



## CODE OF CONDUCT - EMPLOYEES

### INTRODUCTION

We embrace our Methodist ethos and are guided by a values framework richly engrained in this identity. Our Saints Honour code, 'Honour God, Honour Others and Honour Self', is a daily reminder of our lived-out values. All staff are expected to accept the values advocated by the College and promote these values in their dealings with learners in the classroom, on the sports field and in all extra mural or College related activities. Our Christian Methodist ethos are a vital expression of the community life of the College. All staff are therefore required to attend all chapel services.

The purpose of this Code of Conduct ("the Code") is to establish guidelines for the professional conduct and responsible behaviour of Employees. The Code is guided by the College's Charter, its statutory documents and its vision, mission and value systems which require all employees to act in an ethical, consistent, responsible, professional and transparent manner, and to conduct themselves with dignity, honesty, integrity and respect when interacting with colleagues, students, parents and members of the St Stithians community.

The Code provides a framework and is thus not designed to provide an exhaustive list of what is or is not acceptable conduct, nor is it designed to provide answers for every possible factual situation that may be encountered in the workplace. Should an employee have any doubt about the appropriateness or legitimacy of a proposed way of dealing with a specific situation, it is incumbent on that employee to consult management in that regard.

The Code must also be read in conjunction with employees' contracts of employment, the St Stithians Charter and various College rules, policies, procedures and practices that also set out conduct and performance requirements and standards for employees. For convenience we refer to the St Stithians Charter, the various College and School Rules, Policies and Procedures, collectively as the "**College Policies**".

The College has the right to amend, revise and add to this Code and to the College Policies, and to subject employees to disciplinary processes for any infraction which constitutes an act of misconduct, or an offence in terms of the contract of employment, the common law, and the College Policies.

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. Employees are expected to recognise, respect and conform to the values adhered to by the College. All employees must promote these values in their dealings with students, parents, colleagues, management, and generally with members of the St Stithians community - on a day-

to-day basis, in the classroom, on the sports field and in all extra-mural or other College related activities.

2. All deliberations and decisions of staff in the execution of their duties should be based on the following ethical values:

- **Responsibility** – assuming responsibility for the business, reputation and assets of the College and being willing to take corrective action where necessary in the interests of the College;
- **Accountability** – the obligation to account for decisions and actions to management;
- **Fairness** – demonstrating conduct towards others that shows decision-making based on impartial and objective criteria for the common good and not on personal favouritism or personal self-interest;
- **Transparency** – disclosing relevant information to Students, colleagues and management that enables the College to make informed decisions about its performance and sustainability.

3. With regard to professional and ethical conduct, employees must practise the following values:

- **Compliance** – by complying to relevant laws, regulations, the College’s rules, policies and procedures;
- **Confidentiality** – by protecting the integrity and security of the College’s information and treating third-party information as confidential where one is legally required to do so;
- **Excellence** – by rendering an excellent service to the College and its Students, and by encouraging and supporting colleagues in the pursuit of professional excellence;
- **Equity** – by treating others in a fair and impartial manner;
- **Diversity** – by recognising the contribution that diversity makes to creativity and the enrichment of work and teaching;
- **Honesty** – by speaking the truth and acting in a truthful manner, not withholding information that would mislead others regarding the truth.;
- **Integrity** – by adhering to moral and ethical principles and doing the right thing at all times and in all circumstances, no matter what the consequences will be.

- **Proficiency** – by refraining from rendering or providing any professional advice or service for which the employees is not qualified;
  - **Respect** – by treating others with respect, civility and dignity generally and in an effort to promote an environment of cooperation and trust; and
  - **Stewardship** – by looking after the College’s property as well as its resources and the environment.
4. All employees, as representatives of the College, will uphold these values in the discharging of their professional, organisational, administrative and other duties.

#### **DUTY OF GOOD FAITH, LOYALTY, DILIGENCE AND PROTECTING THE INTERESTS OF THE COLLEGE**

5. Employees should at all times act in good faith, and they must demonstrate a spirit of loyalty and service to the College, its management, administrators, trustees, the College Council and students.
6. In terms of the duty of good faith, employees are required to conduct themselves with integrity, objectivity, professionalism, due care and are obliged to protect the interests of the College and to avoid conflicts between their College duties and their private interests. Employees may accordingly not take advantage of their position to profit from the placement of business or the sale of goods or services to or on behalf of the College.
7. Employees must carry out their duties in a diligent, efficient and conscientious manner. In this regard employees must –
- 7.1. at all times be neat and presentable in accordance with their job function. Where protective clothing or equipment is required, this must be adhered to at all times;
  - 7.2. be present at the College as required and only be absent from the workplace with proper authorisation;
  - 7.3. when required to and in compliance with their obligations to the College –
    - 7.3.1. render their services beyond normal working hours;
    - 7.3.2. be in attendance during normal or extended working hours; and

- 7.3.3. be reasonably flexible and willing to perform work not ordinarily expected of them but which they are capable of performing, in particular, when College events or functions are held or when a colleague is absent, or is unable to perform the work that needs to be done for any reason;
- 7.4. maintain and develop an in-depth knowledge and understanding of their area of expertise or the functions which they are required to perform;
- 7.5. endeavour to attain the highest possible standard of performance; and
- 7.6. comply with all lawful and reasonable instructions.

#### **EQUITY, RESPECT AND DIGNITY**

- 8. The College endeavours to actively foster impartiality and create an environment where people are treated equitably, with respect and dignity. In this regard employees should, amongst other things:
  - 8.1. treat their colleagues, superiors, students, parents and others with respect and dignity;
  - 8.2. be responsive, courteous and prompt when dealing with others;
  - 8.3. respect and value a diversity of views and opinions;
  - 8.4. not unfairly discriminate on the basis of race, language, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, medical condition, cultural background, political affiliation or on any other arbitrary basis;
  - 8.5. not harass or intimidate other employees, students or others;
  - 8.6. not harass, intimidate or conduct themselves in an unruly or disturbing manner, and refrain from any form of intrusive or threatening conduct, on or off the College premises, towards any person who is in any way associated with the College; and
  - 8.7. not undermine the dignity, beliefs, privacy, integrity, reputation or professional standing of others.

#### **COLLEGE RESOURCES AND THE DUTY TO CARE FOR PROPERTY AND ASSETS**

- 9. Employees must use College resources with the required care. In general, College resources may not be used for private purposes.

10. For the purposes of this Code, the following are regarded as College resources:
  - 10.1. College assets, property, vehicles, equipment, cellular phones, telephones and the like;
  - 10.2. College funds;
  - 10.3. Electronic resources.
11. Employees are responsible for College resources or the property of others placed under their control. These resources and property must be treated with appropriate care and secured against theft, loss or misuse. Any loss or damage to these resources or property must be reported immediately.
12. Employees must use College resources for the purpose for which they are intended, and they must not remove College resources from the College premises without the necessary authorisation.
13. Where an employee is responsible for or controls College funds, he or she –
  - 13.1. must display the same care and prudence in dealing with these funds as is demanded from a reasonable competent manager;
  - 13.2. may not spend College funds without authorisation;
  - 13.3. must when using the funds for College purposes, and with the necessary authorisation, ensure that the College receives value for the money spent.
14. Electronic resources, where these are provided to employees, should be used for the purpose for which they were intended. Private use of electronic resources is a privilege and should be kept to a minimum and not be abused.

#### **USE OF OFFICIAL CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL INFORMATION**

15. All employees who have access to information owned or received by the College in the conduct of its business activities are expected to know and understand the relevant access and privacy requirements, and are expected to take measures to enforce the confidentiality and security of such information.
16. The College is committed to keeping personal information regarding its employees and students confidential. Access to and knowledge of the content of such records will be limited to persons who need the information for legitimate College business or legal purposes.

17. Employees dealing with personal information must be aware of the purposes for which the information has been collected, and only process the information for those purposes in accordance with the Standard Terms and Conditions for Student Enrolment, the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2014 (POPIA) and the Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000 (PAIA).
18. All employees are required to ensure that they do not impart or process, without authorisation, confidential or personal information (including business information; business strategies; pending contracts, meetings; research results; investigations and information on students and staff) to any person or entity that is not legitimately entitled to the information.
19. Employees must take care to maintain the integrity, confidentiality and privacy of all College documentation and information to which they have access, which are classified as confidential or personal information or which may be regarded as confidential or personal information.

#### **RIGHT OF ACCESS TO COLLEGE PREMISES**

20. The College reserves the right of access to its premises and property and insists on adherence to appropriate safety procedures and protective measures. Employees and their visitors are required to respect the College's rights and obligations in this regard and to strictly observe the rules and regulations put in place by the College.
  - 20.1. Persons who are not entitled to be on the College property should not be permitted to remain on the property once identified. Employees should not invite persons onto the property that have no good reason to be there. This is particularly the case after normal school hours, over weekends or during School holiday periods.
  - 20.2. If any visitor is invited to enter the College premises by an employee, the responsible employee –
    - 20.2.1. must ensure that the visitor has a legitimate reason for being on the College premises;
    - 20.2.2. must notify the College Security and Reception of the visitor's expected arrival;
    - 20.2.3. must receive and escort the visitor;
    - 20.2.4. will be responsible for the visitor's personal safety and behaviour while on the College's premises;

- 20.2.5. must ensure that the visitor does not disrupt school activities, and that the visitor departs College premises once their purpose for being on the premises has been completed.

#### **ALTERNATIVE OR OUTSIDE WORK**

21. No unauthorised freelance or alternative work may be undertaken by an employee without the prior agreement and arrangement with the Head or Rector. Where agreement is reached in relation to such work, the employee may not –
  - 21.1. conduct such work or any aspect of it during working hours or in any way that interferes with the employee's commitments to the College, which takes preference;
  - 21.2. continue with such work if it: a) conflicts with the business or interests of the College; or b) it raises a conflict between the employee's College duties and private interests.

#### **OTHER REPREHENSIBLE CONDUCT**

22. The College will not tolerate any form of reprehensible conduct by employees, including but not limited to the following which may warrant the sanction of dismissal:
  - 22.1. Any form of dishonesty, including theft, fraud, misrepresentation, misappropriation, manipulation, bribery, signing in for someone else, and similar offences.
  - 22.2. The publication or distribution of any document, photo, video or similar recordal in which a student is identifiable or visible, regardless of the circumstances, unless specific permission from the Student's parent has been obtained in writing.
  - 22.3. Using, consuming, providing, distributing, selling, being in possession of, or under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicating substances (including cannabis) during working hours, at extra mural or College related activities, on the College premises or in College vehicles, and may not use, distribute or sell such substances. In addition, and in this regard -
    - 22.3.1. employees may not serve alcohol on College premises unless the permission of the Head of School or the Rector has been obtained and in accordance with the relevant policy;

- 22.3.2. the College reserves the right to require employees to submit to a breathalyser or similar tests if there is a reasonable suspicion that the employee is involved in conduct referred to in paragraph 22.3.
- 22.3.3. employees who are required to take prescribed medication or substances which could impair their faculties, must disclose this information (with proof of medical certification) to their superior or the Head of School prior to the start of the school day;
- 22.3.4. the College reserves the right to refuse access to or to remove employees from the College premises who report for duty under the influence of alcohol or intoxicating substances, or if they are considered unfit for duty.
- 22.4. Smoking is prohibited on the College premises, at College related events or functions, in College vehicles and in the vicinity of students, except in areas as may be specifically designated in terms of smoking regulations.
- 22.5. Employees may not be in possession of any potentially dangerous objects, weapons or firearms on the College's premises, at College related activities, or in College vehicles without the specific permission of the School Head or Rector, and in appropriate circumstances, an employee who is in contravention hereof, may be evicted from, or refused access to, the College premises or the College related activity.
- 22.6. Fighting, assault or other physical confrontation is strictly prohibited, even when provoked, unless it is necessary for the employee to act in self-defence.
- 22.7. Employees may not under any circumstances solicit or borrow any money, obtain favours or other similar benefits from students, parents, visitors or third parties associated with the College.
- 22.8. Employees must not take learners on any excursions or College related activities without adequate adult supervision and without the required indemnity forms signed by their parents. All excursions or College related activities involving students must be authorised by the School Head.



- 22.9. Employees may not undertake, or engage in, activities for which they are not qualified or do not have the appropriate licence or certification, or in respect of which they not competent to perform.
- 22.10. Employees must not, either on their own devices or the College's equipment, engage in, browse, download or make use of the internet, social media, similar or associated applications and platforms, during work hours for personal reasons. In this regard, employees are required to comply with the College Policies in relation to such matters.
- 22.11. Employees must not on the College email, through the College internet facilities (including its wifi) or via the College server display, transmit or distribute videos, photos, texts or on any other medium with inappropriate content such as sex, pornography, violence, hate speech, racism, harassment, discrimination or any other such similar content.

#### **POSITIVE DUTY TO DISCLOSE CERTAIN INFORMATION TO THE COLLEGE**

23. In the context that employees assist the College to render core academic and ancillary services to its students and that they assist the College in its duty of care to and acting in the best interests of the students, employees are required to promptly report to the Head of School or to the Rector any reliable information that establishes or points to –
- 23.1. a student:
- 23.1.1. being under unreasonable or abnormal stress;
  - 23.1.2. suffering from or being a victim of abuse, neglect, violence, discrimination, racism, harassment, bullying or intimidation;
  - 23.1.3. committing or participating in illicit, unethical, or reprehensible conduct (of the kind described in paragraph 22);
- 23.2. a colleague or any other person:
- 23.2.1. contravening this code of conduct;
  - 23.2.2. acting illegally, or in circumstances that may be harmful to the College, other employees or the Students.
24. Any disclosure of such information will be received by the Head of School or the Rector confidentially and in circumstances that will protect the identity of the disclosing employee.

## **PROFESSIONAL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PROFESSIONALS – ALL TEACHING STAFF**

25. All persons employed in educational or academic posts by the College (“Educators”) - whether on a full-time or part-time basis - are required to be registered members of the South African Council of Educators (SACE). The College will require written confirmation of a teacher’s professional membership with SACE prior to any employment relationship commencing. As members of SACE, all teachers are required to conduct themselves in a manner that conforms fully with the SACE Code of Professional Ethics for educators, as amended from time to time.
26. Educators must at all times be conscious of the fact that they are role models and representatives of the College as an educational institution – even when they act in their private capacity or on their own time. Specifically, posts or comments on social media or chat groups, even if private, must be above reproach in this regard and not done in a way that may cause potential harm to the College.
27. Educators should –
  - 27.1. uphold the reputation and standing of the profession and of the College;
  - 27.2. teach in a manner that respects the dignity and rights of all persons;
  - 27.3. maintain high standards of practice in relation to student learning, planning, monitoring, assessing, reporting and providing feedback;
  - 27.4. create an environment where students can become agents in the learning process and develop lifelong learning skills;
  - 27.5. be committed to equality and inclusion and to respecting and encouraging diversity including those differences that may arise from race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, political affiliation, disability, colour, gender, sex or sexual orientation, physical characteristics, age, ancestry, socio-economic status, place of origin, and any further grounds as may be referenced in equality legislation;
  - 27.6. treat all learners with respect and be considerate of their personal, intellectual, cultural and other individual circumstances and needs;

- 27.7. be responsible for recognising individual student educational needs, prescribing and implementing appropriate instructional programmes and evaluating the progress of all their students;
- 27.8. be punctual, empathic, prompt and prepared, shall attend lessons at all times and shall recognise their responsibilities with regard to the academic and personal development of their learners;
- 27.9. act in the best interests of students;
- 27.10. in a context of mutual respect, be open and responsive to constructive feedback regarding their teaching areas, and if necessary, seek appropriate support, advice and guidance;
- 27.11. take personal responsibility for sustaining and improving the quality of their areas of expertise by amongst other things –
  - 27.11.1. actively maintaining their professional knowledge and understanding to ensure it is current;
  - 27.11.2. reflecting on and critically evaluating their professional practice, in light of their professional knowledge base;
  - 27.11.3. availing of opportunities for career-long professional development;
- 27.12. comply with College Policies, and relevant legislation and regulations;
- 27.13. not charge for tutoring a student in any learning area in which he/she teaches to that learner, except with the prior permission of the Head and in line with the College Extraneous Employment policy;
- 27.14. communicate effectively with students, colleagues, parents, management and others in the St Stithians community in a manner that is professional, collaborative and supportive, and based on trust and respect;
- 27.15. not abuse the professional relationship with the student, such as
  - 27.15.1. enter into an improper association or relationship with the student;
  - 27.15.2. show undue personal favour or disfavour towards any student;
  - 27.15.3. in any way unduly influence a student's marks or results;

- 27.15.4. commit such acts against a student which are illegal or unprofessional;
- 27.15.5. engage in inappropriate contact with a student on social media platforms and/or communications not relating to school activities.
- 27.16. should be open minded and allow others to express their opinions and should not hinder the development of democratic processes with regard to the administration of the College. Disputes arising between teachers regarding professional concerns or differences which cannot be resolved through personal interaction, must be submitted to the Head for consideration and resolution. Disputes should not be communicated or referred to external or third parties outside of the College until the College's internal grievance, conflict and dispute procedures have been exhausted;
- 27.17. accept that professional training and personal evaluation of their educational efforts and routines is an ongoing process. Educators are also required to take cognisance of evaluations conducted by, or on behalf of, the College and make serious efforts to meet goals set by the College to sustain and improve its academic standards.

Note:

*This document is to be used as an attachment to every School employee's contract of employment. This Code only reflects the more critical general standards of conduct expected of all School employees, as well as more specific conduct expectations applicable to educators. The Code is therefore not intended as an exhaustive listing of the School's conduct requirements.*

*It must also be pointed out that this code of conduct for School staff is based on established practices and norms in the Independent School sector, and will be different in some material respects from the codes of conduct that may be applicable to staff employed by Public Schools, or as may be prescribed by the SA Schools Act of 1996, as amended.*