Court Grammar School

INTEGRITY • HUMILITY • COMMUNITY

Code of Conduct

Purpose
The purpose of a Code of Conduct is to describe minimum standards of conduct in all behaviour and decision making at CGS to ensure the safety and well-being of our students.

Application
The Code applies to staff, students, volunteers, parents and guardians as applicable. The term 'parents' includes guardians.

Introduction
We acknowledge the inherent vulnerability of the students in our care.

We recognise that the safety and well-being of students depends upon our vigilance and diligence and the vigilance and diligence of all adults.

The Code does not give detailed professional advice on specific behaviour. Rather, it describes the minimum requirements expected of all adults.

The Guidelines are illustrative and not an exhaustive list of the behaviours covered by the Code.

If our behaviour varies from the standards described in this Code and Guidelines, we should be prepared to explain and justify our decisions and actions.

While mandatory language such as 'must', 'shall' and 'will' is not used throughout the Code, there is a presumption the conduct described is mandatory and therefore not discretionary.

The Principal expects all staff to conduct themselves personally and professionally in a way that maintains public trust and confidence in our School.

We have a responsibility to our students and their families, other members of the school community and the wider community to provide and support safe and competent education and care of our students.

We will do your best to support other members of the school community to comply with the Code.

In cases of conflict between parts of the Code, between the Code and other school policies, or in any decision making choices, we give priority to the outcome that will be in the best interests of the safety and well-being of the child.

Breaches

Breaches of the Code must be notified to the Principal and it is a breach of the Code not to do so.

A breach of the Code may constitute a failure to follow a lawful direction from the Principal and therefore the Principal will have the discretion as to what action to take, which may include counselling, professional development or sanctions under any agreement between you and the Principal. If you are a parent, volunteer or visitor, the Principal may take such action as is appropriate in your circumstances to maintain the safety and well-being of students.

The Principal must notify the appropriate authorities of any breach of the Code that was grooming behaviour: ie. deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a student, to lower the student's inhibitions in preparation for engaging in sexual activity with the student. Examples include:

- developing relationships that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific students)
- being alone with a student in circumstances where you are unseen or unlikely to be randomly interrupted
- initiating unnecessary physical contact with students or doing things of a personal nature that a student can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- engaging in personal disclosures (including personal contact details), or exchanges containing sexual content with or in the presence of a student
- organising contact with a student or their family outside of school without the Principal's knowledge and/or consent (e.g. tutoring, sport coaching).
- having any non-curriculum related online contact with a student (including via digital media) or their family
- using any personal digital media account to contact students or their family
- photographing or videoing a student without the consent of the parent
- being in the presence of a student whilst under the influence of alcohol or non-medically prescribed drugs or offering either to a student

The Principal must notify the appropriate authorities of any breach of the Code that was sexual abuse of a child: ie sexual behaviour in circumstances where:

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

Court Grammar School

Conduct Statements

1. We act safely and competently.
2. We give priority to students' safety and well-being in all our behaviour and decision making.
3. We act in accordance with the values of the Court Grammar School's Code of Ethical Conduct.
4. We conduct ourselves in accordance with laws, agreements, policies and standards relevant to our relationship with the school community.
5. We respect the dignity, culture, values and beliefs of each member of the school community.
6. We treat personal information about members of the school community as private and confidential.
7. We give and seek the best, honest and most accurate information about the education and care of students.
8. We support all members of the school community in making informed decisions about our students.
9. We promote and preserve the trust and privilege inherent in our relationship with all members of our school community.
10. We maintain and build on the community's trust and confidence in the School.
11. We act reflectively and ethically.
12. We allow students to have a voice in their education, safety and well-being.

Conduct Statement 1

We act safely and competently.

Guidelines

1. We are expected to put the safety of our students ahead of every other relevant but secondary consideration.

2. In doing so, we are expected to act within the scope of our expertise and role within the school community.

3. If the safety and well-being of a student requires skills and experience outside our core competency, we must refer the student to the appropriate expert.

4. We are personally responsible within the context of our position in the school community for the provision of safe and competent student education. It is our responsibility to maintain the competence necessary to fulfil our role. Maintenance of competence includes participation in ongoing professional development to maintain and improve knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to our role in our school.

5. We recognise that the Principal, staff, parents and students assess our ability to act safety and competently based on our behaviour and decision making, and we do likewise in our assessment of them. We are responsible for conducting ourselves in all things such that there is no speculation, doubt or ambiguity that we do so in the best interests of our students. We must take reasonable steps to avoid situations where our decisions or behaviour could be interpreted as putting our students at risk. We must also notify the Principal as soon as possible if we find ourselves in such a position of ambiguity so that we can explain the circumstances.

6. We recognise each of our students' and their parents' right to receive accurate information; be protected against foreseeable risk of harm; and be involved in and informed about decisions in relation to their education.

7. We perform our role in the school within our professional or industry competency and according to school policies and any standards or codes applicable to our profession or industry.

8. We notify an appropriate person or the Principal of any information relevant to maintaining student safety and well-being, or any observation of questionable, unethical or unlawful behaviour, including breaches of this Code, and intervene to safeguard the student if the circumstances require it.

9. We ensure that any information we receive relevant to the safety and well-being of our students is either acted upon by us in the best interests of the student if we are the relevant decision maker, or passed to the relevant decision maker for them to act.

10. We perform our work in a safe and competent manner that is not compromised by personal health limitations, including the use of alcohol or other substances that may alter our capacity to act safely. If our health threatens our ability to work safely and competently, we have a responsibility to seek assistance to address our health needs. This may include making a confidential report to an appropriate authority.

11. We perform duties in partnership with parents and school staff and in accordance with the standards of our profession or industry (e.g. Teachers Registration Board).

12. We perform duties in accordance with wider standards relating to safety and quality in education and student care and responsibility for a safe school, such as those relating to occupational health and safety, mandatory and critical incident reporting, and participation in incident analysis and formal open disclosure procedures.

13. We make decisions about our students based on their age, ability, and in the best interests of the student's sense of security, and physical, social, emotional and mental safety.

14. We seek advice, assistance and second opinions from experts and the Principal as necessary.

Conduct Statement 2

We give priority to students' safety and well-being in all our behaviour and decision making.

Guidelines

1. We accept that all adults have individual and joint responsibility for the safety and well-being of students.

2. We ensure the safety and well-being of students are the primary focus of our actions and decisions and take precedence over any other considerations including the reputation of the school and our own needs.

3. We support the safety, health and well-being of each student, promoting and supporting decisions and behaviour that contribute to the student's self-confidence, safety and well-being.

4. We do not behave in any way that risks creating ambiguity about whether we are acting in the best interests of a student.

5. We respectfully communicate in plain language and in a way the student and those supporting their education can understand so they may fully participate in that education.

6. We support informed decision making by advising the student as appropriate and those supporting their education about education options, and assist the student and their supporters to make informed decisions about that education.

7. We endeavour to ensure the voice of the student is heard as appropriate, taking into account age and circumstances.

8. We seek out, welcome, and learn from information relevant to the safety and well-being of students in any form, including advice, disclosures, complaints, criticisms, feedback and performance reviews. We look for opportunities to engage in formal and informal group and self-reflection and professional development about our own and others' decisions so that we and the school can learn and continuously improve.

9. We recognise that all information about students collected by school staff is done so on behalf of the Principal and for the benefit of the student. Therefore, all information is disclosed to and accessible by all who have a need to know it in order to support the education, safety and well-being of the student.

10. We respectfully advocate for the safety and well-being of students above all other considerations.

11. We recognise the importance that students' education continues without interruption or disturbance.

12. We disclose to the Principal any information that a reasonable person would recognise may be relevant to the safety and well-being of students so that the Principal may make appropriate decisions to manage any risk to them. This includes any relationship with any person who may have been accused of harming children or acting unsafely towards them.

13. We recognise that students and their parents are entitled to assume that the sole focus of our engagements with students is to educate them within a safe environment that puts their well-being above all else. We understand that this trust by parents and students puts the onus on us to use our relationship with students solely for their education. We use all engagements with students and their parents, whether in person, through a third party, or via digital media for the purpose of teaching the curriculum.

14. We do not accept gifts or benefits that could be viewed as a means of influencing our objective decision making.

Conduct Statement 3

3. We act in accordance with the values of the Court Grammar School's Code of Ethical Conduct.

Guidelines

1. We are mindful that our decisions and behaviour are opportunities for students and others to see how faith integrates with life. Therefore we are responsible for educating ourselves and anyone we lead on the content of the SJGS values, and their practical application in our decision making.

2. We acknowledge that as a member of a Christian school community, we are required to strive to develop and live out our relationships with all people in a manner that is based on Gospel values.

3. We accept that as a member of a Christian school community, our conduct reflects on Christian Education and the Church, and therefore we must strive to uphold the letter and spirit of the ***Code of Ethical Conduct.***

4. You are called upon by the **Code of Ethical Conduct** to act in a manner that is:

- Based on Christian ethics
- Professional
- Timely
- Contextually appropriate

5. The ***Code of Ethical Conduct*** requires us to take an ethical approach based on values which are expressed by our:

- Respect for the dignity of each person
- Acknowledgment of the giftedness of each person
- Commitment to building positive relationships
- Confidentiality
- Accountability

6. Respecting dignity is based on:

- A conscious appreciation of each individual
- A sensitivity to the fact that each individual has emotions, fears, hopes and an innate goodness

7. Recognising the giftedness of others involves:

- Discerning these gifts
- Naming and acknowledging these gifts
- Empowering individuals and groups to use their gifts

8. Fostering positive relationships which flow from being:

- Welcoming and open
- Honest and loyal
- Trusting and trustworthy
- Willing to share knowledge, skills, resources and insights

9. Committing to appropriate confidentiality based on:

- Respect for others
- Professionalism

10. Committing to:

- The acceptance of responsibility for any action or initiative at a personal and professional level.

Conduct Statement 4

We conduct ourselves in accordance with laws, agreements, policies and standards relevant to our relationship with the school community.

Guidelines

1. Our relationship with other members of the school community is defined by whatever written or verbal agreement has given rise to that relationship. If you are a member of staff, it is your employment agreement. If you are a parent or acting in a parental capacity, it is the student's enrolment agreement. If you are a member of the school board, it is your school board constitution. If you are a visitor, it is in accordance with the permission of the Principal to be on school grounds on condition that you act safely and competently.

2. If we witness the unlawful or unsafe conduct of any other member of the school community, or breaches of policy or this Code, whether in teaching, administration, school support services, or while engaging with students in person or via digital or other media, we have both a responsibility and an obligation to notify such conduct to the Principal or an appropriate authority and take other action as necessary to protect students.

3. Where you notify the Principal or a delegate of unsafe conduct, including breaches of this Code, and that notification fails to produce an appropriate response in the circumstances, the matter may be taken to an appropriate external authority.

4. We respect both the person and property of students and their families, and of other members of the school community, and the property and finances of the school.

5. We use school property and resources responsibly and for the purposes of the school.

Conduct Statement 5

We respect the dignity, culture, values and beliefs of each member of the school community.

Guidelines

1. We respect both the person and capacity of each member of the school community, treat them with dignity, show respect for their culture, values, and beliefs.

2. We interact with members of our school community in an honest and respectful manner.

3. We perform our duties and conduct our relations with students and members of the school community with fairness and justice. This includes taking appropriate action to ensure the safety and quality of the education and care of students are not compromised because of harmful or prejudicial attitudes about culture, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, religion, disability, spirituality, political, social or health status.

4. In planning and providing education and school support services, we uphold the standards of culturally safe and competent care. This includes according due respect and consideration to the cultural knowledge, values, beliefs, personal wishes and decisions of each member of the school community. We acknowledge the changing nature of families and recognise that families can be constituted in a variety of ways.

5. We do not express racist, sexist, homophobic, ageist and other prejudicial and discriminatory attitudes and behaviours toward any member of the school community. We take appropriate action when observing any such prejudicial and discriminatory attitudes and behaviours.

6. In making professional judgements in relation to the interests and rights of a member of the school community, we do not contravene the law or breach the human rights of any person.

Conduct Statement 6

We treat personal information about members of the school community as private and confidential.

Guidelines

1. We use personal information in accordance with our school Privacy Policy.

2. We have ethical and legal obligations to treat personal information as confidential. We protect the privacy of each member of the school community by treating the information gained in the relationship as confidential, restricting its use and disclosure to the purposes defined in our school Privacy Policy.

3. If a third party asks for access to personal information, we must take reasonable steps to confirm the identity of the third party, and that it is lawful to disclose the information to them. We must inform the member of the school community that we have disclosed their personal information unless we are satisfied that there are legal reasons for not doing so.

4. We seek advice if we identify a conflict between protecting personal information and any resulting risk to the safety and well-being of a student.

5. We create and keep accurate records of conversations about significant decisions involving the safety and well-being of students.

Conduct Statement 7

We give and seek the best, honest and most accurate information about the education and care of students.

Guidelines

1. We give and seek accurate advice relevant to the education, safety and well-being of students, based on primary rather than secondary sources.

2. We fully explain the advantages and disadvantages of any options so all involved can participate constructively in decision making to deliver the best results for the student.

3. We accurately represent the role we play in the education, safety and well-being of our students.

4. Where the education, safety or well-being of a student requires expert knowledge or experience, we seek these out for the benefit of the student.

5. We seek out first hand sources of information directly from parents, colleagues and experts, or in documents and policies when making decisions or giving advice rather than relying on hearsay, opinion, rumour or assumptions.

Conduct Statement 8

We support all members of the school community in making informed decisions about our students.

Guidelines

1. We recognise that parents are the first educators of their children and equal partners in the education of students.

2. We understand that each member of the school community has skills, experience and knowledge that may be a unique resource that can be directed towards the safety and well-being of our students.

3. We actively share information about our students with their parents and the Principal so that they may make informed decisions about our students. We listen to everyone with courtesy and respect.

4. We treat the opinions of our parents and school staff about the education and well-being of our students with respect and dignity, even if we do not agree with it or believe it is misinformed or misguided.

5. We use plain language with appropriate style, tone and level in our written or verbal communication, particularly when expressing technical or expert advice, and we actively seek confirmation that we have been understood.

6. We engage with all our parents equally and fairly, regardless of their relationship status, mindful that, in the absence of court orders to the contrary, each parent has equal and joint parental responsibility for their child. We do not allow our opinion about the behaviour of parents to prevent us from engaging openly and honestly with each of them about their child's education.

7. We continue to inform and engage with a parent about the education and well-being of their child on the assumption that it is in the student's best interests to do so, regardless of the parent's level of engagement with us or the child. We respect any decision by a parent to disengage with us or their child, and we remain open to re-engage in the future.

8. We act to strengthen, preserve, restore and promote positive relationships between the student and their parents, family members, and those significant to the student, regardless of any breakdown in these relationships.

9. We do not use the behaviour of either parent as a reason for denying them or their child access to information or support from the school that are in the best interests of the student, unless doing so would place the student or school community at risk of harm.

Conduct Statement 9

We promote and preserve the trust and privilege inherent in our relationship with all members of our school community.

Guidelines

1. We promote and preserve the trust inherent in our relationship with students and with their parents.

2. We recognise that an inherent power imbalance exists within our relationship with our students that may make our students and their family vulnerable and open to exploitation. We actively preserve the dignity of all people through practised kindness and by recognising the potential vulnerability and powerlessness of each student and their family. We recognise that the power relativities between us and a student can be significant, particularly where the student is very young, has a disability, a difficult family background, has cultural differences, or experiencing emotional turmoil. This vulnerability creates a power differential in our relationship with students that must be recognised and managed with care.

3. We take reasonable measures to establish a sense of trust to protect the physical, psychological, emotional, social and cultural well-being of each of our students. We protect students who are vulnerable, including but not limited to students with disability, from exploitation and harm.

4. We have a responsibility to maintain appropriate boundaries with our students and to actively support other adults to do likewise, including bringing to their attention any failure to do so.

5. We may have personal or recreational relationships outside our school role with our students' families and friends, or with school staff. We are aware that dual relationships may compromise student care and well-being. In cases of overlap or conflict between our dual relationships, we act with the primary intent of the safety and well-being of our students, which may require us to withdraw from a social relationship.

6. We do not engage in any behaviour with a student that could be interpreted by a reasonable person as being a friendship.

7. We do not engage in any behaviour with a student that a reasonable person could interpret as creating an opportunity to engage in emotional, physical or sexual intimacy with a student.

8. We recognise that the power imbalance between us and our students means that the onus is on us to avoid any ambiguity or misunderstanding by a student or third party about our intent in our behaviour towards them.

9. We understand that the power imbalance between us and our students means a student is unable to give their consent to engaging in emotional, physical or sexual intimacy with us, regardless of the legal age of consent, or the student's age or maturity. We must therefore not seek nor rely on such express or implied consent from a student to engage in an intimate relationship.

10. We understand that the power imbalance between us and our students may continue to influence students' choices beyond the date when they cease to be students at our school. We must therefore not engage in emotional, physical or sexual intimacy with a former student within two years of them ceasing enrolment at our school, or them turning 21, whichever occurs latest.

11. We take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and security of the possessions and property of our students and their families that are in our care.

12. We do not knowingly mislead parents or make misrepresenting statements to them, or withhold information relevant to their ability to make informed decisions about their children unless required by law.

13. We recognise that there may be rare exceptions to full disclosure to parents. Such disclosure of information may compromise law enforcement or other risk management processes, or the privacy and reputation of those involved. We seek legal or other expert advice in resolving such situations, recognising that parents have the right to know about any risk to their children.

Conduct Statement 10

We maintain and build on the community's trust and confidence in the School.

Guidelines

1. We conduct, maintain and build public trust and confidence in our school and other members of the school community.

2. Any unlawful and unethical actions in our personal life risk adversely affecting both our own and the school's reputation in the eyes of the public. If the good standing of either you or the school was to diminish, this might jeopardise the inherent trust between the school and parents, as well as the community more generally, necessary for effective relationships and the best education of our students.

3. We notify the Principal of our involvement in any criminal investigation or other legal process that may undermine trust and confidence in our judgement or care of our students.

4. We consider the interests of the School when exercising our right to freedom of speech and participating in public, political and academic debate, including publication.

5. We never place the reputation of the School above the safety and well-being of our students.

Conduct Statement 11

We act reflectively and ethically.

Guidelines

1. We engage with the school reflectively and ethically to ensure that we consciously put student safety and well-being at the forefront of our behaviour and decisions.

2. We develop and maintain appropriate and best practice advice, support and care for each student and their family.

3. We evaluate our conduct and competency according to this Code, the terms and conditions of our relationship with the school, and school policies.

4. We contribute to the professional development of school staff as appropriate.

5. We contribute to continuous improvement by supporting opportunities to record, assess and learn from incidents involving student safety and well-being.

6. We advise the Principal of any reduction in our capacity to act in the best interests of the safety and well-being of students due to health, social or other factors, while we seek ways of addressing the deficiency.

7. We take care of the safety and well-being of all members of the school community so that we all may fully contribute and cooperate in providing for the safety and well-being of our students.

Conduct Statement 12

We allow students to have a voice in their education, safety and well-being.

Guidelines

1. We recognise that while we and all adults have responsibility for the safety and well-being of students, students have opinions and ideas about their education and well-being.

2. We allow age-appropriate opportunities and forums for our students to reflect on and express their opinions and ideas and we treat those expressions with respect and care.

3. We regularly invite our students to participate in decision making about their education and well-being and offer them constructive feedback on their ideas and opinions.

4. We encourage our students to inform us or the Principal of any concerns they have about their own or other students' education, safety or well-being. We follow up those concerns and keep students informed of how they are resolved.

Patricia Rodrigues
Principal

Board Approved:	November 2016
Revised:	
Staff Inducted:	January 2017
For revision:	November 2019