



In2science Volunteer Code of Conduct

The success of In2science relies on the highest standards of behaviour from the program's staff and volunteers. The In2science Volunteer Code of Conduct outlines standards of behaviour that are expected from In2science volunteer mentors in accordance with governing legislation and protocols.

Your contribution to In2science and the community of Victoria as a volunteer mentor is highly valued and appreciated. In addition to the Code of Conduct set out below, it is important that you carefully assess how your unpaid volunteer work for In2science fits into your university studies, paid work, and social life. A healthy work-life balance will help you enjoy your university studies and mentor placement as much as possible.

* * *

Observe similar standards of behaviour and ethical conduct to that required of school staff.

- You are expected to act within the law, be honest and fair, respect other people (including students), and work to the best standard of your ability.

Appreciate that students have rights and aspirations.

- Treat students with dignity and respect, empower their voice, and help them to build their skills and knowledge.
- Be understanding and supportive of cultural differences i.e. beliefs, language barriers, and learning styles.
- You are seeing a slice of school life: a student's behaviour at a particular time may not be a reflection of the student's character, but rather a reaction to an event that has taken before your arrival.
- Keep an open mind.
- Support students to exercise and express their rights, and to feel safe to speak up.
- Acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Indigenous culture(s).
- Discrimination in any form (including but not limited to: racial, religious, gender, sexual orientation, age, and disability) is not tolerated. Ensure it is identified, confronted, and dealt with in an appropriate manner.

Observe confidentiality in respect of all information gained through your participation as an In2science volunteer mentor (Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014)

- All information held by schools should be handled with care. Some information is especially sensitive. Sensitive and/or personal information requires additional caution in the way it is treated and is only allowed to be used in the manner for which it was collected. For example, you should not discuss nor disclose personal information about students or staff to others.

Conflicts of interest

- Avoid any conflicts of interest while volunteering as an In2science mentor at the school. For example, if you offer tutoring services, do not tutor students from the class you are volunteering in. If you are unsure if a conflict of interest exists, speak to your In2science Coordinator.

Child safety and wellbeing

All volunteers must adhere to their own governing university policies and procedures with respect to child safety and wellbeing.

The safety and wellbeing of the school children In2science works with is paramount in everything we do. Be aware of boundaries when conversing with or in the presence of students and remain conscious of your body language, behaviour, and surroundings.

Inappropriate interactions (e.g. conversations, correspondence, and/or online posts) include but are not limited to the following:

- inappropriate comments about a young person's appearance,
- jokes/innuendo of a sexual nature,
- vilification or humiliation,
- correspondence of a personal nature via any medium (e.g. phone, email, social media),
- discussing personal lifestyle details of yourself or any young person (note: In2science mentors often discuss hobbies, sports and post-secondary school ambitions so take care),
- initiating, permitting, or requesting inappropriate physical contact with a young person,
- using toilet facilities designated for use by young people, and
- singling the same young person/people out for special attention unless directed by the teacher.

Observing these boundaries in communication, physical contact, place, and targeting will not only protect the students you are working with but protect yourself from potential allegations.

Under Victorian law, all adults (including volunteers) who hold a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child under the age of 16 must report that belief to police.

- If you feel a student is being bullied at school or abused and neglected at home (including physical and emotional abuse), you must report it to the classroom teacher and notify your In2science Coordinator.

Additionally, for in-class mentors:

Appreciate that teachers have a special duty of care for students.

- This cannot be delegated or transferred to others, even for a minute. The classroom teacher is aware they should not leave you alone in the classroom with the students, however, if this does occur, politely remind them that you are unable to supervise the students and let your In2science Coordinator know that this has occurred.

Accept and follow directions from the classroom teacher.

- The teacher has the ultimate duty of care for the classroom and their authority must not be undermined. If you are unsure about any instructions or feel they were given in error, clarify this with the teacher discreetly.

Follow school protocols and procedures.

- You must follow the sign in/sign out procedures of the school (usually via the reception desk) every time you visit and where any required identification badges/stickers as directed by the school's policy.
- Discuss occupational health and safety policies and procedures with your classroom teacher. If the students are directed to wear lab coats and safety glasses, do so yourself. Not only will this help you build rapport, it models the appropriate behaviour.

Additionally, for online eMentors:

Communicate with students only through the In2science eMentoring platform.

- Mentors and mentees are only allowed to communicate via the eMentoring platform. This means that you should never share your email address, contact details, or social media details (including LinkedIn) with your mentee(s).