

# Port School Code of Conduct

## Policy Statement

The Port School Code of Conduct sets out general standards of behaviour expected of all staff in their physical and online interactions with children and young people under the age of 18 years old. It places an obligation on all members to take responsibility for their own conduct, and to work with colleagues cooperatively to achieve a consultative and collaborative community, where children are safe, and people are happy and proud to work. It is a major component in the School's provision of a child-safe environment. Port School explicitly forbids any form of child abuse, corporal punishment or other degrading punishment, as defined in this document.

## Background

Port School is committed to providing a child-safe environment, safeguarding all students and promoting practices that provide for the safety, wellbeing and welfare of young people. Port School expects all employees, governing body members, practicum students, regular volunteers, students, visitors and contractors to share this commitment (collectively referred to as 'staff' in this document).

This Code of Conduct will not only continue to create a safe environment for young people, it will also reduce the risk that staff will be unjustly accused of unprofessional or abusive conduct.

The Port School Values underpin our commitment to students and all school community members:

- Empowerment** To enable each other to experience thoughts and feelings as valid and important.
- Diversity** To welcome, nurture and promote each other's differences.
- Growth** To keep the educational development and wellbeing of people at the centre of what we do.
- Community** To provide a safe and secure environment that promotes contribution, ownership and mutual respect.

## 1. Principles of the Code of Conduct

Port School has a duty of care to its students, and the expectation and understanding is that all staff and students will act in the best interests of the students, and that the welfare and safety of students will be of the utmost concern. Staff should model the healthiest and safest possible relationship a child could engage in.

All interactions should therefore be transparent and meet the principles of the School Code of Conduct.

Staff are expected to:

- a. Conduct themselves, both personally and professionally, in a manner that upholds the Values and reputation of the School.
- b. Comply with school policies and procedures.
- c. Act ethically and responsibly.
- d. Be accountable for their actions.

## 2. What is Expected of You?

All staff are expected to:

- a. Be familiar with the School's policies and procedures and be able to comply with them.
- b. Be familiar with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- c. Be familiar with the legislation under which you are employed, as this may specify requirements with which you need to comply.
- d. Perform duties to your best ability and be accountable for your performance.
- e. Follow reasonable instructions and comply with lawful directions.
- f. Carry out duties in a professional, competent and conscientious manner, while seeking suitable opportunities to improve knowledge and skills, including participation in relevant professional development.
- g. Act honestly and in good faith in fulfilling your duties.

- h. Demonstrate Port School Values in dealing with colleagues, students, parents, members of the School community and the public and ensure that your conduct, whether during or outside working hours, is consistent with the Values and does not damage the reputation of the School.
- i. Work collaboratively with colleagues.
- j. Participate in professional learning on the School Code of Conduct, mandatory reporting and other related policies and procedures annually.
- k. Participate in professional learning on the recognition of grooming and child abuse and appropriate prevention practices and strategies annually.

## 2. What Happens if You Breach the Code of Conduct?

All staff hold a position of trust and are accountable for their actions.

All alleged breaches of the School Code of Conduct will be investigated and, if substantiated, you may be warned, suspended or have your employment terminated. If the breach is considered to have involved grooming, the School is obliged to report this to the Director General of the Department of Education as a reportable incident. Any potentially illegal activity will be reported to the Police, and the School will take appropriate actions.

- a. The consequences of inappropriate behaviour and breaches of this Code will depend on the nature of the breach.
- b. You are required to report all *objectively observable behaviour* that breaches or is suspected of breaching the Code (other than those subject to mandatory reporting obligations) to the Principal or the Chair of the School's governing Board. If the prohibited behaviour is by the Principal, then it should be reported to the Chair of the governing Board.
- c. Factors that may be considered when deciding what action to take include:
  - i. The seriousness of the breach.
  - ii. The likelihood of the breach occurring again.
  - iii. Whether the staff member has committed the breach more than once.
  - iv. The risk the breach poses to staff, students or any others; and whether the breach would be serious enough to warrant formal disciplinary action.
- d. Actions that may be taken by the School following a breach of the Code may include management or remedial action, training or disciplinary action, ranging from a warning to termination of employment (if applicable). The School reserves the right to determine the response to any breach of this Code. If a formal warning is issued to a staff member, or their employment is terminated as a result of a breach that is suspected to have involved grooming, this must be notified as a reportable incident to the Director General of the Department of Education.

Nothing in this Code should be taken to limit the circumstances in which the School may take disciplinary action in respect of an employee. The School reserves the right to update this Code at any time.

## 3. What do You do if You see someone Breach the Code of Conduct?

- a. Act to prioritise the best interests of children.
- b. Take prompt actions to ensure that the children are safe.
- c. Promptly report any concerns to the Principal, or if the allegation involves the Principal, to the Chair of the School Board.
- d. Follow the School's procedure for reporting suspected breaches of the School Code of Conduct.
- e. Comply, if relevant, with the requirements of mandatory reporting.

Port School will not tolerate victimisation or other adverse consequences that are directed towards any person who makes such reports in good faith.

#### **4. Good Teaching Practice**

It is expected that teaching staff will provide quality teaching appropriate for their students, cater to the diversity of learners in their care and making every effort to help all students equally.

Good teaching also means working closely with colleagues and parents of students, responding appropriately and promptly to any concerns they have.

#### **5. Respect for Others**

Staff must understand their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of students and other staff.

**You are expected to:**

- a. Treat each other with respect and courtesy.
- b. Be approachable, respectful, courteous and prompt in dealing with other people, including students, parents, other staff and members of the community.
- c. Present yourself as an appropriate role model for students, which can have a profoundly positive influence on a student's personal and social development.

#### **6. Duty of Care and Work Health and Safety**

Staff have a duty of care to students in their charge. That duty is to take all reasonable steps to protect students from risks of harm that can be reasonably predicted. The duty encompasses a wide range of matters, including, but not limited to:

- a. The provision of adequate supervision (before, during and after school).
- b. Ensuring grounds, premises and equipment are safe for student use.
- c. Implementing strategies to prevent bullying from occurring in the School.
- d. Providing medical assistance (if competent to do so) or seeking assistance from a medically trained person to aid a student who is injured or becomes sick at school.
- e. Undertaking risk assessments for all activities that take place off the School campus.
- f. Ensuring Outreach Offsite Risk Assessments are completed prior to visiting a student's home.

Staff have a responsibility under occupational health and safety legislation to take care of their own health and safety at work. You must therefore ensure that your actions do not place your own safety in jeopardy, or that of your co-workers, students or other persons with whom you may come into contact with. This applies to both physical and psychological wellbeing of individuals.

#### **7. Professional Relationships between Staff and Students**

All staff must treat students with courtesy and respect and provide an environment that encourages students to do the same. You are expected to behave in ways that promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people. You must actively seek to prevent harm to children and young people, and support those who have been harmed.

The detection and prevention of grooming behaviour is a vital consequence of complying with this principle.

While not all staff members are required to manage and supervise students, it is important for you to understand and observe the School's Child Protection Policy. You should also be familiar with the Teacher Registration Board of WA document 'Teacher-Student Professional Boundaries'.

#### **8. Appropriate Use of Electronic Communication and Social Networking Sites**

The School provides electronic communication facilities for staff for educational and administrative purposes. It may monitor and view data stored or transmitted using the School's facilities. You are expected to comply with School policies on Appropriate Use of ICT and Social Media.



## **9. Use of Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco**

Occupational health and safety is of fundamental importance to the School. Maintaining a safe work environment requires everyone's continuous cooperation.

You are responsible for ensuring your ability to perform your duties is not impaired by the use of alcohol or drugs, and that the use of such substances does not put you or any other person's health and safety at risk.

## **10. Identifying and Managing Conflicts of Interest**

Private interests have, or can 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:

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

Conflict of interest also includes:

- a. The interests of members of immediate family or relatives (where these interests are known).
- b. The interests of business partners or associates, or those of the workplace.
- c. The interests of friends.

## **11. Declaring Gifts, Benefits or Bribes**

A staff member may be offered a gift or benefit as an act of gratitude. You are expected to exercise sound judgment when deciding whether to accept a gift or benefit, as this may potentially compromise your position by creating a sense of obligation and may undermine your impartiality. It may also affect the reputation of the School and its staff. 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.

## **12. Financial Accountability and Caring for School Assets**

Staff have access to school assets and are required to treat these assets with care and ensure their security. In cases of deliberate misuse or negligence, the School may request reimbursement of the replacement cost of the lost or damaged item.

## **13. Communication and Protecting Confidential Information**

Staff must be aware that there are strong legal requirements around the collection, release and privacy of information.

Before asking for information or disclosing information you need to assure yourself that you are acting in a legal manner. If unsure, this should be discussed with your line manager.

## **14. Record Keeping**

All staff members have a responsibility to create and securely maintain full, accurate and honest records of their activities, decisions and other business transactions. You are expected to be familiar with, and comply with, the School's policy on record keeping. School records must not be destroyed, or removed, without the appropriate authority.

Staff responsible for assessing and recording marks for students' work must do so accurately, fairly and in a manner that is in accordance with relevant policy and requirements of the School.

## **15. Copyright and Intellectual Property**

When creating material, staff must ensure the intellectual property rights of others are not infringed and information is recorded and, where appropriate, acknowledged, about any copyright/other rights included in materials.

The School's intellectual property (including copyright) must not be used for private purposes without obtaining written permission from the Principal.

## **Definitions**

### **Child abuse**

Physical abuse occurs when a child is severely and/or persistently hurt or injured by an adult or a caregiver.

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is exposed to, or involved in sexual activity that is inappropriate to the child's age and development level, and includes sexual behaviour in circumstances where:

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

Emotional abuse includes:

- Psychological abuse.
- Being exposed to an act of family and domestic violence.

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.

- Adequate care for the child.
- Effective medical, therapeutic or remedial treatment for the child.

### **Corporal punishment**

Any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light; typically involving hitting the child with the hand or with an implement; it 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**

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.