

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

It is based on core values of integrity, respect and responsibility

Purpose

The Code of Conduct is not a disciplinary tool. Its purpose is to:

- promote adherence to the values teachers see as underpinning their profession
- provide a set of principles to 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.

This Code of Conduct will not cover every situation. There may be other policies or procedures set down which take priority.

SECTION 1: PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

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

Appendix 1 gives guidance on one to one contact with pupils

Appendix 2 gives an example, in detail, of the spirit embodied in this policy.

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 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 1.4: Teachers develop and maintain a professional relationship with their students

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 inappropriately
- has inappropriate contact with a student via written or electronic means including email, letters, telephone, internet social networking sites, text messages, chat lines or similar.

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

- attends parties or socialises with students other than at official School events
- invites a student or students back to their home, particularly if no-one else is present
- holds conversations of a personal nature, with a student or students, without a valid context.

For guidance on one-to-one contact with pupils see appendix 1

Principle 1.5: 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.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS (GUARDIANS, CAREGIVERS)***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

RELATIONSHIPS WITH COLLEAGUES***Principle1.7: Teachers are professional in their interactions with colleagues***

Teachers demonstrate professional good manners by:

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

SECTION 2: PERSONAL CONDUCT***Principle2.1: The personal conduct of a teacher will have an impact on the professional standing of that teacher and on the reputation of the School***

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
- not exploit their position for personal or financial gain
- ensure that their personal interests do not interfere with the performance of their duties
- act with discretion and maintain confidentiality when discussing workplace issues

Appendix 1

Guidance on one-to-one contact with pupils

Members of staff teaching one pupil or conducting a one-to-one interview or teaching session with a pupil should:

Take particular care in the following ways:

- use a room that has sufficient windows onto the corridor so the occupants can be seen or keep the door open or inform a colleague that the lesson/meeting is taking place.
- arrange the meeting during normal school hours when there are plenty of other people about
- do not continue the meeting for any longer than is necessary to achieve its purposes
- avoid sitting or standing in close proximity to the pupil, except as necessary to check work
- avoid all unnecessary physical contact and apologise straightaway if there is accidental physical contact
- avoid any conduct that could be taken as a sexual advance

Report any incident that causes you concern to the Deputy Head and make a written record (dated and signed).

Source: Veale Wasborough 'Heads' legal briefing' GSA South Central Oct 2006

Appendix 2

The following statement of expectations was drawn up in order to clarify school policy relating to specific issues and as such is an example, in greater detail, of the spirit embodied within the Staff Code of Conduct in relation to those issues.

Statement of Expectations – this represents the approach and standards expected of a member of staff at Burgess Hill Girls and is non-negotiable.

Staff will respond positively to reasonable requests from parents, as required and communicate appropriately.

Staff will uphold the good reputation of the school in all communications with parents, pupils and other contacts related to the school, including not briefing parents against policies or procedures with which you might disagree.

Staff will accept that implied criticism, justified or unjustified may be forthcoming from parents, pupils or colleagues as a natural consequence of dealing with people who may hold different views or perceptions of events, and deal with such criticism in a positive and professional manner, with all necessary support from your line manager, without recourse to refusal to communicate until, or unless, all other reasonable avenues have been explored and exhausted.

Staff will accept that it is not acceptable or appropriate to set conditions, such as will only talk to parents or colleagues in the presence of a union representative, unless it is in the context of a formal or informal meeting related to grievance, discipline or competence procedures or similar significant employment issue.

Staff will work in a professional manner alongside colleagues in general, and your line manager, in particular.

To be read in conjunction with the:

- Child Protection Policy
- Acceptable use of ICT Policy
- Restraint Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1