



**John Calvin School Albany**

A School with the Bible

# CODE OF CONDUCT

For staff, volunteers, trainees or practicum students,  
and board members

## Abstract

This Code of Conduct seeks to provide staff, volunteers, trainees or practicum students, contractors, Governing Body Board members and parents/guardians with a set of ethical principles guiding the standards of conduct at the John Calvin School, Albany

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# Introduction

## Preface

The John Calvin School Albany is committed to providing a child-safe environment by promoting practices which provide for the safety, wellbeing and welfare of our children and young people. The John Calvin School recognises the students as God's special covenant children and therefore expects all school community members including staff, volunteers, students, visitors and contractors to share this commitment.

School staff are in a unique position of responsibility and authority and must make every effort to uphold this commitment to child safety and wellbeing as well as detecting abuse and preventing it from occurring. They act "in loco parentis" and as such must act towards the children as faithful God-fearing parents would.

The vision of the John Calvin School is summarised in the following statement:

*The reformed school is a godly institution of learning for covenant children, to be educated for a life of love and service to God and their neighbour.*

The mission of the John Calvin School is:

- *The reformed school extends high nurture to the children of the covenant.*
- *The reformed school provides expert teaching to the children of the covenant.*
- *The reformed school calls for faithful response from children of the covenant.*

God's Word teaches that God has established a covenant with believers and their children. In that covenant God gives promises and sets obligations. He extends love, care and nurture, and He uses parents and others to be His instruments in extending it. Throughout the Scriptures, children and youth are held up as being precious in the eyes of God. They are to be subjects of patient teaching and nurture, to be instructed in His ways, and to be protected from influences of harm and evil.

God's Word further provides His law as the ultimate guide for how to live in His world. That law, the Ten Commandments, forbids any form of harm or abuse and as such provides protection to children and young people.

The relationship between staff and students at the John Calvin School is a special relationship. It is more than professional; it has a spiritual dimension, arising from the position of both staff and students as fellow believers and joint members of Christ's covenant community. We honour this special relationship as a gift from God and a great blessing for students, teachers, parents and other members of the school and church community and view it as an integral element of the nurture and instruction that takes place at school.

At the same time, it must be acknowledged that this relationship takes place between people who are sinners, and that this introduces elements of risk to the interactions that take place. The nature of this covenant relationship before the face of God provides an even stronger rationale for all interactions between staff and students to be fully transparent and open to scrutiny. A robust professional Code of Conduct is a necessary and valuable support in this regard, serving to protect both students, staff and volunteers as they live out their unique relationship before God and ensuring that the vision and mission of the John Calvin School is achieved.

## What is the Code of Conduct?

The Code of Conduct (the Code) is the statement on the expected behaviours of all members of the John Calvin School community in order to uphold the principles and values of the school, especially around professional conduct and child safety, as well as describing unacceptable behaviours. It sets a high standard of conduct for both physical and online environments but is not intended to provide a detailed and exhaustive list of what to do in every aspect of a staff member, volunteer or contractor's work. In addition, nothing in the Code should be taken to limit the circumstances in respect of which the school may take disciplinary action in response to the conduct of an employee.

This Code is consistent with the Child Safe Organisations Example Code of Conduct as found at [CSO Example Code of Conduct.pdf \(humanrights.gov.au\)](#).

## What underpins the Code of Conduct?

The authority of God's Word extends to every corner of life and hence underpinning *everything* we do at school is God's Holy Word as found in the Bible and as summarised the Creeds and the Three Forms of Unity.

In addition, the following documents further outline the foundations of the Code:

- Constitution of the Free Reformed School Association
- John Calvin School Staff Handbook
- Vision, Mission and Beliefs of Reformed Schooling
- School Policies and Procedures including but not limited to: Child Protection Policy (CP001), Physical Restraint (CP002), Access to Students (CP003), Privacy (G001), Disputes and Complaints (G005), Records Managements (G006), Bullying and Sexual Harassment (HR007), Grievance Framework (HR015), Usage of ICT (IT001), Social Media and ICT Usage (IT002), Work Health and Safety (PC004), Emergency Crisis and Critical Incidents (PC005), Bullying Prevention and Management (R001), Student Supervision (R002) and Behaviour Management and Discipline (R004).
- JCSA Statement of Faith
- The ten National Principles of Child Safe Organisations

## Who must comply with the Code of Conduct?

All paid and unpaid staff, as well as volunteers, interns, trainees or practicum students, governing body members and contractors are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people who engage with the School and therefore are expected to act in accordance with this Code of Conduct in their physical and online interactions with children and young people under the age of 18 years.

If you are responsible for engaging or managing external consultants, contractors or volunteers, it is your responsibility to make them aware of the School's expectations of conduct consistent with the School's Code of Conduct during the period of their engagement. They should be told that any conduct not consistent with the Code may result in the engagement of a contractor, consultant or volunteer being terminated.

## When does the Code of Conduct apply?

The obligations of the Code cover every moment of work (whether paid or unpaid) for the school as well as every interaction with students of the school. It may also apply at times when those covered by the Code are not performing work-related duties, such as during periods of leave and during private life. Even outside of school hours, employees should remain positive role models in their speech and conduct.

## Guidance on compliance with the Code of Conduct

Given the School's duty of care to its students, it is expected that all staff will act in the best interests of the students and that the spiritual and physical welfare and safety of students will be of paramount concern. All interactions therefore should be transparent and meet the principles of the Code and accord with the godliness and Biblical standards of those who profess to be Christians. All staff must be fully aware that their actions will be subject to appropriate scrutiny by other staff and by the community and they must be prepared to give an account of their behaviours to leadership when requested.

If staff members are unsure of what to do in a particular situation, they should discuss the matter with the Deputy Principal or Principal. If a breach of the Code inadvertently occurs, they are to bring it to the attention of Senior Management immediately.

Staff are responsible for their own actions and should avoid any conduct that a reasonable person might consider inappropriate. When considering their actions, staff could consider the following:

- How might others view this?
- Would I do or say this if a colleague were present?
- Would I condone my conduct in another adult?
- Could I defend my conduct to my manager or supervisor and the community if the situation became publicly known?
- What advice would my manager give me in this situation?
- Am I treating this student differently to others?
- Can I achieve the same outcome through a different interaction?
- Are my actions consistent with the spirit of the Code?

Ethical behaviour is not just a matter of following the letter of the law or sticking to the obligations of the Code of Conduct but also upholding the spirit of the law and this Code.

## What happens if I breach the Code of Conduct?

As staff and others working with students, you hold a position of trust, especially regarding children and young people, and therefore you are accountable and will be held accountable for your actions at all times.

The consequences of inappropriate behaviour and breaches of this Code will depend on the nature of the breach. Factors the School may consider when deciding what actions to take include:

- The seriousness of the breach.
- The likelihood of the breach occurring again.

- Whether the staff member has committed the breach more than once.
- The risk the breach poses to children and young people, fellow staff, the school community and/or any others.
- Whether the breach would be serious enough to warrant formal disciplinary action.

All alleged breaches of the Code will be subject to scrutiny involving the facts and the circumstances of the breach. If substantiated, the School may take action including management or remedial action, training, or disciplinary action ranging from a warning to termination of employment. The School reserves the right to determine in its entirety the response to any breach of this Code.

For alleged perpetrators of child sexual abuse:

- An employee, contractor or volunteer will be automatically suspended from work or other duties, if they are under any investigation (internally or by the police) for committing child sexual abuse.
- An employee, contractor or volunteer will be automatically terminated if found guilty of committing child sexual abuse following an investigation or trial.

When a complaint or allegation of child abuse arises, including sexual abuse, it must be reported to the Director General of the Department of Education as a Reportable Incident. If the allegation involves a teacher, it will also be reported to the Teacher Registration Board of Western Australia (TRBWA). In line with the Reportable Conduct Scheme, any allegation of, or conviction for, child abuse will be reported to the Ombudsman. Additionally, any potentially illegal activity will be referred to the Police, and Management will take appropriate actions, as necessary.

Note: inappropriate behaviour or improper conduct outside the school environment or outside working hours may still be considered breaches of the Code. Staff have a responsibility to act ethically and professionally at all times to uphold the values and reputation of the School.

Staff are to inform the Principal if they are charged with or convicted of a serious offence, as well as if they are subject to a Violence Restraining Order.

## What happens if I am aware of others breaching the Code of Conduct?

If you suspect the Code is being breached, the safety of students should be your first and immediate priority and appropriate actions taken to ensure their safety.

All staff are obligated to promptly report any concerns they have about the inappropriate actions of any other employee, volunteer or contractor that involves children or young people, and any breaches of the Code in others to the Deputy or Principal. Where the Deputy breaches the Code, this should be reported to the Principal and where the Principal breaches the Code, this should be reported to the Chair of the School Committee. Where the behaviour falls under Mandatory Reporting obligations, the appropriate actions should be followed (see Child Protection policy CP001).

All staff reporting breaches to the Code are protected from retaliation, victimisation, harassment and/or other consequences if they acted in good faith (see Whistleblower Policy HR014).

# Principles

## Principle 1 – Employee responsibilities

*Bondservants, obey in all things your master's according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men. Colossians 3:22*

School staff and volunteers are expected to behave responsibly and professionally at all times.

As an employee, you should be familiar with and comply with the School's policies and procedures. These are available on Sentral and are regularly reviewed in staff meetings. If you are uncertain about the scope or content of a policy with which you must comply, or any legal obligations to which you are subject, you should seek clarification from the Deputy Principal or Principal. You should also be familiar with the legislation under which you are employed as this may specify requirements with which you need to comply.

Examples of compliance include but are not limited to:

- Recognise that your decisions and behaviour are opportunities for students and others to see Biblical values in action and how faith integrates with life.
- Ensure that your conduct, whether during or outside working hours, is consistent with the ethos of the school.
- Always actively and openly support the School's mission and values and promote the School in a positive manner when interacting with students, parents, and members of the wider community.
- Perform your duties to the best of your ability and be accountable for your performance.
- Comply with lawful instructions and directions given by your supervisor.
- Be punctual to school, professional development, meetings, class and yard duties as outlined in the Staff Handbook and as directed by your supervisor.
- Work collaboratively with your colleagues.
- Contribute, where appropriate, to the School's policies, discussions, learning and reviews about child safety and wellbeing.
- Use school property and resources responsibly and for the purposes of the School.
- Seek suitable opportunities to improve your knowledge and skills.
- Dress in a professional manner that is appropriate to your role (see Staff Dress policy HR003).
- Hold a current Working With Children Check Card.
- Complaints, disputes and grievances are to be dealt with in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Disputes and Complaints policy (G005) and Grievance Framework (HR015).
- Report any concerns that you have about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of a child or young person. Do not ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child harm or abuse.
- Report all suspected or disclosed child harm or abuse as required by Children and Community Services Act (2004) and by the School's Child Protection Policy and Procedure (CP001)
  - All teachers are required by law to make a mandatory report of child sexual abuse when a belief, based on reasonable grounds, is formed that abuse is occurring or has occurred. Staff or volunteers who are not teachers and not mandatory reporters must report all forms of abuse to the Principal. (Reports of abuse involving the Principal must be reported to the Chair of the School's Governing Body.) The Principal may then be required to file a Mandatory Report, submit a Reportable Incident Report to the Director

General, and, in accordance with the Reportable Conduct Scheme, notify the Ombudsman.

- Sexual abuse that occurred before 1 January 2009 where the former student is over 18 years of age is not considered a mandatory report but must be reported to the Principal. The Principal will need to submit a Reportable Incident Report to the Director General of the Department of Education and may also be required to notify the TRBWA.

Matters that you are required to report to the Principal:

- If you are charged with or convicted of a serious offence or if you are subject to a Violence Restraining Order.
- If you become aware of a serious crime committed by another staff member.
- Any concerns about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of a child or young person.
- Any concerns about the inappropriate actions of any other employee, volunteer or contractor that involves children and young people.
- Any concerns you may have about another employee, volunteer or contractor engaging in “reportable conduct” or any allegation of “reportable conduct” or if you become aware that an employee, volunteer or contractor has been charged with or convicted of an offence (including a finding of guilt without the court proceeding to a conviction) involving “reportable conduct” or if you become the subject of allegations of “reportable conduct” whether or not they relate to your employment at school.

Note: “reportable conduct” under the Reportable Conduct Scheme requires the School to report the following matters to the Ombudsman WA and to investigate conduct including:

- Sexual offences.
- Sexual misconduct.
- Physical assault.
- Other prescribed offences.
- Significant neglect of a child; and
- Any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child.



## Principle 2 – Good teaching practice

*And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children. Deuteronomy 6:6-7*

Teachers at the John Calvin School are expected to provide expert teaching to children of the covenant. They are to recognise the diversity of learners in their care and make every effort to help all students, so they have every chance of succeeding. Teachers are to strive to continually improve their practice as outlined in the AITSL Professional Standards for Teachers.

Examples of compliance include, but are not limited to:

- Recognise and respect that all students are precious in the eyes of the LORD.
- Recognise that parents are the first educators of their children who promised to educate their children in the fear of the Lord at their baptism and that you are assisting the parents in that.
- Prepare and provide teaching and learning programs that meet the curriculum standards and requirements and Biblical and Reformed perspectives and values.
- Strive for excellence in your teaching, engaging in practice that will support the optimal learning of all students.
- Be well prepared and manage the learning and care of students.
- Set high standards for yourself and your students.
- Implement strategies negotiated and outlined in individual student plans.
- Maintain regular communication with your students' parents and keep parents informed of issues related to their children and seek parent advice about their children.
- Respond promptly and appropriately to parent and student queries.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues.
- Refuse and prohibit the use of corporal and/or degrading punishment at school.

## Principle 3 – Respect for others

*Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

*Philippians 2:4-5*

The School expects staff to treat each other with respect and courtesy and to reflect the love the Lord has shown us. Therefore, all staff are expected to be approachable, respectful, honest, fair, courteous and prompt in dealing with other people, including students, parents, other employees, members of the Association and members of the community.

Staff who work with students have a special responsibility in presenting themselves as appropriate role models for those students. Teachers need to treat their students with courtesy and respect and provide an environment that encourages students to do the same. Remember that this can have a profoundly positive influence on a student's personal and social and spiritual development.

Examples of compliance include, but are not limited to:

- Establish a positive relationship with students, parents and colleagues as a basis for promoting student learning and positive school culture.
- School staff must treat all colleagues and others courteously and fairly, giving them the opportunity to express their views on work-related issues, making allowances for differences in working style, respecting their work spaces and avoiding displaying or distributing material, or using language that may cause offence.
- Treat the opinions of parents and school staff about the education and wellbeing of students with respect and dignity, even if you do not agree with it or believe it is misinformed or misguided.
- Do not allow your opinion about the behaviour of parents to prevent you from engaging openly and honestly with them about their child's education.
- 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.
- Do not use rude or insulting behaviour, including verbal and non-verbal aggression, or abusive, threatening, intimidating or derogatory language or behaviour including physical abuse, nor use ICT including email, mobiles and social media for such behaviour.
- Do not unlawfully discriminate against, harass or bully any employee, student, volunteer, contractor or parent (see Bullying and Sexual Harassment policy HR007). Unlawful harassment or discrimination may constitute an offence under the Equal Opportunity Act 1984 or federal industrial or discrimination legislation. Bullying may be a breach of your obligations under work health and safety legislation or your duty of care at common law.
  - If you believe you are being unlawfully discriminated against, harassed or bullied, ask the person to stop, make it clear you find the behaviour uncomfortable or unwelcome and/or report this to the Deputy Principal or Principal to seek their support and guidance.
- Manage conflict through honest mediation, always seeking resolution of the issue and restoring relationships with others (see the Disputes and Complaints policy G005 and Grievance Framework HR015 for guidance).

Evidence of compliance specific to students include, but are not limited to:

- Behave respectfully, courteously and ethically towards children and their families.
- Create an environment that promotes and enables children's participation and involve children and young people in making decisions about activities, policies and processes that concern them wherever possible.
- Take care at all times when speaking with students to use appropriate language. You must always treat all students with respect and without favouritism. There is no place for sarcasm, derogatory remarks, inappropriate familiarity or offensive comments.
- Listen and respond to the views and concerns of children and young people, particularly if they communicate (verbally or non-verbally) that they do not feel safe or well.
- Consider the diverse backgrounds, cultures and needs of children and young people. Do not unlawfully discriminate against any child or their family members.

## Principle 4 – Maintain professional relationships between employees and students

*Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin [or to stumble], it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea... See that you do not despise one of these little ones. Matthew 18:5-6, 10*

The Reformed School extends high nurture to children of the covenant. This means that staff are expected to always behave in a godly way that promotes the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people and are not to engage in any activity that is likely to physically, sexually or emotionally harm a child. You must actively seek to prevent harm to children and young people and to support those who have been harmed.

While not all staff are required to manage and supervise students, it is important that everyone understand and observe the School's child protection policies (see especially Child Protection policy CP001).

The detection and prevention of grooming behaviour is a critical component of complying with this principle (see Appendix 1 "Grooming Behaviour" for further information).

### *Supervision of students*

Where possible, avoid being alone with students. This can be achieved by taking another student or by ensuring that other adults are present.

Examples of compliance include, but are not limited to:

- Do not be alone in an enclosed space with a student. Where you are left with the responsibility of a single student you should ensure that this is in an open space in view of others. Where this is not possible or practicable you should discuss this with the Deputy Principal or Principal.
  - Should you need to have a private conversation with a student, consider the time and venue carefully. If possible, leave the door open. Do not locate yourself between the student and the door.
- Do not drive a student in your car unless you have specific permission from the Deputy Principal or Principal and written permission from the parent to do so. Where possible, have the student/s sit in the back seat.
  - In the event of an emergency, use your discretion but report the matter to your supervisor.

### *Physical contact with students*

Consider carefully whether physical contact with students is necessary, and if so, how it should be conducted.

Examples of compliance include, but are not limited to:

- You must not impose any form of corporal or demeaning punishment on a student in the course of your professional duties. Refer to the Behaviour Management and Discipline policy (R004).
- When physical contact with a student is a necessary part of the teaching/learning experience you must exercise caution to ensure that the contact is appropriate and acceptable. You should seek consent from the student before making contact or ask for a volunteer.

- When physical contact with a student is not a necessary part of the teaching/learning program you must exercise caution to ensure that the contact is age appropriate and acceptable. Younger students (K-2) may need the comfort, encouragement and assurance of physical contact (e.g. pat of the shoulder, quick hug) in certain circumstances.
  - Hugs delivered side-to-side are more appropriate than front-to-front or front-to-back.
- When congratulating a student, a handshake, pat on the shoulder or brief side-to-side hug are acceptable as long as the student is comfortable with this action. Kissing of students is not acceptable.
- Assisting with toileting needs of younger students needs to be done with caution. Have students do the direct actions as much as possible by themselves. For students with a disability the management of toileting needs should be included in the student's Documented Plan, which is to be signed by the parents.
- Assessing and assisting injured students may require physical contact. Always advise the student of what you are doing and, if conscious, seek their consent.
- At times it may be necessary to use physical restraint for the safety of the student or other students. This needs to be performed within the guidelines of the Physical Restraint Policy (CP002).

### *Relationships with students*

All relationships between School staff and students are to be professional.

Examples of compliance include, but are not limited to:

- You must not have a romantic or sexual relationship with a student. It is irrelevant whether the relationship is homosexual or heterosexual, consensual or non-consensual or condoned by parents or caregivers.
  - The law prohibits sexual relations with a person under the age of consent (16 years); and
  - The law prohibits sexual relations between a teacher and his or her student under the age of 18 years.
- You must not develop a relationship with any student that is or can be interpreted as having a personal rather than a professional interest in a student. An overly familiar relationship with any student you are responsible for teaching, advising, assessing or for whom you provide pastoral, or wellbeing support raises serious questions of conflict of interest, trust, dependency and of equality of treatment. Such relationships may also have a negative impact on the teaching and learning environment for other students and colleagues and may carry a serious threat to the school's ethos.
- You may, as part of your pastoral care role, hold discussions with students. However, you must be cautious about making personal comments about a student or asking questions that probe your own or a student's sexuality or relationships. You must not hold conversations with a student of an intimately personal nature where you disclose information about yourself.
- You must not engage in tutoring or coaching students from the school without express permission from the Principal.
- If you consider that a student is being overly familiar, seeking to establish a personal relationship with you or has developed a "crush" on you, you should report your concerns to the Deputy Principal or Principal as soon as possible so that a plan can be developed to manage the situation effectively and sensitively.
- You must not arrange personal contact, including online contact with children for a purpose unrelated to school activities.

- You must not invite students to join your personal electronic social media site or accept students' invitation to join their site.
- Social networking sites which are established for educational purposes are to be transparent to colleagues and students and may only operate with the express permission of the Principal.
- You must not give gifts to students. You should also carefully consider your position before accepting a gift from a student or parent (see Principle 10 – Declaring gifts, benefits and bribes).
- Be aware of, and sensitive to, children with culturally diverse or indigenous backgrounds and cultural practices that may influence the interpretation of your behaviour.

## Principle 5 – Duty of care

*The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings. Psalm 36:7*

School staff have a duty of care to students in their charge and to take all reasonable steps to protect them from risks of harm that can reasonably be predicted. Preventative measures should be taken against risks from known hazards and foreseeable risk situations. The standard of care that is required, such as the degree of supervision, needs to be commensurate with the students' maturity and ability.

Duty of care to students applies during all activities and functions conducted and arranged by the school. The risks associated with any activity needs to be assessed and managed before the activity is undertaken.

You should ensure that you are familiar with the School's Student Supervision (R002) Camps and Excursions (I002), Emergency Crisis and Critical Incident (PC005) and Risk Management (PC008) policies.

Examples of compliance include, but are not limited to:

- Do not leave students unsupervised either in our outside class. Be punctual to class.
- Be prompt to yard duty and actively supervise your designated area, being vigilant and moving around.
- Remain with students at after-school activities until all students have been collected.
- Be alert to bullying and any kind of discriminatory behaviour and respond promptly. See the School's Bullying Prevention and Management policy (R001) for further details.
- Be familiar with the School's evacuation and/or lock down procedures (see Emergency, Crisis and Critical Incident policy PC005).
- Attend to ill or injured students. Seek assistance from staff members with additional qualifications where necessary.
- Only administer medication to students in line with the School's policy (H011).
- Ensure grounds, premises and equipment are safe for students to use.

## Principle 6 – Work health and safety

*The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it. Proverbs 27:12*

*My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. Psalm 121:2-3*

School staff have a responsibility under work health and safety legislation to take care of their own health and safety at work. You must ensure that your activities do not place your own or other's safety at risk, including colleagues, students or other persons you come into contact with at work.

Considerations of safety relates to both physical and psychological wellbeing of individuals.

You should ensure that you are familiar with the School's Work Health and Safety policy (PC004), especially any safety measures that apply to your area of work.

Examples of compliance include, but are not limited to:

- Do not expose yourself, students or anyone else at your workplace to any risk or hazard.
- Maintain your workplace in a safe and healthy manner.
- Use equipment in accordance with Safe Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Safe Work Methods (SWMs) and wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- Immediately report any workplace hazards, incidents, accidents or near misses to the Safety representative and/or Deputy Principal or Principal and fill out the appropriate reporting form (Issue Tracking on Sentral for hazards; Wellbeing on Sentral for student incidents, accidents or near misses and Incident Report form – Appendix 7 PC005 – for staff incidents, accidents or near misses).
- Look out for bullying, harassment or any other form of discriminatory behaviour and report incidents to the Deputy Principal or Principal.
- Do not engage in any retaliation, victimisation or bullying or harassment in any form.



## Principle 7 – Appropriate use of electronic communication and social networking sites

*Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. Ephesians 4:29*

The school provides electronic communication facilities (e.g. laptops, email) for its students and staff for educational or administrative purposes. The fast and permanent nature of electronic communication requires staff to be particularly vigilant with their own communications and that of their students. Remember that once a document or image has been sent there may be no way to recall it, and it may exist permanently. Staff must ensure that their use of ICT and Social Media is appropriate and does not violate legal or biblical principles, jeopardise integrity and security or harm the reputation of others or the school.

You should ensure that you are familiar with the School's Usage of ICT (IT001) and Social Media and ICT Usage (IT002) policies.

Examples of compliance include, but are not limited to:

- Use appropriate and professional language in electronic messages.
- Do not send messages that are harassing, discriminatory, defamatory, threatening, abusive or obscene.
- The transmission, storage, promotion, or display of offensive, obscene, defamatory, or harassing material is strictly forbidden.
- You must never use the School's networks to view, upload, download or circulate any of the following materials:
  - Sexually related or pornographic messages or material.
  - Violent or hate-related messages or material.
  - Racist or other offensive messages aimed at a particular group or individual.
  - Malicious, libellous, or slanderous messages or material; or
  - Subversive or other messages related to illegal activities.
- Do not invite students to your social networking sites or accept invitations to theirs.
- Do not use social networking sites to email or contact students.
- Do not post images that include students on social media.
- Do not post images that include staff on social media without their permission.
- Report any situations where you become aware of inappropriate use of electronic communication and social networking sites.
- Be aware that if an issue in an email becomes the subject of a legal dispute, then those emails would be discoverable: that is, the court and all parties to the dispute would be entitled to see them.

## Principle 8 – Use of alcohol, drugs or tobacco

*And do not get drunk with wine, which is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit. Ephesians 5:18*

Maintaining a safe work environment includes ensuring that your capacity to perform your duties is not impaired by the use of alcohol or drugs and that the use of such substances does not put at risk your or any other person's health and safety.

Examples of compliance include but are not limited to:

### *General:*

- You must not attend work while under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or non-prescribed and/or restricted substances.
- Do not consume alcohol, illegal drugs or non-prescribed and/or restricted substances while at work.
- Take action to resolve any alcohol or drug-related issues you have.
- Notify the Deputy Principal or Principal if you are aware that your work conduct could be adversely affected as a result of the effect of a prescribed drug.
- Consult with the Deputy Principal or Principal if you are concerned about working with other employees who may be affected by drugs or alcohol.

### *Drugs:*

- You must not have illegal drugs in your possession while at work. Any illegal drugs found on school property or in the possession of a person on school property may result in disciplinary action including termination of your employment, referral to the Police and/or TRBWA.
- You must not give students or other employees illegal drugs or restricted substances or encourage or condone their use.
- Administering of prescription or non-prescription drugs to students must be in line with the Administration of Medicine policy (H011).

### *Alcohol:*

- You must not take alcohol to school or consume it during work hours or at any school function at any time school students are present, including events conducted outside school premises or outside school hours unless expressly permitted to do so by the Principal. (A school function is any occasion organised by the School and/or in the School's name.)
- Alcohol consumption by all persons attending camps or excursions is expressly forbidden.
- You must not purchase alcohol for, or give alcohol to, any school student (or to any other person under the age of 18 years) nor encourage or condone the use of alcohol by students of any age during educational activities.

### *Tobacco:*

- You must not smoke or vape or permit smoking or vaping in any school buildings, enclosed area or on school grounds, including ovals, cars and car parks.
- You must not smoke or vape at any school function even if it is not on the school premises or not in school hours. This includes during excursions, tours or camps.
- You must not give or purchase any tobacco products or vapes to/for any school student.

## Principle 9 – Identifying and managing conflicts of interest

*No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. Matthew 6:24*

Private interests can, or have the potential to, influence a person's capacity to perform their duties and in turn compromise their integrity and that of the school.

A conflict of interest can involve:

- Pecuniary interests, i.e. financial gain or loss or other material benefits.
- Non-pecuniary interests, i.e. favours, personal relationships and associations.

Conflicts of interest also include:

- The interests of members of your immediate family or relatives (where these interests are known).
- The interests of your own business partners or associates, or those of your workplace.
- The interests of friends.
- Working in a second job is a situation where a conflict of interest may arise.

Examples of compliance include but are not limited to:

- You must not act in conflict with the School's best interests.
- When faced with a situation in which you may have a conflict of interests, you should report this to the Deputy Principal or Principal.
- You must report to the Deputy Principal or Principal any situations where a superior or colleague who has an identified conflict is, or may be perceived to be, influencing your decision.

## Principle 10 – Declaring gifts, benefits or bribes

*You shall not pervert justice. You shall not show partiality, and you shall not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the cause of the righteous. Deuteronomy 16:19*

As an employee, you may be offered a gift or benefit as an act of gratitude. Accepting gifts and other benefits has the potential to compromise your position by creating a sense of obligation and undermining your impartiality. Substantial gifts can be seen as bribes. You must not create the impression that any person or organisation is influencing the School or the decisions or actions of any of its employees. However, there are some circumstances when to refuse a gift would be perceived as rude, insulting or hurtful. You are expected to exercise sound judgment when deciding whether to accept a gift or benefit.

Examples of compliance include but are not limited to:

- If you are offered a bribe (i.e. anything given in order to persuade you to act immorally and improperly) you must refuse it, explain why it is not appropriate and report it to the Principal as soon as possible.
- If offered a gift or benefit, consider the value and purpose of it before making any decision about accepting it. A gift that is of more than nominal value (e.g. \$100) must not become personal property. You should either politely refuse it or advise the contributor that you will accept it on behalf of the School.
- When such a gift is accepted, you must advise the Principal who will determine how it will be treated and make a record of its receipt. Depending on the nature and value of the gift, it may be appropriate to record the gift in the asset register as a donation.
- Sometimes employees might, in the course of their work, win a prize of significant monetary value. Such prizes are usually considered the property of the School. If you win such a prize, you should advise the Principal who will determine how the prize will be treated and recorded.

## Principle 11 – Communication and confidentiality

*Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a thing covered. Proverbs 11:13*

Teachers are encouraged to communicate with parents about their children. You should be mindful of confidentiality when in discussions with parents. You cannot always give a guarantee of confidentiality, especially if it concerns mandatory reporting.

School employees should be aware that there are strong legal requirements around the collection, release and privacy of information. Before asking for or releasing information, staff need to assure themselves that they are acting in a legal manner. If unsure, discuss the matter with the Deputy Principal or Principal (see Privacy Policy G001 and Records Management Policy G006).

Examples of compliance include but are not limited to:

- Respect the privacy of others.
- You must only use confidential information for the work-related purpose it was intended.
- You must ensure that any sensitive, personal or confidential information should only be provided to people who are authorised to have access to it and cannot be accessed by unauthorised people.
- Unless authorised to do so by legislation, you must not disclose or use any confidential information without the express permission of the Principal.
- Do not disclose personal information about another staff member to students or parents or discuss their work performance except if authorized by the Principal in the context of grievance resolution.
- You should always exercise caution and sound judgment in discussing the personal information of students, parents, staff and other people with other school employees.
  - Normally information should be limited to those who need to know in order to conduct their duties, or to those who can assist in carrying out the School's work due to their expertise.
- All matters discussed in staff meetings and staff memos are to be treated as confidential and not discussed with students, parents, members of the school community or the public.
- The media should not be given access to students or entry to the School without the express permission of the Principal. You should not make any comments to the media about the school, students or parents without the express permission of the Principal.

## Principle 12 – Record keeping

*Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. 1 Corinthians 4:2*

All employees have a responsibility to create and securely maintain full, accurate and honest records of their activities, decisions, and other business transactions. These records should be captured or stored in the JCSA record systems such as Sentral or Student Profiles or other arrangements.

Examples of compliance include but are not limited to:

- You must not destroy or remove records without appropriate authority (see Records Management policy G006).
- Supervisors have a responsibility to ensure that the employees reporting to them comply with their records management obligations.
- Employees responsible for assessing and recording marks for students' work must do so accurately, fairly and in a manner that is consistent with the relevant policy and requirements of the School (see Assessment and Reporting policy I004).

## Principle 13 – Copyright and intellectual property

*You shall not steal. Exodus 20:15*

When creating material, you need to ensure that the intellectual property rights of others are not infringed, and that information is recorded about any third-party copyright/other rights included in the materials.

If you develop material that relates to your employment with the School, the copyright in that material will belong to the School. This may apply even to material developed in your own time and/or at home.

Examples of compliance include but are not limited to:

- Do not give away or assign the School's intellectual property without the approval of the Principal.
- Do not use the School's intellectual property (including copyright) for private purposes without obtaining written permission from the Principal.
- Advice relating to sharing or licensing the School's intellectual property should be sought from the Principal.

# Acknowledgement

**By signing this acknowledgement, you are agreeing to abide by this Code of Conduct to the best of your ability at all times and acknowledge that you understand that breaches of this Code of Conduct will be taken seriously and may lead to disciplinary action or result in termination of your employment.**

I \_\_\_\_\_ have read, understood and agreed to comply with the terms of this Code of Conduct.

_____	_____
<b>Employee/Volunteer Signature</b>	<b>Dated</b>
_____	_____
<b>Principal Signature</b>	<b>Dated</b>

The original will be kept on file (and a signed copy passed on to the employee if requested)



# Appendix

## Understanding grooming behaviour

Grooming in a child protection context refers to deliberate actions undertaken to engage in sexual activity with a child. It differs from sexual abuse in that is primarily a preparatory activity occurring before abuse occurs but is continued during and after the abuse to ensure the safety of the groomer.

Grooming is a subtle, gradual and escalating process of building trust with a child and those around the child, both children and adults, with the express purpose of the sexual gratification of the perpetrator. This generally involves engaging in sexual activity with the child. It is deliberate and purposeful and occurs both before and after the abuse. Abusers may groom children and supporting adults for weeks, months, or even years before any sexual abuse actually takes place. The grooming may occur in person, via cyber media and/or other forms of communication.

A committed offender will employ grooming behaviour from an early stage and because it is so subtle and gradual the child may not even be aware that the actual abuse, when it occurs, is wrong or harmful. The grooming occurs with the child but also with those supporting networks around the child which might normally act as a deterrent or protective element. The perpetrator will invest significant energy and patience to minimise the risk of detection and exposure.

The groomer will employ manipulation, guilt, shame, bribery, coercion or exploit low self-esteem to psychologically manipulate the child. As a result, the child becomes increasingly dependent on the groomer and increasingly alienated from protective elements including possible sources to disclose to. This is a deliberate strategy employed to maintain the secrecy of the abuse and to ensure the silence of the child.

The groomer will exploit any vulnerabilities of the protective elements around the child, including parent and family circumstances and school systemic weaknesses. Groomers are very adept at identifying anomalies, boundary ambiguities and any lack of systemic awareness, and then using them to deflect attention from their own actions and intentions.

While distinguishing between appropriate intent and inappropriate intent is often difficult, particularly for a child, it is essential that schools have very clear expectations and boundaries around employee behaviours so that there can be rigorous accountability when dealing with staff.

Schools must work to improve their knowledge and understanding in this area, so they are able to challenge existing practice, recognise unprofessional behaviour and build a shared understanding of what a safe school is.

Grooming behaviour with children may include, but is not limited to:

- Selecting and befriending a child and gaining his or her trust and then exploiting the child's vulnerabilities.
- Testing a child's boundaries by telling inappropriate jokes, roughhousing, backrubs, tickling, or sexual games.
- Moving from non-sexual touching to "accidental" sexual touching. This typically happens during play so the child may not even identify it as purposeful, inappropriate touching. It is often done slowly so the child is gradually desensitised to the touch.

- Manipulating the child to not tell anyone about what is happening. The abuser may use a child's fear, embarrassment, or guilt about what has happened. Sometimes the abuser uses bribery, threats or coercion.
- Causing the child to feel responsible for the abuse. Children may not notice or may become confused as the contact becomes increasingly intimate and sexual.

Grooming behaviour with adolescents may include additional strategies, such as:

- Identifying with the adolescent. The abuser may appear to be the only one who understands him/her.
- Displaying common interests in sports, music, video games, television shows, etc.
- Recognising and filling the adolescent's need for affection and attention.
- Giving gifts or special privileges to the adolescent.
- Allowing or encouraging the adolescent to break rules (e.g. smoking, drinking, using drugs, viewing pornography).
- Communicating with the adolescent outside of the person's role (e.g. teacher or coach). This could include emailing or texting the teen without the parents' knowledge.

In addition to grooming the child, the groomer will use deflection strategies to remain unchallenged. Some of these strategies may include where the perpetrator:

- Promotes self and creates a reputation as caring, child-loving, competent, available, trustworthy, and/or truthful.
- Raises doubts about the motives, mental health, reliability of the child or anyone else who might approach support services with allegations.
- Foster dependency as someone the family can rely on.
- Positively represents the child to others so they can be perceived as someone who would never harm the child.

### *Preventing or interrupting the grooming process*

Schools unfortunately provide a vast array of opportunities for groomers to enact the grooming process. Some abusers have a particular preference for children within particular age bands and some studies have shown that groomers will take child focused employment primarily to get access to a particular cohort of children.

Within a school context, holding all staff members accountable to the school Code of Conduct and challenging boundary crossings and violations is one of the most effective strategies to combat grooming behaviour.

It is imperative that staff report all breaches of the Code of Conduct to the Deputy Principal or Principal. In the event of a report, all staff and volunteers will abide by the principles and requirements of the Whistleblower Policy (HR014).

## Definitions

**Bullying** – as defined in the *Guide to the Registration Standards and Other Requirements for Non-Government Schools* is “an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical, and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons.

Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Single incidents and conflicts or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying. However, these conflicts still need to be addressed and resolved.”

**Child abuse** – as defined in the *Guide to the Registration Standards* is “four forms of child abuse are covered by WA law and by the Department of Communities:

1. *Physical abuse* occurs when a child is severely and/or persistently hurt or injured by an adult or caregiver.
2. *Sexual abuse* occurs when a child is exposed to, or involved in, sexual activity that is inappropriate to the child’s age and developmental level, and includes sexual behaviour in circumstances where:
  - a. The child is subject to bribery, coercion, a threat, exploitation or violence.
  - b. The child has less power than another person involved in the behaviour; or
  - c. There is a significant disparity in the developmental function or maturity of the child and another person involved in the behaviour.
3. *Emotional abuse* includes:
  - a. Psychological abuse; and
  - b. Being exposed to an act of family and domestic violence.
4. *Neglect* is when children do not receive adequate food or shelter, medical treatment, supervision, care or nurturance to such an extent that their development is damaged, or they are injured. Neglect may be acute, episodic, or chronic.

**Corporal punishment** – as defined in the *Guide to the Registration Standards* is “any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light; typically involving hitting a child with the hand or with an implement; can also include, for example, forcing the child to stay in an uncomfortable position. It does not include the use of reasonable physical restraint to protect the child or others from harm.”

**Degrading punishment** – as defined in the *Guide to the Registration Standards* is “any punishment which is incompatible with respect for human dignity, including corporal punishment and non-physical punishment which belittles, humiliates, denigrates, scapegoats, threatens, scares or ridicules the child.”

**Harassment** – behaviour that targets an individual or group and humiliates, intimidates, or creates a hostile environment.

Harassment may be an ongoing pattern of behaviour, or it may be a single act. It may be directed randomly or towards the same person/s. It may be intentional or unintentional.

# References

Sources used in writing this Code of Conduct include:

- AISWA Policies and Procedures Guidelines for Schools
- Child Safe Organisations Example Code of Conduct
- FRSA Code of Conduct
- Kennedy Baptist College Staff Code of Conduct
- ACT Government Education Code of Conduct for School Based Staff
- Catholic College Bunbury Staff Code of Conduct