

Staff Behaviour Code of Conduct

1. Background and principles

1.1. The purpose of this policy is to provide a Code of Conduct framework for safe professional practice and effective partnerships between staff, leaders and parents/carers.

1.2. The Code of Conduct applies to all teachers, support staff, volunteers, visiting staff and locums working with pupils on and off-site and requires that these adults will

- place the welfare of pupils as their first and paramount consideration;
- accept responsibility for their own actions and behaviour and avoid any conduct that might lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions;
- work in an open and transparent way;
- make a record of any incident and promptly consult their line manager;
- apply the same professional standards, regardless of gender, race or sexual orientation;
- be aware of the name of the designated person with responsibility for safeguarding pupils and understand their responsibilities under the safeguarding / child protection policy;
- understand that any breaches in the law or professional expectations might lead to criminal or disciplinary action and barring; and
- understand their responsibilities to report the unprofessional conduct of other adults working in or on behalf of the College.

2. Confidentiality

2.1. Staff must not use confidential or sensitive information about a child or their family for their own benefit or to humiliate or embarrass a child

2.2. Confidential information about pupils or the College should not be shared casually

2.3. Information that might suggest that a child is in need or at risk of significant harm must be shared with the Designated Person, in accordance with the safeguarding / child protection procedures

3. Behaviour

3.1. Staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence and must uphold high standards of personal conduct to do so; both within and outside of their work setting

3.2. Staff must not do or say anything that might bring the College into disrepute

4. Gifts

4.1. Whilst there may be occasions when parents or pupils may wish to give a small token of appreciation to staff at religious festivities or the end of a placement, for example, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis.

4.2. Personal gifts should not be given by staff to pupils and any reward to a child should be consistent with the college's behaviour policy, recorded and not based upon favouritism

4.3. If unsure of whether to accept a gift please refer to the Vice-Principal.

5. Infatuations

5.1. It is not unusual for pupils or, sometimes, their parents to develop infatuations or "crushes" towards trusted staff. All such situations must be responded to sensitively to maintain the dignity of those concerned and any indications that this might be happening reported to their manager.

6. Social contact

6.1. Staff should not establish or seek to establish any social contact with a pupil or their parents/carers.

6.2. Unplanned or other social contact that happens outside of the college setting should be reported to the Vice-Principal.

6.3. Staff should not give their personal telephone numbers or email addresses to pupils or their parents

6.4. No member of staff will enter into extra or private tuition or childcare arrangements with parents without the permission of the Vice-Principal.

6.5. Staff should notify their manager of any existing or previous family or social relationship with a pupil or their parents/carers.

7. Physical contact

7.1. When physical contact is made with pupils, it should be in response to their needs at that time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.

7.2. Physical contact should never be secretive, for the gratification of the adult or represent a misuse of authority.

7.3. Extra caution should be exercised where a child is known to have suffered previous abuse or neglect. Such experiences may sometimes make a child exceptionally needy and demanding of physical contact and staff should respond sensitively by deterring the child through helping them to understand the importance of personal boundaries.

7.4. Any extreme attention-seeking or behaviour by pupils that makes staff feel uncomfortable should be reported to a line manager

7.5. Staff supervising PE and games or providing music tuition may be required to initiate physical contact with pupils, the principle of "limited touch" should be applied, with understanding of pupils' sensitivities and with the pupil's agreement.

7.6. Children are entitled to respect and privacy whilst they are changing or showering after games or swimming.

8. Pupils in distress

8.1. On those occasions when a pupil may be in distress and in need of comfort and re-assurance, staff should ensure that they remain self-aware at all times and that their contact with the pupil is not open to misunderstanding.

8.2. Such incidents must always be recorded and shared with a line manager.

9. Care, control and physical intervention

9.1. The College is committed to the use of positive behaviour management and staff will not use any form of physical punishment, threats, sarcasm or demeaning comments to deal with unacceptable behaviour.

9.2. When children need to be restrained for their own protection or the protection of others, this must only be undertaken in accordance with the training and policy sanctioned by the Senior Leadership Team.

9.3. Any such incidents and physical interventions will be recorded and reported to parents / carers

10. One to one situations

10.1. Staff working individually with children should recognise the potential vulnerability of pupils and adults in such situations and ensure that they manage these situations with regard for the safety of both the child and themselves.

10.2. Individual work with pupils should not be undertaken in isolated areas or rooms where there is no external visual access. Where it is necessary to close doors for reasons of confidentiality, a colleague should be made aware of this and asked to remain vigilant.

10.3. In general, staff will not be expected to transport or accompany pupils off-site on their own. If staff use their own cars for transporting pupils, they will ensure appropriate escort arrangements and that they have in place motor insurance that covers business use.

10.4. All first aid will be administered only by suitably trained and accredited staff except in an emergency where the illness or injury is such that to delay assistance might cause harm to the child.

10.5. Children who require any form of intimate care are entitled to privacy, dignity and safety. Pupils with on-going health problems will be treated in accordance with any medical plan that has been agreed with the parent and only by those who have been authorised to do so by the Vice-Principal.

10.6. Lone male members of staff will not be placed in a position where they are expected to provide any form of intimate care without the safeguard of having a female colleague in the same room or area.

11. Curriculum

11.1. The curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit or otherwise of a sensitive nature. Care should be exercised to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the lesson plan.

11.2. The curriculum can sometimes lead to unplanned discussion of sensitive subject matters. Responding to pupils' questions requires careful judgments and guidance should be sought from members of the Senior Leadership Team, as appropriate.

12. Photography, videos and other creative arts

12.1. Whilst photographic and video images can play a valuable role within the curriculum, after-college activities and to celebrate achievement, there is potential for such images and opportunities to be misused by adults with ulterior motives.

12.2. Staff should be sensitive to the needs of pupils who may have been abused in this way or who appear uncomfortable when asked to participate in photography or filming.

12.3. Staff should ensure that a member of the Senior Leadership Team is aware of the proposed use of photographic/video equipment and that this is recorded in lesson plans.

12.4. Staff should be able to give account of the rationale behind any images of pupils that are in their possession. They should be stored securely and only used by those authorised to do so.

12.5. Permission from pupils and their parents/carers for the use of images of pupils for publicity purposes is usually given through the admissions process. Staff must however ensure that each parent agrees to photographic images being taken. For most uses names of pupils must not be published.

13. Internet Use

13.1. Staff should follow the college policy on the use of computer equipment and should under no circumstances, access, or allow pupils to access, inappropriate material or images.

13.2. If pupils are found to have accessed such images, this should be reported to the Vice-Principal.

Checked on 4th August 2021 by Cillian Logue