



Policy Area: Stewardship
Policy: St Jerome's Code of Conduct
Released: 2017
Reviewed:
Next Review:

Rational

When working with children from St Jerome's Primary School all staff and volunteers are acting in a position of trust. It is important that staff and volunteers are aware that they may be seen as role models by children, and must act in an appropriate manner at all times.

Purpose

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to help to protect children from abuse and inappropriate behaviour from adults. It describes the minimum standards of conduct in all behaviour and decision making to ensure the safety and well-being of students. It will also help staff and volunteers to maintain the standard of behaviour expected of them and will reduce the possibility of unfounded allegations of abuse made against them.

Application

The Code applies to staff, students, volunteers, parents and guardians as applicable, who engage with children through St Jerome's Primary School and its activities.

Principles

School personnel are expected to create an environment where children are valued, encouraged and affirmed, have their rights respected and are treated as individuals, eliminating any threatening, violent or degrading behaviour.

Introduction

- You acknowledge the inherent vulnerability of the students in your care.
- You recognise that the safety and well-being of students depends upon your vigilance and diligence and the vigilance and diligence of all adults.
- The Code does not give you detailed professional advice on specific behaviour. Rather, it describes the minimum requirements expected of you.
- The Guidelines are illustrative and not an exhaustive list of the behaviours covered by the Code.
- If your behaviour varies from the standards described in this Code and Guidelines, you should be prepared to explain and justify your decisions and actions.

- While mandatory language such as 'must', 'shall' and 'will' is not used throughout the Code, there is a presumption the conduct described is mandatory and therefore not discretionary.
- The Principal expects you to conduct yourself personally and professionally in a way that maintains public trust and confidence in your school and the Church.
- You have a responsibility to students and their family, other members of the school community and the wider community to provide and support safe and competent education and care of students.
- You will do your best to support other members of the school community to comply with the Code.
- In cases of conflict between parts of the Code, between the Code and other school policies, or in any decision making choices, you give priority to the outcome that will be in the best interests of the safety and well-being of the child.

Breaches

Breaches of the Code must be notified to the Principal and it is a breach of the Code not to do so.

A breach of the Code may constitute a failure to follow a lawful direction from the Principal and therefore the Principal will have the discretion as to what action to take, which may include counselling, professional development or sanctions under any agreement between you and the Principal. If you are a parent, volunteer or visitor, the Principal may take such action as is appropriate in your circumstances to maintain the safety and well-being of students.

The Principal must notify the appropriate authorities of any breach of the Code that was grooming behaviour: i.e. deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a student, to lower the student's inhibitions in preparation for engaging in sexual activity with the student. Examples include:

- Developing relationships that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific students).
- Being alone with a student in circumstances where you are unseen or unlikely to be randomly interrupted.
- Initiating unnecessary physical contact with students or doing things of a personal nature that a student can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
- Engaging in personal disclosures (including personal contact details), or exchanges containing sexual content with or in the presence of a student.
- Organising contact with a student or their family outside of school without the Principal's knowledge and/or consent (e.g. tutoring, sport coaching).

- Having any non-curriculum related online contact with a student (including via digital media) or their family.
- Using any personal digital media account to contact students or their family.
- Photographing or videoing a student without the consent of the parent.
- Being in the presence of a student whilst under the influence of alcohol or non-medically prescribed drugs or offering either to a student.

The Principal must notify the appropriate authorities of any breach of the Code that was sexual abuse of a child: i.e. sexual behaviour in circumstances where:

- The student is the subject of bribery, coercion, a threat, exploitation or violence;
- The student has less power than another person involved in the behaviour; or
- There is a significant disparity in the developmental function or maturity of the child and another person involved in the behaviour.

Mrs Helen O'Toole

Principal

This Code of Behaviour for Staff has at its core 12 Conduct Statements. The statements are:

- 1.** You act in accordance with the values of the Gospel as defined in the Code of Ethical Conduct.
- 2.** You give priority to students' safety and well-being in all your behaviour and decision making.
- 3.** You act safely and competently.
- 4.** You respect the dignity, culture, values and beliefs of each member of the school community.
- 5.** You conduct yourself in accordance with laws, agreements, policies and standards relevant to your relationship with the school community.
- 6.** You promote and preserve the trust and privilege inherent in your relationship with all members of the school community.
- 7.** You treat personal information about members of the school community as private and confidential.
- 8.** You act reflectively and ethically.
- 9.** You give impartial, honest and accurate information about the education, safety and well-being of students.
- 10.** You support all members of the school community in making informed decisions about students.
- 11.** You allow students to have a voice in their education, safety and well-being.
- 12.** You maintain and build on the community's trust and confidence in Catholic schools and the Church.

Guidelines

1. You act in accordance with the values of the Gospel as defined in the Code of Ethical Conduct.

The Code of Ethical Conduct requires you to take an ethical approach based on the living out of Gospel values which find expression in:

- Respect for the dignity of each person
- Acknowledgment of the giftedness of each person
- Commitment to building positive relationships
- Confidentiality
- Accountability

You are mindful that your decisions and behaviour are opportunities for students and others to see Gospel values in action and how faith integrates with life. Therefore you are responsible for educating yourself and anyone you lead on the content of those values, and their practical application in your decision making.

2. You give priority to students' safety and well-being in all your behaviour and decision making.

You accept that you and all adults have individual and joint responsibility for the safety and well-being of students.

You ensure the safety and well-being of students are the primary focus of your actions and decisions and take precedence over any other considerations including the reputation of the school and your own needs.

3. You act safely and competently.

You are expected to put the safety of students ahead of every other relevant but secondary consideration.

You recognise that the Principal, staff, parents and students assess your ability to act safely and competently based on your behaviour and decision making, and you do likewise in your assessment of them. You are responsible for conducting yourself in all things such that there is no speculation, doubt or ambiguity that you do so in the best interests of students. You must take reasonable steps to avoid situations where your decisions or behaviour could be interpreted as putting students at risk. You must also notify the Principal as soon as possible if you found yourself in such a position of ambiguity so that you can explain the circumstances.

4. You respect the dignity, culture, values and beliefs of each member of the school community.

You respect both the person and capacity of each member of the school community, treat them with dignity, show respect for their culture, values, and beliefs and interact with them of in an honest and respectful manner.

You perform your duties and conduct your relations with students and members of the school community with fairness and justice. This includes taking appropriate action to ensure the safety and quality of the education and care of students are not compromised because of harmful or prejudicial attitudes about culture, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, religion, disability, spirituality, political, social or health status.

5. You conduct yourself in accordance with laws, agreements, policies and standards relevant to your relationship with the school community.

If you witness the unlawful or unsafe conduct of any other member of the school community, or breaches of policy or this Code, whether in teaching, administration, school support services, or while engaging with students in person or via digital or other media, you have both a responsibility and an obligation to notify such conduct to the Principal or an appropriate authority and take other action as necessary to protect students.

6. You promote and preserve the trust and privilege inherent in your relationship with all members of the school community.

You recognise that an inherent power imbalance exists within your relationship with students that may make the students and their family vulnerable and open to exploitation. You actively preserve the dignity of all people through practised kindness and by recognising the potential vulnerability and powerlessness of each student and their family. You recognise that the power relativities between you and a student can be significant, particularly where the student is very young, has a disability, a difficult family background, has cultural differences, or experiencing emotional turmoil. This vulnerability creates a power differential in your relationship with students that must be recognised and managed with care.

7. You treat personal information about members of the school community as private and confidential.

You have ethical and legal obligations to treat personal information as confidential. You protect the privacy of each member of the school community by treating the information gained in the relationship as confidential, restricting its use and disclosure to the purposes defined in your school Privacy Policy.

You seek advice if you identify a conflict between protecting personal information and any resulting risk to the safety and well-being of a student.

You create and keep accurate records of conversations about significant decisions involving the safety and well-being of students.

8. You act reflectively and ethically.

You engage with the school reflectively and ethically to ensure that you consciously put student safety and well-being at the forefront of your behaviour and decisions.

You contribute to continuous improvement by supporting opportunities to record, assess and learn from incidents involving student safety and well-being.

You advise the Principal of any reduction in your capacity to act in the best interests of the safety and well-being of students due to health, social or other factors, while you seek ways of addressing the deficiency.

9. You give impartial, honest and accurate information about the education, safety and well-being of students.

You seek out first hand sources of information directly from parents, colleagues and experts, or in documents and policies when making decisions or giving advice rather than relying on hearsay, opinion, rumour or assumptions.

You fully explain the advantages and disadvantages of any options so all involved can participate constructively in decision making to deliver the best results for the student.

10. You support all members of the school community in making informed decisions about students.

You recognise that parents are the first educators of their children and equal partners in the education of students.

You engage with all parents equally and fairly, regardless of their relationship status, mindful that, in the absence of court orders to the contrary, each parent has equal and joint parental responsibility for their child. You do not allow your opinion about the behaviour of parents to prevent you from engaging openly and honestly with each of them about their child's education.

You treat the opinions of parents and school staff about the education and well-being of students with respect and dignity, even if you do not agree with it or believe it is misinformed or misguided.

11. You allow students to have a voice in their education, safety and well-being.

You encourage students to inform you or the Principal of any concerns they have about their own or other students' education, safety or well-being. You follow up those concerns and keep students informed of how they are resolved.

You recognise that while you and all adults have responsibility for the safety and well-being of students, students have opinions and ideas about their education and well-being.

12. You maintain and build on the community's trust and confidence in Catholic schools and the Church.

You notify the Principal of your involvement in any criminal investigation or other legal process that may undermine trust and confidence in your judgement or care of students.

You are conscious of any unlawful and unethical actions in your personal life that may adversely risk affecting both your own and the school's reputation in the eyes of the public.

Next Review

Year	Person / Group Responsible
2020	Assistant Principal



Policy Area: Stewardship
Policy: St Jerome's Code of Conduct
Released: 2017
Reviewed:
Next Review:

Please acknowledge that you have read and agree to the St Jerome's Code of Conduct:



Name: (Please Print) _____

Role within the school: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____