

Staff Code of Conduct Policy

Good Shepherd College



PURPOSE

Staff Code of Conduct

AUTHORISATION

College Council

COMMUNICATION

Email / Meetings /

ORIGINAL

August 2015

SCOPE

Staff

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

Principal

STORAGE

College Network

REVIEW CYCLE / DATES

Every 3 Years (August 2018)

Policy Statement

Introduction

The Code of Conduct has been developed for and by the Victorian teaching profession.

It identifies a set of principles, which describe the professional conduct, personal conduct and professional competence expected of a teacher by their colleagues and the community.

It is based on the values set out in the accompanying Code of Ethics, namely:

- Integrity
- Respect
- Responsibility

and draws on the Victorian Institute of Teaching's Standards of Professional Practice, and Codes of Conduct for teachers developed by other registration authorities.

Purpose

The Code of Conduct codifies what is already common practice within the teaching profession.

Its purpose is to:

- promote adherence to the values teachers see as underpinning their profession
- provide a set of principles which will guide teachers in their everyday conduct and assist them to solve ethical dilemmas
- affirm the public accountability of the teaching profession
- promote public confidence in the teaching profession

The Code of Conduct is not a disciplinary tool.

The Code of Conduct will not cover every situation. There may be policies or procedures set down by the sector/school in which the teacher works, or there may be specific issues that are covered by the EBA.

Definitions

'Teacher' means all persons registered under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*

'School' refers to an education setting, including school, early childhood education and care services or any other location where teaching and learning occurs.

'Students' refers to learners, including:

- students taught by a teacher in a school or other education setting
- children taught by a teacher in an early childhood setting

'Parents' also includes guardians and caregivers.

Code of Conduct

Professional Conduct

Teachers' professional conduct is characterised by the quality of the relationships they have with their students, their students' parents (guardians and caregivers), families and communities and their colleagues.

Relationships with Students

Principle 1.1: Teachers provide opportunities for all students to learn

The main focus of teaching is student learning. Teachers demonstrate their commitment to student learning by:

- knowing their students well, respecting their individual differences and catering for their
- individual abilities
- maintaining a safe and challenging learning environment
- accepting professional responsibility for the provision of quality teaching
- having high expectations of every student, recognising and developing each student's
- abilities, skills and talents
- considering all viewpoints fairly
- communicating well and appropriately with their students

Principle 1.2: Teachers treat their students with courtesy and dignity

Teachers:

- work to create an environment which promotes mutual respect
- model and engage in respectful and impartial language
- protect students from intimidation, embarrassment, humiliation or harm
- enhance student autonomy and sense of self-worth and encourage students to develop and reflect on their own values
- respect a student's privacy in sensitive matters, such as health or family problems, and only reveal confidential matters when appropriate. That is:
 - if the student has consented to the information being used in a certain way
 - to prevent or lessen a serious threat to life, health, safety or welfare of a person (including the student)
 - as part of an investigation into unlawful activity
 - if the disclosure is required or mandated by law
 - to prevent a crime or enforce the law
- refrain from discussing students' personal problems in situations where the information will not be treated confidentially
- use consequences commensurate with the offence when disciplining students

Principle 1.3: Teachers work within the limits of their professional expertise

In fulfilling their role, teachers carry out a wide range of responsibilities. They support students by knowing their strengths and the limits of their professional expertise.

Teachers:

- seek to ensure that they have the physical, mental and emotional capacity to carry out
- their professional responsibilities
- are aware of the role of other professionals and agencies and when students should
- be referred to them for assistance
- are truthful when making statements about their qualifications and competencies

Principle 1.4: Teachers maintain objectivity in their relationships with students

In their professional role, teachers do not behave as a friend or a parent. They:

- interact with students without displaying bias or preference
- make decisions in students' best interests
- do not draw students into their personal agendas
- do not seek recognition at the expense of professional objectivity and goals

Principle 1.5: Teachers are always in professional relationship with the students in their school, whether at school or not

Teachers hold a unique position of influence and trust that should not be violated or compromised. They exercise their responsibilities in ways that recognise that there are limits or boundaries to their relationships with students. The following examples outline some of those limits.

A professional relationship **will** be violated if a teacher:

- has a sexual relationship with a student
- uses sexual innuendo or inappropriate language and/or material with students
- touches a student without a valid reason
- holds conversations of a personal nature or has contact with a student via written or electronic means including email,
- letters, telephone, text messages or chat lines, without a valid context
- accepts gifts, which could be reasonably perceived as being used to influence them, from students or their parents

A professional relationship **may** be compromised if a teacher:

- attends parties or socialises with students
- invites a student or students back to their home, particularly if no-one else is present

Relationships with Parents (Guardians, Caregivers), Families and Communities***Principle 1.6: Teachers maintain a professional relationship with parents (Guardians and Caregivers)***

Teachers should be respectful of and courteous to parents. Teachers:

- consider parents' perspectives when making decisions which have an impact on the education or wellbeing of a student
- communicate and consult with parents in a timely, understandable and sensitive manner
- take appropriate action when responding to parental concerns

Principle 1.7: Teachers work in collaborative relationships with student's families and communities

Teachers recognise that their students come from a diverse range of cultural contexts and seek to work collaboratively with students' families and communities within those contexts.

- model and teach the values of mutual respect; honesty; concern for individuals other than self; service; rights balanced with responsibilities;
- establish relationships based on courtesy, mutual trust and open communication;
- resolve conflict using the principles articulated in Matthew 18;
- treat all people with dignity and unconditional respect - behave with equity regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual preference, academic ability, religious persuasion;

Relationships with Colleagues***Principle 1.8: Collegiality is an integral part of the work of teachers***

Teachers demonstrate collegiality by:

- treating each other with courtesy and respect
- valuing the input of their colleagues
- using appropriate forums for constructive debate on professional matters
- sharing expertise and knowledge in a variety of collaborative contexts
- respecting different approaches to teaching
- providing support for each other, particularly those new to the profession
- sharing information relating to the wellbeing of students

Personal Conduct***Principle 2.1: The personal conduct of a teacher will have an impact on the professional standing of that teacher and on the profession as a whole.***

Although there is no definitive boundary between the personal and professional conduct of a teacher, it is expected that teachers will:

- be positive role models at school and in the community
- respect the rule of law and provide a positive example in the performance of civil obligations
- not exploit their position for personal or financial gain
- ensure that their personal or financial interests do not interfere with the performance of their duties
- act with discretion and maintain confidentiality when discussing workplace issues

In relation to themselves and their own development, teachers are expected to:

- articulate, model and encourage others (staff, students and parents) to uphold the values underpinning the College's mission and values;
- demonstrate Gospel principles and Christian qualities such as forgiveness, reconciliation, trustworthiness, service;
- undertake theological study as required by Lutheran Education Australia;
- act in a manner consistent with the Christian ethos of the College

Professional Competence

Principle 3.1: Teachers value their professionalism, and set and maintain high standards of competence

Teachers:

- cooperate actively in the development of the College as a Christian community (e.g. at a basic level through attendance at devotions / Chapel);
- act in accordance with both the spirit and letter of College policies
- are knowledgeable in their areas of expertise
- are committed to pursuing their own professional learning
- complete their duties in a responsible, thorough and timely way

Principle 3.2: Teachers are aware of the legal requirements that pertain to their profession. In particular, they are cognisant of their legal responsibilities in relation to:

- discrimination, harassment and vilification
- negligence
- mandatory reporting
- privacy
- occupational health and safety
- teacher registration

Code of Ethics

As teachers, we use our expert knowledge to provide experiences that inspire and facilitate student learning. We are a significant force in developing a knowledgeable, creative, productive and democratic society. The values that underpin our profession are integrity, respect and responsibility.

We hold a unique position of trust and influence, which we recognise in our relationships with students, parents (caregivers and guardians), colleagues and the community.

We demonstrate our integrity by:

- acting in the best interest of students
- maintaining a professional relationship with students, parents, colleagues and the community
- behaving in ways that respect and advance the profession

We demonstrate our respect by:

- acting with care and compassion
- treating students fairly and impartially
- holding our colleagues in high regard
- acknowledging parents as partners in the education of their children

We demonstrate our responsibility by:

- providing quality teaching
- maintaining and developing our professional practice
- working cooperatively with colleagues in the best interest of our students

Staff Code of Conduct

Staff are pivotal to the college achieving its mission of being a Christ centred learning community that supports children to achieve personal excellence in all dimensions of life. The Code of Conduct framed within the college's Four Pillars of Learning provides a clear statement of the college's expectations of its staff. It also takes account of the Code of Ethics set down by the Victorian Institute of teachers.

Learning to Be

In relation to themselves and their own development, staff are expected to:

- articulate, model and encourage others (staff, students and parents) to uphold the values underpinning the College's mission;
- demonstrate Gospel principles and Christian qualities such as forgiveness, reconciliation, trustworthiness, service;
- undertake theological study as required by Lutheran Education Australia;
- act in a manner consistent with the Christian ethos of the college

Learning Together

In relation to all members of the college community (staff, students and parents), teachers are expected to:

- model and teach the values of mutual respect; honesty; concern for individuals other than self; service; rights balanced with responsibilities;
- establish relationships based on courtesy, mutual trust and open communication;
- resolve conflict using the principles articulated in Matthew 18;
- treat all people with dignity and unconditional respect - behave with equity regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual preference, academic ability, religious persuasion;
- abide by the college's Child Protection, Workplace Health and Safety and Sexual Abuse policies

In relation to students, staff are expected to:

- treat all students with respect and be empathetic to their needs;

In relation to other staff, staff are expected to:

- work harmoniously with other staff as an effective team member in the pursuit of shared goals;
- assist colleagues and especially newcomers to the profession;
- comply with the lawful and proper directions of those in authority

In relation to students, teachers are expected to:

- assist students to learn principles of effective teamwork;
- manage student behaviour appropriately to provide a safe and supportive environment that promotes the spiritual, physical, emotional, social and intellectual well-being of all students
- support students to accept the expression of different opinions and perspectives and help students to assess the worth of these
- maintain professional boundaries with students at all times

In relation to parents/guardians, teachers are expected to:

- respect parents' rights of inquiry, consultation and information with regard to their children;
- encourage partnership with parents through regular contact, courtesy and openness

Learning to Learn

In relation to their learning, teachers are expected to:

- reflect upon their own performance, recognise strengths and address areas for growth;
- engage actively in purposeful professional development
- take an active part in collaborative learning through discussion of varying perspectives and opinions about learning
- participate in the college's appraisal system

Learning to Know and Do

In relation to the college and the college community, staff are expected to:

- cooperate actively in the development of the college as a Christian community (e.g. at a basic level through attendance at devotions / Chapel);
- act in accordance with both the spirit and letter of college policies;
- avoid activity which could result in a conflict of interest arising between personal benefit for the employee and the employee's professional duties;
- avoid other paid employment without first obtaining the permission of the Principal;
- promote the college positively when speaking with parents, visitors or people in the outside community;
- help to create a sense of community identity and pride;
- observe contractual commitments;
- teaching staff to participate in at least one aspect of the co-curricular programme of the college

In relation to the wider community, staff are expected to:

- support students to be socially-just and self-sacrificial citizens of the local and global community;
- promote cooperation among all agencies and professionals working in the best interests of students and families;
- act within the educational and wider community in a way that enhances the status of the profession

In relation to teaching and learning, teachers are expected to:

- base teaching on thorough knowledge of subject matter and practical skills relevant to the subject;
- base teaching on effective principles of teaching and learning (pedagogy);
- appreciate diversity, creating effective learning experiences in response to individual students' needs

In relation to written and spoken communication, staff are expected to:

- abide by the college's privacy policy, treating information with the appropriate level of confidentiality or, when lawful, disclosure;
- ensure all written communication to parents or the wider community follows rules of correct English usage;
- ensure all written and spoken communication uses appropriate language and is in good taste;
- teaching document lesson plans and work programmes as required including the keeping of appropriate records of students' learning and assessment

In relation to professional standards and service, staff are expected to:

- maintain a focus on students' learning as the primary goal of the community;
- personally model and encourage students and staff to strive for personal excellence;
- exercise high standards of duty care;
- demonstrate respect for property and equipment;
- observe necessary deadlines and budgetary guidelines;
- show appropriate levels of organisation

Staff Dress Code

Background

The intention of this document is to give guidelines and to describe contextual expectations. Good Shepherd College is a professional community. Overall appearance, including personal grooming, hairstyle and personal presentation should be in keeping with standards generally regarded as appropriate in the professional and business community and avoid attire and shoes that appear casual, faded, worn, and aged. Generally staff are required to be well groomed and dress in a way that promotes an image of professionalism. In deciding on an appropriate standard of dress and grooming, the over-riding consideration is whether members of the public would form a favourable opinion about the professional status of the College.

In general, the overall impression should be smartly professional rather than casual or informal.

General

For normal day-to-day teaching, including attendance at professional development seminars away from school, and administrative duties, the following are acceptable and appropriate:

Women	Men
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tailored trousers, slacks, or similar. ▪ Skirt, dress or tailored shorts for female members of staff providing the hem is not more than 10 cm above the bottom of the knee. ▪ Smart blouse or suitable top of sufficient length so midriff is not exposed with movement. ▪ Dress shoes - closed-in shoes for work place health and safety considerations. ▪ Appropriate brimmed hat. ▪ All tattoos should be covered by clothing or makeup. ▪ Earrings should be in keeping with the professional dress. ▪ No other form of visible body piercing is acceptable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tailored trousers, slacks, or similar. ▪ Tailored shorts with quarter socks are an appropriate alternative to trousers or slacks. ▪ Smart collared shirts worn tucked in. Ties to be worn in winter. ▪ Dress shoes (not joggers or other recreational footwear). ▪ Appropriate brimmed hat. ▪ All tattoos should be covered by clothing or makeup. ▪ Earrings should be in keeping with the professional dress ▪ No other form of visible body piercing is acceptable.

Formal and Academic Occasions

On formal occasions, such as parent/teacher interviews, college services, college photographs, and the like, dress standards need to reflect the 'full dress' standards expected of student at the college. This would include business shirt and tie and optional coat or jacket. On some of these occasions academic gown and hood will be appropriate.

Special Notes

Sports

- Some staff e.g. Physical Education, Ground Staff, will need to adopt a style of dress to suit their work environment and their role in the college. These members of staff should meet the general tenor of acceptability of appearance as outlined in this document, but in such a way as to meet the demands of their own work environment.
- On sports carnival days, staff may wear appropriate sports clothes and should wear broad brimmed hats. When representing the college as part of inter-school sport a Good Shepherd Sports Polo Shirt may be worn.

Outdoor Education / Camps

The nature of the activity will determine the type of attire worn.

All staff should wear full brim hats when working, supervising or teaching outdoors. This is an important example to students and is also advisable for staff member's own protection.

Workplace Health and Safety

Workplace Health and Safety requirements may present special needs. Naturally Workplace Health and Safety requirements will be observed as a first priority.

Unsuitable Attire

- bonds style t-shirts, or casual recreational shirt for normal day wear
- jeans of any kind, capri pants, cargo and hipster style pants/skirts
- stabbies, board shorts, 'short' shorts
- leggings, stirrup pants, harem pants
- midriff tops, crop tops, singlet tops, tops with narrow straps or that are inappropriately tightly fitted
- slogan T-shirts and tracksuits
- thongs/beach style sandals, canvas shoes, sandals with socks
- see-through blouses or tops with plunging necklines
- 'bike' tights/pants

School Holiday Periods and Student Free Days

During school holiday periods and student free days it is recognised that a more casual style of clothing may be adopted by those staff at the school. Contact with members of the public is still quite frequent in these periods, so the level of informality needs to be maintained at a casual but businesslike level.

Summary

The purpose of the Code is to enable staff to have an understanding of the expectations of the College in relation to their daily attire. The Code attempts to combine the demands of changing work environments, a sub-tropical climate and a demonstration of professionalism which is in the interests of all parties in an independent school. It is intended that there is room for considerable diversity and latitude, within a band of expectations which would be broadly acknowledged by the general community and is outlined in this document.