



# Staff Code of Conduct

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This code of conduct gives guidance to all College staff on the standards of conduct required to be met whether working within the College or acting as a representative at external meetings/functions.
- 1.2 The College is committed to the creation and maintenance of a supportive and inclusive environment. It is recognised that in a healthy working environment staff and learners form mutually rewarding relationships. This Code provides guidance in areas where personal relationships overlap with working relationships. It seeks to protect the integrity of all learners and staff from allegations of actual or perceived conflicts of interest and avoid complaints of harassment and grievance or disciplinary action.
- 1.3 All members of staff must abide by the policies and procedures of the College, including the College financial regulations. It is the responsibility of the individual member of staff to know these policies, procedures and regulations.
- 1.4 It is the responsibility of all staff to read, understand and be familiar with this Code of Conduct.

## 2.0 Code of Conduct

### 2.1 Relationships

This Code covers all areas where relationships raise questions about conflict of interest, trust and/or confidentiality which may occur at the outset, during or on the termination of a relationship. Such conflicts may arise in relation to the following areas.

- management and supervision of staff including career progression and staff development
- deployment of financial and other resource
- all aspects of teaching and learning
- access to confidential information
- access to Student Services including financial assistance, accommodation and other services
- contractual matters including employment, career opportunities, placements, complaints and discipline
- assignment of work and facilities to learners

#### 2.1.1 Relationships between staff and learners

Staff should conduct themselves at all times in ways that are consistent with College policy and procedures and acknowledge their professional and ethical responsibility to protect the interests of learners and accept the obligations and constraints inherent in that responsibility. To maintain the relationship with learners based on trust, confidence and equal treatment, staff are strongly advised not to enter into an intimate relationship with a learner for whom they have a responsibility in the areas of teaching/learning,

assessment, selection and pastoral care. Such relationships can lead to perceived or actual conflicts of interest, which can have a detrimental effect on the teaching and learning environment for other learners and colleagues

Should a personal relationship already exist when the member of staff or learner enters the College or develop while the learner is registered, it is the responsibility of the member of staff to declare their involvement to their line manager/Head of Faculty/Unit or to one of the persons designated by the College for the purpose. There will not be a requirement to give details of the involvement.

## 2.1.2 Relationships between staff

Within the College, members of staff will have a variety of mutually rewarding relationships which will not have a detrimental effect upon colleagues or the good running of the organisation. Whilst most social and personal relationships are entirely beneficial in that they promote good working and academic relationships, there are occasions when personal relationships between staff may lead to actual or perceived conflicts of interest. Members of staff are required to declare an interest where a personal relationship gives rise to a reasonable apprehension that a conflict of interest might exist, *or that* the integrity of the academic, administrative or institutional processes of the College could be threatened, in circumstances such as described above. Such an apprehension will almost certainly arise where one party to a relationship has a direct line management responsibility for another.

It is the responsibility of the member of staff to make a declaration of interest to their Line Manager/Assistant Principal/Head of Unit or to one of the persons designated by the College for the purpose. There will not be a requirement to give details of the involvement.

## 2.1.3 Conflict of Interest

Wherever the College is made aware of a relationship covered by this code of conduct, it will consider the appropriate action in a manner that protects the integrity of all parties. The staff/learner involved will be consulted and are expected to comply with reasonable action. The College will try to ensure that these matters are dealt with in confidence and as sensitively as possible.

Appropriate action could include

- ensuring that the member of staff does not have sole responsibility for aspects of the learners work which require judgement, e.g. academic assessment.
- ensuring that the member of staff is not solely in a position to take decisions affecting the learner.
- ensuring that appropriate action is taken to minimise the potential effect of the relationship on other staff or learners.
- ensuring that the involvement of a member of staff in taking or influencing decisions affecting the other person's salary, terms and conditions of employment, role, workload, promotion, training and development, career development and staff appraisal etc. is carried

out in such a way as to protect the integrity of all parties and processes.

2.1.4 Staff who are uncertain about what action to take should seek guidance, in confidence, from the Human Resources Unit. Failure to declare a conflict of interest which results in the academic, administrative or institutional processes being brought into question, may result in disciplinary action being taken.

2.1.5 Where staff believe themselves to have been personally adversely affected by a misuse of power/authority or conflict of interest, they should raise it with their Line Manager/Assistant Principal/Head of Unit or through the procedures available (Grievance, Harassment). Where the College is made aware of a relationship by another person or other means, appropriate action will be taken to protect the integrity of all parties and procedures and deal with the matter as sensitively as possible.

Any of the parties involved who do not consider that satisfactory arrangements have been implemented have recourse to the Human Resources Unit.

### 3.0 **Malpractice**

The College does not tolerate actions (or attempted actions) of malpractice of staff in connection with assessments and certification. The College will enact the Disciplinary Procedure where there is evidence of incidents (or attempted incidents) of malpractice. Where assessment malpractice is proven the relevant Awarding Bodies will be notified in line with their own Malpractice procedures. Awarding Bodies may also impose penalties or sanctions against either the individual/s involved and/or the College.

#### **Staff Malpractice**

Staff malpractice includes non-compliance as well as professional misconduct, for example:

- failure to follow relevant regulations
- deliberate falsification of records, witness statements, certificates, etc.
- fraudulent certificate claims, for example, claiming for a certificate prior to the learner completing all the requirements of assessment
- allowing evidence, known by the staff member not to be the learner's own, to be included in a learner's assignment/task/portfolio/coursework
- giving information about formal assessment outcomes before the official release of such information by the Awarding Organisation.

#### **Maladministration**

Maladministration covers negligent, dishonest or poorly informed behaviour that results

in procedures that may compromise the integrity of assessment, such as:

- inaccurate production of assessment records
- failure to follow procedures or to maintain appropriate records
- incorrect recording of assessment decisions

- issuing of an erroneous certificate or qualification
- deliberate destruction of award of credit or qualification records
- failure to keep assessment papers or mark schemes secure.

## 4.0 **Business Practice**

All members of staff must maintain a high standard of integrity and avoid any arrangements which may prevent the operation of fair competition in the College's business relationships.

## 4.1 **Contracts**

If a member of staff (or immediate family/partner/business contact) has a financial interest or involvement in a contract the member of staff must declare it to their Line Manager within the Executive or the Chair of Board of Governors were applicable. Failure to declare a financial interest may result in disciplinary procedures being invoked.

Contracts may only be signed by a member of staff when it is consistent with the individual member of staff's responsibility defined by their job role.

Contract may only be signed in accordance with the College's financial regulations.

## 4.2 **Media**

Contact with the media will normally be undertaken by a member of the Executive/Assistant Principals/Heads of Units may have contact with the media if so authorised by a member of the Executive.

Members of staff must not bring the College into disrepute through use of the media.

## 4.3 **Discrimination**

All employees must observe the College's Equal Opportunities Policy. All students, employees, clients and visitors must be treated fairly and with respect regardless of age, colour, creed, disability, gender, nationality, race or sexual orientation, social and economic position.

No employee should be victimised by any other employee (regardless of his/her status) for any reason whatsoever.

## 4.4 **Health & Safety**

All employees must exercise proper and due care of their personal hygiene, health, safety and welfare and that of other employees, students and visitors who may be affected by their acts or omissions. All employees must comply with the College Health and Safety Policy and procedures and ensure compliance by learners and visitors.

## 4.5 **Hospitality**

Hospitality in the form of a meal or refreshments is often accepted courtesy of a business relationship. Hospitality received by an employee must not be permitted to

reach such a level where it may be justifiably alleged by others to have influenced a business contractual or equivalent decision.

The provision of hospitality must (wherever possible) be agreed in advance by a member of the Governors, Executive, Assistant Principal or Head of Unit. Such hospitality as may be provided should be relevant and appropriate to the occasion and take into account the culture of the person(s) who are to be entertained.

#### 4.6 **Gifts**

College policy is that gifts are not either appropriate or necessary for any sound, proper business relationship. The receiving of gifts (other than diaries, calendars and other small items) is therefore not permitted. Diaries, calendars and other small items may be accepted but must be for College use.

#### 4.7 **General**

All employees should seek to work to the highest possible standards of professional behaviour and give priority to the interests of existing and potential learners and customers.

All employees should seek to work supportively and co-operatively with their colleagues and should avoid words and deeds that may undermine colleagues in the perception of other or which might bring the College into disrepute.

All employees should retain professional and independent objectivity and not promote dogma or political bias during their College work.

Should it be necessary, investigations of alleged breaches of this Code will be dealt with under the College's appropriate procedures (e.g. grievance/discipline). Matters concerning designated senior staff will be dealt with in accordance with their terms and conditions of employment as determined by the College.