

# BOS Code of Conduct: Teachers, Assistant Teachers and Support Teachers



## A. Introduction

The Code of Conduct identifies principles, which describe the professional conduct, personal conduct and professional competence expected of a teacher by their colleagues and the community. It is based on three ethical principles:

Integrity  
Respect  
Responsibility

As teachers, we use our expert knowledge to provide experiences that inspire and facilitate student learning. The values that underpin our profession are integrity, respect and responsibility.

We hold a unique position of trust and influence, which we recognise in our relationships with students, parents, colleagues and the wider community.

We demonstrate our **integrity** by:

- acting in the best interest of students
- maintaining a professional relationship with students, parents, colleagues and the wider community
- behaving in ways that respect and advance the profession.

We demonstrate our **respect** by:

- acting with care and compassion
- treating students fairly and impartially
- holding our colleagues in high regard
- acknowledging parents as partners in the education of their children.

We demonstrate our **responsibility** by:

- providing quality teaching
- maintaining and developing our professional practice
- working cooperatively with colleagues in the best interest of our students.

## **B. Purpose**

This document codifies what is already common practice within the teaching profession.

Its purpose is to:

- promote adherence to the values teachers see as underpinning their profession
- provide a set of principles that will guide teachers in their everyday conduct and assist them in solving ethical dilemmas
- affirm the accountability of teachers
- promote confidence in our teachers

The Code of Conduct will not cover every situation. If a teacher is in doubt about a situation they should consult with the Principal before proceeding.

## **C. Professional Conduct**

Teachers' professional conduct is characterised by the quality of the relationships they have with their students; their students' parents (guardians and carers) and families; their colleagues and the wider community.

### **1. Relationships with Students**

#### **1.1 Teachers provide opportunities for all students to learn**

The main focus of teaching is student learning. Teachers demonstrate their commitment to student learning by:

- a. accepting professional responsibility for the provision of quality teaching
- b. having high expectations of every student, recognising and developing each student's abilities, skills and talents
- c. maintaining a safe and challenging learning environment
- d. communicating well and appropriately with their students.
- e. knowing their students well and respecting their individual differences
- f. considering all viewpoints fairly

## **1.2 Teachers and students treat each other with courtesy and respect**

Teachers:

- a. work to create an environment which promotes mutual respect
- b. model and engage in respectful and impartial language
- c. are referred to as Mr - - - or Mrs - - - , or, if preferred, Sir or Miss
- d. treat students' property with respect and expect their own, and the school's, property to be treated in the same way.
- e. protect students from intimidation, embarrassment, humiliation or harm
- f. enhance student autonomy and sense of self worth, and encourage students to develop and reflect on their own values
- g. respect a student's privacy in sensitive matters, such as health or family problems, and only reveal confidential matters when appropriate. That is:

- if the student has consented to the information being used in a certain way
- to prevent or lessen a serious threat to life, health, safety or welfare of a person (including the student)
- as part of an investigation into unlawful activity
- if the disclosure is required or mandated by law
- to prevent a crime or enforce the law

(When in doubt about confidential matters, a teacher should consult with the head of their school.)

- h. refrain from discussing students' personal problems in situations where the information will not be treated confidentially
- i. use consequences commensurate with the offence when disciplining students

### **1.3 Teachers work within the limits of their professional expertise**

In fulfilling their role, teachers carry out a wide range of responsibilities. They support students by knowing their strengths and the limits of their professional expertise.

Teachers:

- a. seek to ensure that they have the physical, mental and emotional capacity to carry out their professional responsibilities
- b. are aware of the limits of their expertise, and make decisions to refer matters to the Principal with the best interests of the student uppermost in the consideration
- c. are truthful when making statements about their qualifications and realistic when evaluating their own competencies

### **1.4 Teachers maintain objectivity in their relationships with students**

In their professional role, teachers do not behave as a friend or a parent. They:

- a. interact with students without displaying bias or preference
- b. make decisions in the students' best interests
- c. do not draw students into their personal agendas
- d. do not seek recognition at the expense of professional objectivity and goals

**1.5 Teachers are always in a professional relationship with the students in their school, whether at school or not.**

Teachers hold a unique position of influence and trust that should not be violated or compromised. They exercise their responsibilities in ways that recognise that there are limits or boundaries to their relationships with students. The following examples outline some of those limits, but they are not exhaustive.

A professional relationship **will** be violated if a teacher:

- a. has a sexual relationship with a student
- b. uses sexual innuendo or inappropriate language and/or material with students
- c. touches a student without a valid reason
- d. holds conversations of a personal nature or has contact with a student via written or electronic means including email, letters, telephone, text messages or chat lines, without a valid context
- e. invites a student or students back to their home, particularly if no-one else is present

- f. accepts gifts, which could be reasonably perceived as being used to influence them, from students or their parents

A professional relationship **may** be violated if a teacher attends parties or socialises with students or parents

## **2. Relationships with Parents, Families and the Wider Community**

### **2.1 Teachers maintain a professional relationship with parents**

Teachers should be respectful of and courteous to parents. In their professional role, teachers do not behave as a friend. They should:

- a. use formal codes to address parents, for example Mr or Mrs ---, and expect to be addressed in a similar fashion
- b. consider parents' perspectives when making decisions that have an impact on the education or wellbeing of a student
- c. communicate and consult with parents in a timely, understandable and sensitive manner
- d. take appropriate action when responding to parental concerns

### **2.2 Teachers work in collaborative relationships with students' families**

Teachers recognise that their students come from a diverse range of cultural contexts and seek to work collaboratively with students' families and communities within those contexts.

### **3. Relationships with Colleagues**

Collegiality is an integral part of the work of teachers. They demonstrate this by:

- a. treating each other with courtesy and respect
- b. valuing the input of their colleagues
- c. using appropriate forums for constructive debate on professional matters
- d. sharing expertise and knowledge in a variety of collaborative contexts
- e. respecting different approaches to teaching
- f. providing support for each other, particularly those new to the profession
- g. sharing information relating to the wellbeing of students

### **D. Personal Conduct**

Although there is no definitive boundary between the personal and professional conduct of a teacher, it is expected that teachers will:

- a. be positive role models at school and in the community
- b. respect the rule of law and provide a positive example in the performance of civil obligations
- c. not exploit their position for personal or financial gain
- d. ensure that their personal or financial interests do not interfere with the performance of their duties
- e. act with discretion and maintain confidentiality when discussing workplace issues

**E. Professional Competence**

Teachers value their professionalism, setting and maintaining high standards of competence. Therefore, they:

- a. are knowledgeable in their areas of expertise
- b. are committed to pursuing their own professional learning
- c. complete their duties in a responsible, thorough and timely way

I have read, understood and agree to abide by the terms of the BOS Code of Conduct:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date: