

Agreed by Board of Governors: June 2023

To be reviewed: June 2027

### 1. Aims, scope and principles

This code of conduct aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow.

At Parkhall Integrated College our vision is to provide an inclusive, caring learning environment where we all feel valued and respected and are empowered to reach our full potential. By creating this code of conduct, we aim to ensure our college is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

College staff have an influential position in the college and will act as role models for students by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the college and its students.

### 2. General obligations

All staff and volunteers set an example to students. They will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in college
- Treat students and staff with dignity and respect
- Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others
- Not express personal beliefs in a way that exploits students' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within
- Adhere to the Teachers' Standards (if applicable)

### 3. Safeguarding

Staff have a duty to safeguard students from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect. Staff will familiarise themselves with our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

To avoid misinterpretations, and so far as is practicable, staff and volunteers are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with a student.

Staff and volunteers should therefore be cognisant of the guidance issued by the Department of Education NI on the use of reasonable force (Circular 1999/09 and guidance document 'Towards a Model Policy in Colleges on Use of Reasonable Force').

### 4. Staff-student relationships

Staff will observe proper boundaries with students that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so.

If staff members and students must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

- This takes place in a public place that others can access
- Others can see into the room

- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

Staff should avoid contact with students outside of college hours if possible. On occasions, staff and volunteers may have less formal contact with students outside of college, perhaps through mutual membership of social groups, sporting organisations, or family connections. Staff and volunteers should not assume that the college would be aware of any such relationship and should therefore consider whether the college should be made aware of the connection.

Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and students. This includes social media profiles.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a student may be misinterpreted, or if a staff member is concerned at any point about a fellow staff member and a student, this should be reported in line with the procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

## **5. Communication and social media**

Staff should be aware of the college's e-safety and acceptable use policy.

College staff's social media profiles should not be available to students. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name, as students may be able to find them. Staff might consider using a first and middle name instead and must set social media profiles to private.

Staff should not attempt to contact students or their parent/guardians via social media, or any other means outside college, to develop any sort of relationship. They will not make any efforts to find students' or parent/guardians' social media profiles. It is preferable that any contact with students is made via the use of college email accounts or telephone equipment when necessary.

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are students at the college without their consent.

## **6. Acceptable use of technology**

Staff should be aware of the college's e-safety and acceptable use policy.

In particular, staff will not use technology in college to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.

Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or college equipment for personal use, in college hours or in front of students.

The college has the right to monitor emails and internet use on the college system.

## **7. Honesty and integrity**

All staff and volunteers are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of college property and facilities.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the college is correct. This should include:

- Background information (including any past or current investigations/cautions related to conduct outside of college)
- Qualifications
- Professional experience

Gifts from suppliers or associates of the college (e.g., a supplier of materials) must be declared to the Principal. A record should be kept of all such gifts received. This requirement does not apply to "one off" token gifts from students or parent/guardians e.g., at Christmas or the end of the academic year.

Staff and volunteers should be mindful that gifts to individual students may be considered inappropriate and could be misinterpreted.

### **8. Conduct outside of work**

Staff and volunteers should not engage in conduct outside work which could damage the reputation and standing of the college or the staff/ volunteer's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the college community. This covers conduct including but not limited to relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the college on social media.

Staff and volunteers may undertake work outside college, either paid or voluntary and should ensure it does not affect their work performance in the college. Advice should be sought from the Principal when considering work outside the college.

### **9. Dress code**

Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner.

### **10. Confidentiality**

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive, private and confidential information about the college, staff, students and parent/guardians.

This information should never be:

- Disclosed to anyone unless required by law or with consent from the relevant party or parties
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the Designated Teacher or Principal where staff believe a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, as detailed further in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

### **11. Link to other policies**

This policy and our procedures have been developed in line with guidance from:

The Department of Education NI Circular 1999/09 and guidance document 'Towards a Model Policy in Colleges on Use of Reasonable Force'.

These policy guidelines are translated into action through other policies and procedures, for example:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy and Sanctions Procedures
- Complaints Procedures
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Use of reasonable force
- e-safety and acceptable use policy