



Arndell

Anglican College

CODE OF CONDUCT

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1. INTRODUCTION

This document (The Code) sets out the expectations of behaviour and conduct Arndell Anglican College imposes on all who work and learn in it. In particular, it identifies the conduct that is required of staff (including volunteer workers) with respect to the way in which they carry out their duties and the way in which they interact with the students of the College. In addition, it identifies the conduct required of students, and that required of staff in their interactions with other staff, parents or adult members of the College community.

This Code of Conduct is made available to the school's staff at the commencement of their employment and it is to be available and/or provided to staff during the course of their employment or involvement with the school.

The Code forms comprehensive directions to these employees or other workers as to the expected standard of behaviour. This Code is intended to apply to all employees and contractors and volunteers in their work with the school.

This Code does not attempt to provide a detailed and exhaustive list of what to do in every aspect of your work. Instead, it sets out general expectations of the standards of behaviour required.

The Code places an obligation on all employees to take responsibility for their own conduct and to work with colleagues cooperatively to achieve a consultative and collaborative workplace where people are happy and proud to work.

The Code acknowledges, and requires all staff to be aware of, the significant legislation that is relevant to it:

- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- Child Protection Legislation Amendment Act 2003
- Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998 Ombudsman Act 1974
- Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998

1.1 Who has to comply with the Code of Conduct?

By accepting employment with the School, you must be aware of and comply with this *Code*. Therefore, you must

- (a) conduct yourself, both personally and professionally in a manner that upholds the ethos and reputation of the School
- (b) comply with the School's policies and procedures;
- (c) act ethically and responsibly; and
- (d) be accountable for your actions and decisions.

Useful information on aspects of the legislation context may be found at:
www.Kids.nsw.gov.au/check/employer.html
www.nswombudsman.nsw.gov.au/publications

NSW Ombudsman Child Protection Guidelines

2. DUTY OF CARE AND LEGAL LIABILITY

Staff can be deemed legally liable if they have been negligent in relation to their responsibilities under the legislation as it pertains to the care and protection of children.

Generally speaking, a person owes a duty not to injure another as a result of his or her own negligent act or omission. The duty does not usually extend to the taking of steps to prevent injury where one has not caused or contributed to the risk giving rise to the injury.

There exists, however, special duty relationships between some members of our society which give rise to more onerous duties of care. The relationship between teacher and pupil is one of these.

The general law of negligence provides that a person may be negligent if: -

- She/he owes a duty of care to the person injured, that is, the standard judged reasonable in all of the circumstances, and
- She/he did not carry out that duty to the legal standard required, and
- The person suffered damage as a result of the failure to observe the duty of care.

With regard to care and protection the following general principles apply:

- Staff must take reasonable care to ensure that their students are not harmed. They have a duty to protect their students against foreseeable risks of personal injury or harm.
- The standard of care is that of a reasonably prudent parent. The degree of care depends on such factors as the age of the students.
- There must be an efficient system of supervision in operation in the school.

Duty of Care applies while the students are under the care of the College. This applies equally to College based activities and out of College activities. The same duty of care applies to employees who volunteer their services to the College.

Employees are required to follow good standards and approved practice. An example of good standards or approved practice would be compliance with the College's Code of Conduct.

3. APPROPRIATE CONDUCT AT ARNDELL

Arndell Anglican College expects that the conduct of all members of the College community will be, at all times: - respectful of the rights and needs of others, polite caring and cognisant of the different roles and different status of staff, students and others.

4. EXPECTATIONS OF STAFF

Staff interactions with students occur constantly and in a wide variety of situations, from the highly structured and formal (assemblies, timetabled classes) through to the less formal (a rehearsal for the play) and sometimes informal (an expedition for the Duke of Edinburgh Award: example only). Whilst it is true that some aspects of behaviour (such as tone or manner of speech) will change with the circumstances, many elements of the necessary conduct of staff will not change. Therefore, Arndell Anglican College always requires of its staff:

- Behaviour which recognizes the value in all students as fellow creations of our loving God,
- Behaviour which conforms to the statement of Appropriate Conduct (above, Section 3),
- Behaviour which is in accord with the notes below, which list many practical situations/examples for staff to follow.

As staff you are required to:

- perform your duties to the best of your ability and be accountable for your performance;
- follow reasonable instructions given by your supervisor or their delegate;
- comply with lawful directions;
- carry out your duties in a professional, competent and conscientious manner, while seeking suitable opportunities to improve your knowledge and skills, including through participation in relevant professional development;
- act honestly and in good faith in fulfilling your duties;
- be courteous and responsive in dealing with your colleagues, students, parents and members of the public;
- work collaboratively with your colleagues; and
- ensure that your conduct, whether during or outside working hours is consistent with the ethos of the College and does not damage the reputation of the College.

Notes:

- 4.1 Staff must work within the policy's requirements for safe conduct of lessons and other events and for the management of evacuations and lock-downs.
- 4.2 Staff must, as a matter of priority, be punctual in attendance at all lessons and duties. This is a fundamental part of ensuring that students are not exposed to any unnecessary risk of injury or other mishap (eg bullying).

- 4.3 Staff must not leave students (in a class or any other activity) without making sure that another staff member is aware of the situation and is able to adequately supervise it. Particular care should be taken at the conclusion of an excursion, or practice/rehearsal or other activity to ensure that no student is left uncollected before staff leave the area.
- 4.4 Playground supervision is a vitally important duty for staff. It is expected that staff will be punctual; that they will move about the area of the duty; and that they will be vigilant in looking for any misbehaviour and taking active steps to keep student behaviour sensible and appropriate.
- 4.5 **Staff must never undertake any corporal punishment of children whatsoever.**
- 4.6 Staff must actively intervene in any situation they come across of student bullying; they must act to defuse the situation, render help and report the situation, as appropriate, to the Head of Junior, Middle or Senior School. Staff should expect to play a part in following through the College's Bullying Policy with respect to the incident.
- 4.7 Any ill or injured student should be attended to by a staff member, part of this attention will involve the soonest possible notification to the Clinic staff so that further assistance may be rendered.
- 4.8 Under normal circumstances, staff will not drive a student in their car. Under emergency situations, staff should exercise discretion; they should endeavour to avoid a 1:1 situation in the car, they must have the student make every effort to contact a parent/guardian; and they must report the matter to their Supervisor as soon as possible.
- 4.9 Staff should, as much as possible, avoid yelling at students. It is acknowledged that raising one's voice to restore or maintain order in a group, or yelling so as to alert a student to danger, are perfectly proper actions

Notes concerning personal and/or physical interaction with students.

- 4:10 as teachers and pastoral carers, staff will quite properly engage in conversations with students which raise matters of personal sensitivity. This is expected and in order. However, staff should not make personal comments about a student or act in such a way as to probe the student's sexuality or sexual relationships.

Some physical contact with students is necessary and inevitable. It needs to be strictly controlled, in line with the following guidelines.

- 4:11.1 In order to congratulate a student, a handshake or a pat on the shoulder is to be preferred. A staff member will never initiate a hug of a student. A staff member will not kiss a student.
- 4.11.2 Some physical contact can be a necessary part of a teaching/learning situation. Such contact, must be appropriate and acceptable to the student.

Staff should seek reassurance from the student that this is so.

- 4.11.3 Physical contact with an injured or sick student may be necessary. When possible, staff must explain what they are about to do to a student and seek their concurrence with that action.
- 4.11.4 It is quite proper for a staff member to use reasonable force on a student only where that force is necessary to prevent the student doing harm to him/herself or others.
- 4.11.5 In dealing with very young students, staff may be called on to give physical comfort or other kinds of physical attention (eg attending to toileting needs). Staff should endeavour to have such interactions observed by other(s). As a guide, staff should not have a student sitting on their knee but should try to provide comfort or assistance by other means.

The following guidelines and protocols are put in place to assist young children in times of discomfort or distress.

- Toileting Accidents – Wear gloves, in the event of urine accident, to use the store room with a towel on the floor for child to sit on if needed. Wipes are available for children to clean themselves. Two staff members need to be present for this.
 - If it occurs in the playground one teacher to assist in toilets while other stays in close proximity (at the door of the toilets) to maintain supervision of the playground also.
 - If it occurs during class time, the storeroom is to be used for student privacy with one staff member to assist and guide student as needed while the other stays within view and monitors the rest of the class.
 - Some clean towels to be set aside for this purpose
 - Accidents involving other bodily contents are to be referred to the clinic for assistance as child may be unwell. A Prep staff member will be present with the Clinic staff to supervise the cleaning up of the child.
 - After accidents occur a note is to be sent home in the boomerang pouch to parents notifying them that their child had an accident today.
- 4.12 Although staff may, for reasons of confidentiality, need to have private conversations with students, they must exercise great caution in the management of such conversations. Staff should consider:
- Locating the conversation in an open space,
 - Having the door to the room open,
 - Never sitting between the student and the door/exit,
 - Alerting another staff member to the conversation and having that person 'drop by' when the 1:1 situation arises in an individual lesson, such as a music lesson, at the very least a window or a pane in the door must exist to make the instruction observable.
- 4:13 Staff should not arrange social interactions with students, purchase gifts or visits at the staff member's or student's home, unless with the express permission of the Headmaster, which would only be given in highly unusual

circumstance. Consideration prior to accepting a gift is also required. You must not engage in tutoring or coaching students from the College without the express permission of the Head of School. Contact with students through personal interaction in chat rooms or Facebook is not acceptable at Arndell Anglican College.

- 4:14 Staff must on no account, use language to students which is rude or obscene, sarcastic, insulting, sexist, excessively familiar or otherwise inappropriate to a professional staff-student relationship.
- 4:15 Staff must not involve themselves in any conduct towards a student of a sexual nature; this includes, inter alia, touching, conversations, innuendo, gestures, correspondence or via social media. Staff must not expose students to material of a sexual nature, except as part of a lesson in the approved curriculum.
- 4:16 Staff are not permitted to enter into personal electronic communication with students by either the use of personal email or issuing personal telephone details nor should staff enter into online / digital forums with students. **However** the use of the College's email system is permitted as a part of issuing individual programs or curriculum details, receiving and responding to drafts or submitted work or other class activities, for the purpose of communicating matters and offering support and advice. Staff are expected to be professional in all communications.
- 4:17 Staff must not demean, denigrate or humiliate students, by word or action, either in 1:1 or as part of a group.

Other notes on staff behaviour

- 4:18 Arndell Anglican College (including when at offsite camps, excursions and functions) does not permit smoking by staff, or the possession or use of illegal drugs. Alcohol may only be consumed as part of a function authorized by the Head of School.
- 4:19 Staff should exercise great confidentiality in their discussion of students. Thus, one does not discuss one student with another or with the parents of another; similarly, one does not discuss a staff member with students or parents
- 4.20 You should be aware of, and sensitive to, children with culturally diverse or indigenous backgrounds and cultural practices that may influence the interpretation of your behaviour.

5. REPORTING

Staff must immediately notify the Headmaster or his delegate of any situation in which they suspect 'reportable conduct.' (See Child Protection Policy).

Staff must not investigate the situation. Such reportable conduct could involve neglect, or an action listed in the Guidelines to the legislation indicated at the start of this Code. If in doubt staff should always notify.

6. EXPECTATION OF STUDENTS

Staff (including volunteer staff) are referred to the relevant documents:

- the discipline levels that guide staff response to disciplinary measures;
- "General Information for Students" as printed in the annual College Diary.
- Child Protection Policy

7. STAFF INTERACTIONS WITH OTHER STAFF

There is a clear expectation that all staff at Arndell Anglican College will at all times act in a collegial manner. The following examples are not behaviours that the College accepts or expects:

- Abusive, insulting or offensive language or comments;
- Shouting at, constant criticism or humiliation of a staff member or group of staff members in private or in front of their peers
- Intimidation tactics; forcing a staff member to participate in an "initiation" process; The playing of practical jokes
- Forcing a staff member to undertake demeaning tasks
- Spreading misinformation or malicious rumours
- Sniggering or gossiping behind someone's back
- Laughing at someone in the workplace in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable or distressed
- Setting unreasonable timelines or constantly changing deadlines, or setting tasks that are unreasonably below or beyond a person's skill level
- Withholding information that is vital for effective work performance
- Continuously and deliberately excluding someone from workplace activities including ignoring them and keeping them isolated from relevant communications about work issues.

Note that these examples are not exhaustive, they are for guidance and should any of the above or similar occur then please refer to the **Staff Grievance Policy**

Sexual Harassment

This section outlines the requirements Arndell Anglican College makes of its staff in terms of avoiding any instance of sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is defined as committing any action (including speaking any words) which, by means of sexual acts, words or innuendo serves to pressure, intimidate or otherwise cause distress to any other person.

Staff of the College (including volunteer and contract workers) must not engage in

acts of a sexual nature which, by means of actions, words or innuendo, pressure, intimidate or cause distress to other staff or students.

The following notes are to be taken as a guide to situations or actions that would be interpreted as sexual harassment and which staff of the college must take great care to avoid: -

- In their dealings with other staff of the College, staff must not make comments or engage in innuendo that probes or comments upon the sexuality or sexual preferences or actions of another.
- Staff must not display, pass about or download on school computers material of a sexual nature, unless the material is clearly part of an authorized teaching program.
- Staff must not seek to pressure another by means of any unsolicited sexual advances
- As part of a professional relationship with other staff, staff must make sure that they do not indulge in jokes, stories or comments which, because of their sexual nature or sexual content, might cause embarrassment, offence or distress to another.
- Staff are expected to ensure that, as far as possible, any physical contact between them arises only in the course of performing professional duties and is not of such a nature that it could be interpreted as implying any intimacy.
- As is apparent in other sections of the code, staff must on no account indulge in actions or comments of a sexual nature in the presence of or involving students.

8. ACTIONS TAKEN

Actions that may be taken by the College in respect of a breach of the Code may include;

Management, Remedial action, Training or Disciplinary action ranging from a warning to termination of employment

The College will reserve the right to determine in its entirety the response to any breach of this Code. However guidance through the Workplace Relations team at the Association of Independent Schools will be sought.