**ASTRAL**

# Code of Conduct

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# Overview

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which this institute and its programs are run, the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation and the many other Aboriginal peoples throughout Australia. We respect all elders, both past, present and emerging, and pay respects to their connection to land, sea and sky. We aim to continue their tradition of looking up at the night sky with curiosity, and wonder about our place in the universe through astronomy and deeply respect any people of Indigenous descent who will be involved in the A.S.T.R.A.L. Institute.

This code of conduct was developed on April 18, 2024. We recognise that these terms may require revision and further amendments, which may be applied at a later date.

The code of conduct is split into three sections, each covering specific principles of the ASTRAL Institute. *Vision* highlights the basic principles and ethos of ASTRAL, from which the other aspects of the code of conduct stem. *Work* outlines work-related practices that ASTRAL members strive to uphold and aspire to. It covers the expectations and responsibilities of students and mentors in work-related environments. ***Relationships*** describe the expected behaviour of ASTRAL members, and the relationships between mentors, students, and parents of students to ensure a safe and positive environment to the benefit of all. Any individual who breaches this code will be encouraged to revisit their behaviour, understand their motivations for engaging in it, and provided an opportunity to improve their behaviour to avoid removal from the program.

# Vision

ASTRAL provides opportunities for all students with an interest in astronomy, regardless of prior experience or skill sets, to share in and learn new skills through research and outreach activities within the astronomical sciences. ASTRAL accepts students of all backgrounds, including those that are culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD), come from varied socioeconomic backgrounds, are neurodiverse or who identify as a part of the LGBTQ+ community. ASTRAL aims to follow alongside the UN Sustainable Goals 2050 by providing a form of education for all students.

At ASTRAL, curiosity is the cornerstone of our educational philosophy. Within this framework, students are encouraged to freely express their viewpoints, ideas, perspectives, and inquiries without pressure or fear of judgement. Through the application of inductive and deductive reasoning methodologies, students navigate the complexities of astrophysics, supercomputing,

and research, thereby refining their own understanding in these areas. Our main priority is to provide opportunities for students to learn and grow, and to facilitate opportunities for students to network and collaborate with mentors and experts in the field of astronomy and the wider world.

# Work

ASTRAL aims to foster a positive environment for students to share and build on their skills and knowledge, and contribute to the production and communication of astrophysical knowledge. In order to keep students safe and inspired, ASTRAL is committed to the following guidelines for work ethics and integrity:

### Acknowledgment of Ownership

We ensure clear ownership of projects and acknowledge the contributions of all individuals involved. All contributors are given credit for their efforts, as is standard practice for scientific research.

### Respect and Collaboration

We respect others' work, ideas, and contributions, fostering a collaborative environment that prioritises the team's success over individuals, recognising that being part of an elite team far outweighs the short-term benefits of personal recognition.

### Adaptability and Consideration

We adapt to students' circumstances and commitments, ensuring that workloads do not create undue stress. Students are committed to arriving and departing events on time and fulfilling time commitments, but are able to manage and adjust their workload as required. This is to ensure that ASTRAL can complete complex academic programs while avoiding the downsides that arise from being given too much work. ASTRAL programs aim to be fun, non-stressful extensions to what students already do at school or university, and should be positively impacting a student's academic performance in those spaces.

### Effective Feedback Mechanisms

We provide and accept constructive criticism with respect and professionalism, giving feedback mindfully and receiving it without an automatic negative response. We promote clear and respectful channels for giving and receiving feedback.

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At ASTRAL, constructive criticism is defined by a set of key principles by which feedback is shared between members. These key principles include presenting feedback –

- With a positive outlook to encourage fellow team members
- Without the use of ad hominem language that demotivates students
- In a manner that addresses ASTRAL members politely and with respect
- In a format that aims to celebrate the effort of students while addressing shortcomings as well.

These key principles can be imagined as extensions of existing aspects of the code of conduct, namely the open and welcoming environment ASTRAL strives for in all their programs. At ASTRAL, the need to provide constructive criticism over criticism only is stressed to ensure that no student is alienated or feels uncomfortable

## Team Orientation

We prioritise team results over ranking individual achievements. As a team, we set clear S.M.A.R.T. goals (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely) that are amenable to everyone's circumstances. Individuals work as a collective team to strive to meet these goals in accordance with the code of conduct.

This emphasis of team orientation is in accordance with the vision of ASTRAL, specifically Leadership. However, ASTRAL opposes specific situations where teams can lead to negative consequences and the development of environments within ASTRAL programs that do not align with values in the code of conduct.

ASTRAL instead strives for team environments whereby peer discussions drive the project forward, and any issues, disagreements or points for discussion are resolved in a formal manner in which everyone's opinions are heard in a fair and equal manner. Students are highly encouraged to work together to reach a consensus-based solution in which all opinions are heard and valued equally and fairly.

## Remote Participation

ASTRAL students are encouraged to respect the disadvantages that personnel on remote links experience due to network latencies and be mindful of encouraging their equal participation with appropriate pauses and regular monitoring of "hands-up" indicators that they have something to contribute.

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## Approaches to Problems

ASTRAL students are encouraged to recognise that there are often many different approaches in research that can all lead to satisfactory outcomes, not just the one they personally might favour. It is important that all the ASTRAL team members learn to take on responsibilities and can identify their own contributions to the team's achievements by completing tasks without others interfering.

## Data Integrity and Transparency

We uphold data integrity and transparency in all scientific processes. Scientific discoveries should be easily verified by researchers outside of the ASTRAL institute, and adhere strictly to existing scientific protocol and methodology. We maintain accurate documentation to ensure clarity, accountability, and reproducibility.

## Commitment to Learning

We are dedicated to teaching and learning new skills without judgement, fostering an inclusive environment for knowledge exchange among peers and mentors irrespective of previous experience. We prioritise creating opportunities for students to learn and grow, and explore their interests with passion and freedom.

# Relationships

## Safety

In fostering relationships within the ASTRAL community, ensuring the safety and well-being of students is paramount. Parents are provided with reassurance through rigorous protocols, including the requirement for mentors to undergo a Working With Children Check (WWCC). Moreover, to maintain a secure environment, mentoring primarily occurs within team settings rather than one-on-one interactions. Parents are kept informed of any off-campus social activities, promoting transparency and parental involvement in their child's experiences. Additionally, semi-annual catch-up sessions between the mentors and parental guardians will provide a platform to express any concerns and for parents and guardians to stay updated on their child's progress.

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ASTRAL further prioritises the establishment of a safe space where students feel comfortable sharing their concerns with mentors. This environment is characterised by a respectful social distance between mentors and students, fostering an atmosphere of mutual respect. Students are encouraged to address mentors using appropriate titles, such as "Dr. Flynn", fostering a culture of professionalism and respect for authority. This emphasis on self-awareness ensures that all individuals within the ASTRAL community feel empowered to contribute meaningfully to discussions and projects.

## Teamwork

In alignment with ASTRAL's ethos of inclusivity, contributions from all team members are valued and celebrated. Open communication channels encourage individuals to speak freely, knowing that their ideas and questions will be welcomed without fear of belittlement. Furthermore, a supportive environment is cultivated wherein individuals feel comfortable seeking help when needed, fostering a culture of collaboration and mutual assistance

## Communication

To mitigate potential issues and maintain a positive atmosphere, ASTRAL employs a methodological approach to conflict resolution. Issues are addressed promptly and respectfully, with a focus on resolving conflicts before they escalate.

Clear communication lines between students, mentors, and parents/guardians facilitate the swift resolution of any concerns or misunderstandings. Moreover, ASTRAL is committed to fostering a respectful environment where bullying and harassment are not tolerated. Casual remarks perceived as bullying or harassment are addressed seriously, emphasising the importance of treating others with dignity and respect at all times.

# Final Thoughts

In closing, the ASTRAL Institute's code of conduct stands as a testament to our unwavering commitment to excellence, inclusivity, and integrity. Guided by the principles of curiosity-driven learning, collaborative work ethics, and respectful relationships, we strive to create an environment where every individual can thrive and contribute meaningfully to the pursuit of knowledge. By upholding these standards, we not only enrich the educational experience of our students but also foster a community that celebrates diversity, respects differences, and embraces the limitless possibilities of discovery. Together, we embark on a journey to explore the

cosmos and inspire the next generation of STEM pioneers, guided by the values encapsulated within this code of conduct.