



Code of Conduct

for

All Staff in the College

Approved by the Board of Governors on 11th September 2017

Introduction

The staff in Priory Integrated College have always understood the professional roles and responsibilities they carry to nurture the academic, social and emotional well-being of all pupils in their care. This Code of Conduct makes explicit the values that underpin these roles and responsibilities, and provides a public statement of how these values inform our professional practice in the college.

The Code of Conduct seeks to:

- Set out clearly the core values underpinning professional practice in the college;
- Encourage attitudes and conduct commensurate with the core values of the college;
- Provide a framework for evaluating practice and policies;
- Enhance the status of all staff in the eyes of the college and wider communities.

Core Values

The core values of Priory Integrated College are:

Truth

Respect

Excellence

Empowerment

Integration

The core values of the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland are:

Trust

Respect

Integrity

Honesty

Fairness

Tolerance

Commitment

Equality

Service

This Code of Conduct incorporates all of the above core values, and articulates the commitment of all staff in the college to exemplifying these values in their professional duties and their relationships with pupils, parents / carers and each other.

The Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with:

- Staff Contracts of Employment and Conditions of Service;
- Advice from Department of Education circulars on Safe Handling of Pupils (1999/9) and Online Safety (2016/27);
- Advice from trade unions and professional associations;
- Other relevant college policies and procedures including:
 - Child Protection & Safeguarding
 - eSafety
 - Mobile Phones
 - iPad Acceptable Use
 - Pastoral Care
 - Discipline

A Code of Conduct for All Staff in Priory Integrated College

All actions and behaviours in relation to working with young people must uphold their best interests as the primary consideration.

Staff must always be mindful of the position of trust that they hold, which demands that their behaviour towards pupils in their care must always be above reproach.

This Code of Conduct is intended to empower all staff by drawing attention to areas of risk for pupils and for the staff who work with them. It gives staff advice on prudent conduct which protects the safety and well-being of their pupils and themselves.

1. Private Meetings with Pupils

Staff should avoid situations where they may be alone in a room with a pupil for any length of time. However, from time to time, it will be necessary for a member of staff to hold a private interview with a pupil. Staff should conduct such interviews in a room with visual access, or with the door open. Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult is present. Where this is not possible, the staff member should ensure another adult knows where and when the interview is taking place, and that this other adult remains nearby throughout the duration of the interview. The college will be proactive in facilitating this arrangement in such circumstances. It may be necessary to use a sign on the door saying that a meeting is taking place, but it is not advisable to prohibit entry into the room during such interviews.

2. Physical Contact with Pupils

As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with pupils. Where a pupil is distressed, staff can provide verbal comfort and reassurance, but should avoid physical contact. Staff should never touch a pupil who has clearly indicated that he / she is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the pupil, others or property from harm. The DENI circular 1999/09 on the use of reasonable force gives guidance to staff on Article 4 of the Education (NI) Order 1998 (Power of member of staff to restrain pupils).

Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to a pupil's misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint. (In addition, please note that the use of an excessively loud voice by a member of staff, when it is directed towards a pupil / group of pupils, could be considered intimidatory, and should be avoided).

Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by a pupil, parent / carer or casual observer should always be avoided. Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his / her actions have been, or could be, misinterpreted, the member of staff should immediately report what happened to a line manager, or a member of SLT, or a member of the college Safeguarding Team. A written record of this report should be retained by the member of staff and the person to whom the report has been referred. The incident should then be reported as soon as possible to the Principal.

Staff should be especially careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting, or in an approved out of school activity, where a more informal relationship may place staff and pupils in closer physical proximity than would normally be the case in a classroom setting.

3. Choice and Use of Teaching & Learning Resources

Staff, especially teaching staff, should avoid using teaching materials which might be misinterpreted by pupils, or may lead to a misunderstanding of intentions. When using materials of a sensitive nature, a member of staff should seek the approval of their line manager before using the materials with pupils. If in any doubt about the appropriateness of these materials, the line manager should seek advice from a senior member of staff.

4. Relationships and Attitudes

Staff should always embody appropriate and professional values when interacting with pupils. Staff should ensure that their relationships with young people are appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupil. Staff should avoid socialising with pupils outside of school hours unless the activity is school-related. Staff should always take care that their conduct (attitudes, actions, demeanour and language) does not give rise to misunderstanding or negative speculation on the part of pupils, parents / carers or the wider community.

5. Use of Social Media

Staff should take care to follow all of the advice provided by the college, and by their unions and professional associations in relation to their use of social media. Please refer to the college's 'Acceptable Use of Social Media Policy.' Staff should never interact with pupils through social media channels, or by texting from their personal mobile phone or through a private email account. Staff should never give their private contact details to a pupil, or retain a pupil's private contact details. Photographs and / or videos featuring pupils should only be taken by a member of staff where it is demonstrably clear that the images are being used for educational purposes. Such images should never be stored for

any length of time on a staff member's personal mobile phone or iPad, or posted on social media.

6. Dress and Physical Appearance

Staff should always be cognisant of themselves as role models for our pupils, and should therefore exemplify the high standards of physical appearance we expect of our pupils. When interacting with pupils in school or in school-related activities, staff should dress in a manner appropriate to their professional role and to the context of working with young adults. The staff dress code discourages:

- overly casual or revealing items of clothing such as shorts, denim, sportswear, trainers (except for PE / ancillary staff) and canvas pumps;
- items of clothing that may present a health and safety risk such as very high-heeled footwear, flip-flops or excessive, visible jewellery.