



# STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

*This policy refers to both Wellington Senior School and Wellington Prep School*

Headmaster	Eugene du Toit
Author	Emily Weiss – Director of HR
Date Reviewed	June 2020
Updated	August 2020
Date of Next Review	June 2021
Website	Yes

## **1. Overview**

Relationships amongst staff and with pupils at Wellington School and Wellington Prep School are friendly and mutually respectful. Both the Senior and the Prep Schools seek to provide a safe and supportive environment that ensures the wellbeing and best outcomes for all pupils and supports our aims and values.

The Staff Code of Conduct has been formulated in order to maintain this balance by:

- clarifying the professional responsibility of all staff, teaching and non-teaching;
- giving clear advice about what constitutes illegal behaviour and what might be considered as misconduct; and
- establishing expectations of standards that all staff must maintain when carrying out school business or representing the School in any circumstance.

The School recognises that it has a duty of care towards its employees to provide a safe working environment for staff. It is intended that this guidance will help ensure that staff maintain the safest possible working practice and thereby safeguard all pupils in their care as well as safeguard themselves against accusations of improper or unprofessional conduct.

Specifically, staff should be aware that:

- allegations of unprofessional conduct or improper contact can arise at any time;
- professionalism and vigilance are required in order to ensure the safety of children in our care and to reduce the risk of an allegation of impropriety against a member of staff;
- forming inappropriate relationships with children or young people who are pupils at another school may also be regarded as gross misconduct.

## **2. Standards of personal behaviour**

### **2.1 Equality of opportunity**

The School seeks to promote inclusivity and values diversity. It also seeks to ensure that the work environment for its employees is supportive, and one where individual respect is shown to all. All members of staff and pupils, regardless of their gender, race, ethnic background, culture, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, age, religion, socio-economic status or any other factor will be supported and encouraged to perform to their potential.

### **2.2 Harassment and bullying**

To secure an environment in which pupils and members of staff are able to flourish and to achieve their full potential, the School is committed to ensuring that everyone is able to work and to participate in the life of the School without fear of harassment, bullying or intimidation. Everyone in the School has a part to play by ensuring that their own behaviour, whether intentional or unintentional, does not constitute harassment. The School will take action against inappropriate behaviour that shows lack of respect for others or which leads people to feel threatened.

## **2.3 Health and safety**

The School places a high priority on providing a safe working and learning environment and will act positively to minimise the incidence of all workplace risks as required by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and other associated legislation. All activities should be carried out with the highest regard for the health and safety of employees, students, visitors and the public. Our aim is excellence in health and safety, by means of continuous improvement of standards, and the comprehensive use of risk assessments so as to systematically remove the causes of accidents/incidents and ill-health. This, together with more specific aims and objectives, reflects the School's commitment to promote employee wellbeing. See the Health and Safety Statement of Intent and Health and Safety Policy for further information.

## **2.4 Security**

In the interests of security, employees must carry their key pass and a means of identification whilst in School and produce it on request. The School reserves the right to search the outer clothing, bags, lockers etc. of staff members whilst on site. The staff member may have a colleague in attendance on such (rare) occasions.

## **2.5 Relationships with other members of staff and other clients and customers of the School**

The School does not concern itself with the private lives of its staff unless they affect its effective operation or its reputation.

Members of staff who are relatives or who have a close personal relationship should not normally have a supervisory, assessing or authorising relationship with each other.

Employees must inform their line manager if they have a close personal relationship with another employee or a client or customer of the School that could be considered by colleagues, pupils or others, as impacting on the way they conduct themselves at work.

All staff, irrespective of job role, should be polite, helpful and professional towards each other. They should seek to be considerate and courteous at all times, even on occasions when there may be differences of opinion or challenge.

## **2.6 Performance**

The School expects individuals to follow all reasonable rules and instructions given by those supervising or managing their activities and/or work areas.

## **2.7 Attendance and Timekeeping**

Should a staff member need to be absent or expect to be late for any reason, he/she should ask their Head of Department in advance when possible. If this is not possible, he/she is asked to contact the Head of Department at the earliest opportunity.

## **2.8 Use of language**

Staff must ensure that they use appropriate language at all times. Staff must:

- avoid words or expressions that have any unnecessary sexual content or innuendo;

- not use language that could be considered racist, sexist or homophobic;
- not use language that promotes extreme political ideas or that promotes any form of radicalisation;
- avoid any words or actions that are over-familiar;
- not swear, blaspheme or use any sort of offensive language in front of pupils; and
- understand that the use of sarcasm or derogatory words should be avoided when punishing or disciplining pupils and unprofessional comments about anyone must also be avoided;
- take care if engaging in banter with pupils and/or colleagues, however well intended.

## **2.9 Smoking**

The School is a non-smoking site and staff must observe the School's policy on smoking.

## **2.10 Misuse of drugs and alcohol**

Staff must not drink alcohol during the normal school working day nor should they drink alcohol with pupils outside of the normal school working day apart from in the instances set out below.

Drinking alcohol with pupils is only acceptable during formal, supervised and approved occasions, such as a House Dinner or Sixth Form Dinner or other such social event where pupils aged 16 or above are sitting eating a meal and where alcohol is controlled by designated members of staff at that meal. The consumption of alcohol on trips is permitted in moderation but at least one member of staff must not drink any alcohol in case of emergency. Drivers must not consume alcohol under any circumstances.

It is a disciplinary offence to be on School premises and/or carrying out official duties when under the influence of non-medically prescribed drugs.

## **2.11 Gambling**

Gambling activities must not be conducted on School premises; discretion may be used in relation to small raffles for charitable purposes, national lottery syndicates, occasional sweepstakes etc.

## **2.12 Conduct outside work**

The School does not seek to dictate how employees conduct themselves in their personal lives outside work. However, unlawful, anti-social or other conduct by employees that may jeopardise the School's reputation or position will be dealt with through the Disciplinary Procedure. In particular, a member of staff accused of a criminal offence is expected to inform the School at the earliest opportunity and failure to do so may be a disciplinary offence.

## **2.13 Dress code**

The School does not operate a formal dress code for its employees, other than for those who are provided with a uniform and/or protective clothing. However, employees must ensure that their dress is appropriate for the situation in which they are working and that they present a professional image and one that reflects sensitivity to customer perceptions. This may reflect their ethnicity and lifestyle, but should not be provocative or cause offence to those with whom they have contact.

## **2.14 Mobility and Flexibility**

Due to the demands and nature of the school, staff should be prepared to transfer upon request within departments either temporarily or permanently, to undertake work of a different nature, providing it is reasonable and safe to do so and the staff member is adequately trained.

## **2.15 Use of Mobile Phones and Cameras**

Photographs will only be taken of children with their parents' permission (provided in writing via a consent form). Photographs will only be taken by a designated staff member/s. Where photographs are taken by staff to give evidence of children's progress, photos can only be taken on School cameras. They must then be downloaded onto School computers, where they will be monitored. Photos cannot be used or passed on outside the School unless in accordance with the Taking, Using and Storing Images of Children Policy, which is available on the School website at Annex 4 of the E-Safety Policy.

Neither staff nor children may use their own mobile phones to take photographs within our EYFS setting, Nursery and up to Reception year in our School.

## **3. Guidelines on the prevention of allegations of abuse**

### **3.1 Physical contact with pupils**

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. Staff should therefore use their professional judgement at all times. Staff should not have unnecessary physical contact with pupils and should be alert to the fact that minor forms of friendly physical contact can be misconstrued by pupils or onlookers.

A member of staff can never take the place of a parent in providing physical comfort and should be cautious of any demonstration of affection.

Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be recorded in writing as soon as possible, the Designated Safeguarding Lead ("DSL") informed and, if appropriate, a written record of the incident placed on the pupil's file.

### **3.2 Physical Restraint**

Any physical restraint is only permissible when a child is in imminent danger of inflicting an injury on himself/herself or on another, and then only as a last resort when all efforts to defuse the situation have failed. Another member of staff should, if possible, be present to act as a witness. All incidents of the use of physical restraint should be recorded in writing and reported immediately to the DSL/Headmaster who will decide what to do next. Where this relates to the School's Nursery/EYFS setting, parents will be informed of any physical restraint used on their child the same day or as soon as reasonably practicable.

### **3.3 Physical education and other activities requiring physical contact**

Where exercises or procedures need to be demonstrated, extreme caution should be used if the demonstration involves contact with pupils and, wherever possible, contact should be avoided. It is acknowledged that some staff, for example, those who teach PE and games or performing arts, or who offer music tuition, will, on occasions, have to initiate physical contact with pupils in order to support a pupil so they can perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument or assist them with an exercise. This should be done with the pupil's agreement.

Contact under these circumstances should be for the minimum time necessary to complete the activity and take place in an open environment. Staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the child.

### **3.4 One to one situations**

Staff working in one to one situations with children and young people are more vulnerable to allegations. Teachers and others should recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure the safety and security needs of both staff and pupils are met.

Pre-arranged meetings with pupils away from the School premises should not be permitted unless approval is obtained from their parent and the Headmaster or another senior colleague with delegated authority.

Staff should:

- avoid meetings with pupils in remote or secluded areas of the School;
- ensure there is visual access or an open door;
- inform other staff of the meeting beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by; and
- always report any concerns to a senior colleague.

Staff are reminded that it is a criminal offence for a person aged 18 or over to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual.

### **3.5 Intimate care**

All children have a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of an intimate nature is required (for example assisting with toileting or removing wet/soiled clothing). A care plan should be drawn up and agreed with parents for all children who require intimate care on a regular basis.

Children should be encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their own personal care as is practicable. When assistance is required, staff should ensure that another appropriate adult is in the vicinity and is aware of the task to be

undertaken. Further information is contained in the Prep School Intimate Care Policy, which is contained within the WPS Staff Handbook.

### **3.6 Transporting pupils**

It is inadvisable for a lone member of staff to give a lift in a car to a pupil. Wherever possible and practicable it is advisable that transport is undertaken other than in private vehicles, with at least one adult in addition to the driver acting as an escort. If there are exceptional circumstances that make unaccompanied transportation of pupils unavoidable, the journey should be made known to a senior member of staff e.g. matrons taking pupils to hospital / doctor's appointments.

### **3.7 Staff homes**

Pupils should not visit staff unaccompanied unless specifically agreed in writing by the DSL or the Headmaster, or the home has been designated by the School or regulatory body as a work place e.g. childminders, foster carers.

Staff must not allow pupils to stay in their homes overnight unless there is a friendship between a pupil and the child of a member of staff. In these cases, all such arrangements must be made with full parental consent. Where accommodation is provided by the School, the agreement of the Head of Boarding is also required.

### **3.8 Communication with pupils including the use of social media**

Staff should not give their personal mobile phone numbers or email addresses to pupils, nor should they communicate with them by text message or personal email. If they need to speak to a pupil by telephone, they should use one of the School's telephones and email using the School system. The group leader on all trips and visits involving an overnight stay may ask the pupils for their mobile numbers before allowing them out in small, unsupervised groups. The group leader will delete any record of pupils' mobile phone numbers at the end of the trip or visit and should ensure that pupils delete any staff numbers that they may have acquired during the trip. Staff should be aware that it is not appropriate to use social media to communicate directly with pupils.

## **4. Financial probity**

### **4.1 Self-employment, other employment or consultancy work**

The School understands that these types of opportunities can bring benefits to the School as well as to individual members of staff. All staff proposing to undertake a self-employment, other employment or consultancy work must secure the approval from the Director of HR and ensure that the proposed work is not in conflict or detrimental to the School's aims and objectives.

### **4.2 Intellectual property**

You are required to inform the School immediately of any invention, improvement, discovery, process, design or copyright which you create or obtain whilst in the School's employ or as a consequence of it. This will become the absolute property of the School except as otherwise

stated by statute. You irrevocably waive all moral rights under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 in any existing or future works created by you.

### **4.3 Financial regulations**

The School's financial regulations create a framework of financial controls within which the staff of the School must operate. These regulations are designed to protect the School and individual members of staff. Failure to comply with these regulations may lead to the loss of assets, significant delays in payments to employees and suppliers, and additional work for colleagues.

Employees must not accept gifts or hospitality that could give rise to a suspicion that they have a conflict of interest or have been influenced in a decision. Breaches of the regulations will normally be a serious disciplinary offence.

### **4.4 Conflicts of interest**

The highest standards of behaviour are also expected in all areas of school life, especially where individuals are in positions to make decisions that may have significant impact on others. In all such cases it is important that decisions are taken in a fair and balanced way that can withstand external scrutiny. Conflicts of interest should be identified so that individuals are not involved in decisions where their actions could be seen as biased.

### **4.5 Access to confidential information**

Although the School strives to conduct its business in an open fashion, there will be times when individuals, through their positions as members of committees, selectors/recruiters, line managers etc., become aware of confidential information, either about other individuals or in connection with the School's commercial/academic activities. Individuals should be aware of the need to keep such matters confidential and to respect the proper channels of communication for such information.

Staff members should never give absolute guarantees of confidentiality to pupils or adults wishing to tell them about something serious. They should guarantee only that they will pass on information to the minimum number of people who must be told in order to ensure that the proper action is taken to sort out the problem and that they will not tell anyone who does not have a clear need to know. They will also take whatever steps they can to protect the informing pupil or adult from any retaliation or unnecessary stress that might be feared after a disclosure has been made.

For specific guidance on the disclosure of any child protection related issues, please see the School's Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedures, available on the School website.

### **4.6 Use of equipment for non-work purposes**

The School will allow employees reasonable use of School equipment and facilities, provided that authorisation has been obtained from the Headmaster, that the use does not interfere or conflict with the work of the School, and that any costs are met by the individual.



#### **4.7 Private telephone calls**

Employees may use School telephone facilities to make occasional private calls for essential or emergency matters. Private international calls are not permitted without prior authorisation by the Director of Finance.

#### **4.8 Use of IT equipment, internet and social media**

Users of the School's IT and internet facilities must behave reasonably towards other users and in public areas, they must behave appropriately. Users who do not behave reasonably and appropriately may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with relevant procedures. In particular, employees must not use School facilities to create, display, produce, store, circulate or transmit obscene or pornographic material in any form or medium.

Employees must keep the use of School internet facilities for personal matters to a minimum and only during lunch breaks or after contracted hours.

### **5. Procedures**

#### **5.1 Raising matters of concern - Whistleblowing**

Employees have a right and a duty to raise concerns that they may have about breaches of the law or propriety by the School. This should normally be through their line manager but in circumstances where this is not appropriate they may approach the Director of HR in confidence. No individual who expresses their views in good faith and in line with this guidance will be penalised for doing so. For further information please refer to the School's Whistleblowing Policy, which is available on the School website

#### **5.2 Action if a pupil is missing**

Please refer to the WPS and Wellington Senior School Missing Person Procedures, available in each School Office, when a child is not collected on time, which also include the requirements for a day pupil, EYFS or boarder missing child in their content.

A record is kept by the School of any instances in which a pupil is missing from school without satisfactory permission and documentation, including the action taken and the pupil's explanation.

#### **5.3 Complaints**

The School's Complaints Procedure is available on the School website and copies can be sent to any parent on request. Any complaint arising from the implementation of this policy will be considered under the School's Complaints Procedure.

#### **5.4 Breaches of this code**

This code of conduct has been drawn up to provide a source of guidance to the School's employees. It is not a contractual document and can be amended at any time by the School. All staff must comply with both the provisions of this code and the School's policies and procedures, breaches of which will be taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Staff are also reminded that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. The School's primary duty is towards the welfare of pupils and its staff. Individuals are encouraged to take a common sense approach towards their conduct. Any staff member who has a concern or is unsure about an event that has arisen should discuss the matter with a senior colleague as soon as possible.