



College Code of Conduct

Presbyterian Ladies' College (PLC) strives for excellent standards in all areas of its operations. To achieve this, employees, volunteers and contractors ('staff') are expected to comply with this Code of Conduct.

Compliance with all College Policies, Procedures and Requirements

Staff are required to observe and comply with all PLC policies and procedures at all times during the course of their employment. It is the responsibility of all staff to know College policies and procedures and to remain abreast of changes to such documents. The College will provide notification of changes and updates as and when they occur.

Staff are expected to take an active part in the general life of the College by supporting policies, procedures, aims and objective in order to facilitate the day-to-day operation and promote a high quality of education and service delivery.

Child Protection

All staff working at PLC have both a common law 'duty of care' and **statutory obligations** regarding child protection. There are five types of child abuse including: physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and neglect.

Every child and young person has a right to be protected from sexual abuse. **Sexual abuse** in relation to a child includes sexual behaviour in circumstances where:

- (a) *the child is the subject of bribery, coercion, a threat, exploitation or violence; or*
- (b) *the child has less power than another person involved in the behaviour; or*
- (c) *there is a significant disparity in the developmental function or maturity of the child and another person involved in the behaviour.*

Grooming is considered a form of sexual abuse and is defined as: actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for engaging in sexual activity with the child. Any form of sexual abuse must be reported.

Staff are expected to observe professional boundaries including emotional, relationship, power, communication and physical boundaries. Refer to the **Child Protection Policy** for more information on staff expectation and on reporting abuse.

The following statements are not an exhaustive list, rather they provide staff with examples of inappropriate interactions with students.

Staff must not:

- Engage in any form of inappropriate behaviour towards students or expose students to such behaviour.
- Use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or inappropriate language with students.
- Express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of students or discriminate against any student based on culture, race, ethnicity or disability.
- Engage in open discussions of an adult nature in the presence of students.
- Engage in any form of sexual conduct with a student including making sexually suggestive comments and sharing sexually suggestive material.
- Engage in inappropriate or unnecessary physical conduct or behaviours including doing things of a personal nature that a student can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
- Engage in contact with students through social media or technology that is not of a work-related matter.

The two following questions may be useful in determining if your conduct should be altered in any way:

Would I modify my behaviour if a colleague was present?

How would I feel about explaining my actions at a staff meeting?

Boundaries are not always clear. There are "grey areas". Actions often have the potential to be perceived by others in unintended ways. You have the power. It is ultimately your responsibility not to misuse it. **If in doubt err on the side of caution** and seek advice from your line manager.

Professional Conduct

Personal and professional behaviour must conform to the standards that could reasonably be expected of such persons employed or associated with PLC including a commitment to professional standards in teaching and learning, administration and community interaction.

Professional Expectations

- Staff are required to follow any lawful and reasonable direction made by the College or its representatives.
- Staff are expected to report any breach of this Code of Conduct they witness to the Principal or a member of the Senior Leadership Team as soon as reasonably practicable.
- Contractors and volunteers must be aware and comply with the Contractor and Volunteer Code of Conduct.

Interactions with Students and their Families

In accordance with the College's Mission, Vision and Values, staff will:

- Provide a supportive, stimulating and effective environment that empowers and encourages students to reach their potential;
- Treat students with respect, impartiality, courtesy and sensitivity and, wherever possible, involve them in decisions that affect them;
- Provide accurate, timely and useful information to students in relation to their course of study, co-curricular activities, policies and processes;
- Provide an environment free from discrimination and harassment in which students, staff and parents feel safe and comfortable;
- Provide a clear statement of acceptable academic requirements and behaviours by students;
- Be committed to the ethical values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility in their interactions with students;
- Support the contribution of students and their families to the life of the College;
- Remain abreast of current knowledge and trends in education and specific subjects through participation in relevant professional development activities and membership of professional organisations.

The College recognises counsellors and nursing staff are subject to additional professional codes which may override parts of this code.

Respect and Support

Staff must at all times treat other employees, students and other members of the community with respect, courtesy and fairness, including making decisions that are procedurally fair and avoiding behaviour which might create an unsafe or unhealthy environment.

Examples of behaviour that are unacceptable include:

- Communication in offensive or aggressive tones;
- Rude or insulting behaviour;
- Sarcastic comments;
- Making decisions based on favoritism;
- Misuse of power through positions held to disadvantage or inhibit other staff members in fulfilling their duties.

Equality of opportunity and its principles of equity, diversity and social justice form the basis of all employment and education policies and practices, benefits and programs at PLC. Staff must treat all staff, students, and other individual in the PLC community in a fair, respectful and equitable manner.

Staff must ensure they contribute positively to an environment free of discrimination and harassment. This requires the implementation of fair and transparent practices of decisions, not influenced by irrelevant and unlawful attributes, as prescribed by anti-discrimination, anti-harassment and anti-bullying legislation.

Conflicts of Interest and Outside Activities

Staff should avoid situations where personal interest conflicts with the best interest of the College. This may involve outside employment or a business that a staff member, family members or friends engage in the involves PLC, a student or another staff member. It may involve a competitor of PLC or one of its suppliers.

Employment or professional activities, other than those undertaken as part of a staff member's role at PLC, must not negatively impact their ability to perform their College duties.

Outside employment must not have the potential to adversely affect staff performance or undermine, compromise or create a conflict of interest with obligations and duties to the College. Outside employment must be discussed with the Principal on every occasion as per the Conflict of Interest Policy.

Corrupt, Improper and Criminal Conduct

Staff must discharge their duties with honesty and integrity and refrain from any corrupt, improper or criminal conduct. Staff must report known and suspected instances of corrupt, improper or criminal conduct to their manager or to a member of the Senior Leadership Team or through other appropriate reporting mechanisms.

Staff must advise the Principal if they are charged with a criminal offence which is punishable by imprisonment or, if found guilty, could reasonably be seen to affect their ability to meet the inherent requirements of the work they are engaged to perform.

PLC Resources

Staff must use all PLC's resources, including both virtual and physical resources in line with appropriate College policies and avoid any waste of resources. They must safeguard, properly use, protect and care for PLC resources both physical and virtual, at all times.

Public Communication

The Principal, or her delegate is the spokesperson for the College. Unless authorised specifically to do so, staff must not make public comment on behalf of the College or in a context where a comment could be interpreted as a statement on behalf of the College.

All documents must be prepared and presented in a professional format in keeping with the College style guide and high standards of spelling, grammar and punctuation must be maintained.

The PLC College logo and letterhead must not be used for any non-school related documents and must not be used for written references without the Principal's permission.

Public communications must be approved by the appropriate member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Social Media and Technology

Whether using social media for work use or in a private capacity, staff must not do or say anything that may adversely affect their standing as an employee of PLC or the reputation of other staff or which could bring PLC into disrepute.

Staff must only ever engage with students through technology or social media for work related purposes, refer to the Child Protection section of this code for more information.

Privacy

Staff must not make improper use of information gained by being a staff member. They must ensure that personal information including data relating to other staff, students or members of the PLC community is collected, stored and used in accordance with privacy legislation, freedom of information and College policies and procedures, including records management practices.

Confidentiality

Staff are required to retain the confidentiality of all PLC information and take appropriate steps to prevent its unauthorised disclosure. These obligations apply equally to other people's confidential information (be they students, other staff, suppliers or family members) that is provided as a result of their employment.

Engagement with partners and communities
In interacting with any external party, staff will do so in the awareness that they are a representative of PLC and their personal and professional behaviour will conform to the standards that could be reasonably expected of employees of the College in such situations. Staff conduct will at all times demonstrate regard to the College's interests.

Communication

Communication in the workplace, whether verbal or written must conform to acceptable standards of behaviour at all times. Verbal and written communication must not harm or damage the College's or an individual's reputation or standing with staff, students or the PLC Community. Examples of unacceptable behaviour are statements, written or verbal that deride, insult or denigrate.

Safety and Security

Staff will acknowledge their responsibilities and obligations under occupational health and safety (OHS) laws and agree to take reasonable and practical precautions to manage hazards and risks to ensure a safe working environment.

Staff are required to:

- Uphold OHS responsibilities in line with their position requirements;
- Perform all duties in accordance with relevant OHS laws, College policies and procedures;
- Consult with all stakeholders including staff, students and contractors on any OHS matter;
- Support colleagues in return to work endeavors;
- Report hazards and take all reasonably practical steps to protect themselves and others; and
- Ensure that they do not adversely affect their work performance or cause any risk to health and safety through the consumption of alcohol or use of other drugs.

Copyright and intellectual property

The materials / programs you develop that relate to your employment with PLC, whether created on campus, at home or another venue, are the intellectual property of the College. Staff cannot give away or assign the College's intellectual property without the approval of the Principal. Staff ensure the intellectual property rights of others are not infringed.

Breach of Code of Conduct

Consequences relating to the Code of Conduct will vary depending on the nature and scale of the breach please refer to the Staff Misconduct and Discipline Policy for more information.

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