

Employee Code of Conduct

The Code contains four sections.

- **Section A: What does the Code do?**
- **Section B: When and where does the Code apply?**
- **Section C: General responsibilities of employees**
- **Section D: Specific areas where more detailed guidance is required**

Section A: What does the Code do?

The code sets out the standards of behaviour which are expected at St Clare's, Oxford. St Clare's is an international college which welcomes students, teachers and support staff from many different countries, cultures and religious backgrounds. It is within this context that expectations in relation to interactions between students and all other adults within the community need to be set down so that best practice is maintained and that studying and working at the College represents a caring, positive experience for students and employees alike. The Code applies to everyone who is employed by St Clare's.

The Senior Management Group (SMG) refers to the Principal, the Bursar, the Director of Marketing, Admissions and Development, the Vice Principal, Pastoral and the Vice Principal, Academic.

The Code has three purposes:

1. It reinforces our core values and encourages high standards of professionalism on the part of employees in their dealings with each other and with students.
2. It provides information to employees about the kind of conduct which the College expects.
3. It explains what will happen if the standards set down in the Code are breached and the likely disciplinary and/or legal consequences.

Section B: When and where does the Code apply?

The Code applies for those periods when students are registered on a course at St Clare's. These courses can vary in length from as short as a week to two years on the IB Diploma. The code applies on weekends and also during all holiday periods when there is any contact with students. For PIB and IB students, this includes the long summer holiday up to the 31 August of the year which the student leaves.

Section C: General responsibilities of employees

As an international college, there is an even greater need for awareness and sensitivity on our part with regard to our interactions with each other and with our students. St Clare's is home to many different nationalities and it is important that the College ethos reflects a culture which celebrates that diversity and that we are an open, tolerant and respectful community. This section should be read in conjunction with St Clare's [The Equal Opportunities Policy and Dignity at Work Policy](#) and Keeping Children Safe in Education.

In practical terms this means that:

1. We help our students feel secure and supported while they are with us.
2. We help them understand and appreciate the cultural norms that apply in Britain and also its legal restrictions.
3. We lead by example in our relations and interactions with each other and model good behaviour to our students. We moderate our students' behaviour in relation to each other in an effort to avoid any student feeling marginalised or discriminated against.
4. We are strong advocates for our students and never speak disparagingly of a student whether in private discussion or elsewhere. This does not prevent staff from engaging in appropriate, professional and suitably private discussions about any concern regarding a student's academic or behavioural standards.
5. We do not show favouritism.
6. We respect individuals. We recognise their human rights and freedoms whilst, at the same time, balancing them against the lawful needs and rules of St Clare's and the rights and freedoms of others.
7. We interact with students and colleagues in a manner which celebrates difference: we do not discriminate unfairly on grounds such as gender, race, colour, language, sexual orientation, religion, political and other opinions, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, age or physical characteristics.
8. We treat colleagues and students fairly, hearing and considering both sides of any question or complaint, taking decisions without bias, and giving reasons for decisions.
9. We conduct ourselves politely, professionally and thoughtfully in our interactions with each other.
10. We value internal discipline and positive attitudes; we do not discuss any dissatisfaction about the College with a student inside or outside the College but instead use the processes set out in the College's complaints procedure if we have a grievance.
11. We respect College property and the property of others when it comes into our care.

Section D: Specific areas where more detailed guidance applies

Intimate relationships - Staff should also be familiar with St Clare's [Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#) and also the government guideline 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.

1. Employees must never engage in inappropriate relationships - sexual or otherwise - with students, irrespective of the age or gender of the parties concerned and irrespective of whether or not the student agrees to the relationship. It does not matter whether the student is legally an adult, i.e. over the age of 18 as the employee-student relationships is one of trust - see 3.1 below. Private one-to-one meetings with students in the employee's home or at social events outside the College are prohibited as well as using your personal phone number and personal social media and email accounts to contact students. This includes meeting students at their own home. This rule applies equally to weekends and college holidays.
2. Boarding staff may talk to students in their houses and teachers may talk to students in the non-residential areas of the College, though it would be prudent to have another person present even in a "public" area if the matter under discussion is serious or very delicate. The students' bedrooms are private areas and only residential, cleaning and maintenance staff, as well as Senior Management (or those who have been given express permission by a member of the SMG) can access those areas and only in connection with the fulfilment of their professional duties.
3. Disciplinary consequences will result where there is a breach of these rules: in addition, the following legal provisions need to be understood.
 - 3.1 The *Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000* makes it a criminal offence, namely the offence of "abuse of a position of trust", punishable by imprisonment and/or a fine for a person aged

18 or over who is in a position of trust in relation to another person under that age to engage in sexual activity with that person; and

3.2 The *Education (Restriction of Employment) Regulations 2000* under which a teacher can be barred or restricted from teaching by the Secretary of State if the teacher is dismissed for misconduct or resigns to avoid dismissal for misconduct.

Physical contact

1. Employees must not have inappropriate physical contact with students. You should avoid:
 - 1.1 Words, actions or physical contact which might be taken as a sexual advance which could in some circumstances amount to an indecent assault; and
 - 1.2 Any form of aggressive contact such as holding, pushing, pulling or hitting, which could amount to a criminal assault, unless for the purposes of lawful restraint to safeguard another person's welfare.

Drugs and substances

Controlled drugs (other than prescribed by a medical practitioner), substances for purposes of abuse and their paraphernalia (collectively, "drugs") must not be brought on to or used on College premises. They must never be shared with students. This rule applies to any premises and sites used for College activities including those used for evening, overnight and extended trips.

Alcohol

1. Employees must remain within the law concerning alcohol use and supply (The Licensing Act of 1964, for England and Wales). It stipulates that it is an offence for a person under the age of 18 to buy alcohol or for another person to sell alcohol to a person under the age of 18, with the following exceptions
 - 1.1 In licensed premises, 16 and 17 year olds can have alcohol (beer, wine and cider, but not spirits) bought for them by their parents or those acting with a duty of care, but only to consume with a meal (not a snack).
 - 1.2 When students are in the care of an employee whether at College premises or otherwise:
 - Employees must be extremely moderate in their consumption of alcohol when in the company of students whether in this country or on trips overseas.
 - Employees must not consume alcohol if they are going to drive students up to 12 hours in advance of when the driving takes place
 - Soft drinks must always be available whenever drinks are offered.

Visiting homes

1. Employees must not invite individual students to their homes as this action can be misconstrued or leave the employee open to suspicion. If an employee wishes to hold a social gathering involving a group of students at their own home, they must always obtain permission from a member of the SMG. If a student does attend the home of an employee alone for any reason, this should be reported to a member of the SMG on the next day or at the earliest opportunity.
2. Employees may not make private arrangements with students or their parents to provide extra tuition or coaching on or away from College premises.

Providing transport for students

1. Employees must not give lifts to students in their own vehicles without the express permission of a member of the Senior Management Group. The exceptions are:
 - 1.1 The College nurse, boarding staff and others who have express permission to drive students to hospital or to medical appointments.
 - 1.2 The Activities Department who have permission to drive students to activities authorised by the College.
 - 1.3 Vice Principal (Pastoral) and Assistant Principal Pastoral in emergency situations when they are on call.

Reporting misconduct

1. If an employee suspects misconduct in another employee in relation to drugs, or the use of alcohol, the suspicion must be reported to a member of the SMG.
2. If an employee suspects misconduct by a student this should be brought to the attention of the student's House Parent, Personal Tutor, Assistant Principal Pastoral or member of SMG as appropriate.
3. If an employee is suspected of sexual misconduct, or other behaviours which fall under The Child Protection Act, the Principal should be informed. This also applies if it is the Designated Safeguarding Lead who is suspected of sexual misconduct.

If it is the Principal who is suspected of sexual misconduct, then the Chair of Governors should be informed

4. If an employee suspects misconduct or has a low-level concern about another employee, the Principal should be informed. Low-level concerns that are not reported or addressed might have serious consequences on welfare of students and can be signs of grooming which can lead to a sexual abuse of a student. Examples of low-level of concerns are: favouritism, being overly friendly, meeting a student in a secluded part of the college, frequently touching/ hugging students/ being 'tactile', giving a student excessive amount of time for support either before or after school or during break and lunch time, taking a particular group of students on trips more often than other groups of students. The list is not exhaustive. The College takes low-level concerns seriously.
5. All employees have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote student welfare, and to act at all times in accordance with the College's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy. If approached by a student regarding a welfare issue, it is important to remember that confidentiality cannot be offered to students as it may be necessary to pass on information in the interests of student welfare and safety. If a case of child abuse or suspected child abuse is reported to you, do not give a guarantee that you will keep what is said confidential or secret. If you are told about abuse you must tell the Designated Safeguarding Lead:
 - 4.1 Elena Hesse, Vice Principal, Pastoral for students who are taught at the Banbury Road site (IB World School) during the academic year, and also for students who are taught at the Bardwell Road site (International College) and for all students on summer courses.
6. This section should be read in conjunction with the College's [Whistle-Blowing Policy](#)

Smoking

Employees should not encourage smoking by students. Employees must not supply students with cigarettes, e-cigarettes or accept either of these from students.

Employees must abide by the [College's Smoking Policy](#)

Dress Code

1. Employees at St Clare's should dress in a professional way appropriate to their role in the College, one which would be unlikely to cause embarrassment or to offer offence to students, parents or colleagues in our international community. It must be remembered that parents, prospective students, agents and others visit the College on an almost daily basis and that smart casual is the minimum acceptable dress code. Very casual items such as shorts (other than for sports), revealing clothing and flip-flops are not acceptable.
2. If a uniform is provided as part of the job, it must be worn in its entirety at all times when on duty, i.e. including weekends and evening shifts.
3. In all cases, the Principal, Course Directors, the Bursar and Vice Principals have the authority to decide what is appropriate dress.

Influencing students

Employees must maintain an appropriate balance between frank and open discussion about religious, political or other issues, on the one hand, and imposing or exerting excessive influence over students in relation to these matters on the other.

Verbal communications

Verbal communications must be conducted in an appropriate and professional way. It is unacceptable to use ridicule, insults, sustained or repeated yelling, profanity, belittling or intimidating or threatening statements or behaviour to anyone who works or studies at St Clare's or to those who visit the College in any capacity.

Computer facilities

1. Employees must not abuse computer facilities available to them at College. The following conduct is a breach of discipline and may also be a criminal offence. This policy should be read in conjunction with the College's ePolicy.
 - 1.1 Accessing and/or distribution of pornographic or other offensive material via/from the internet.
 - 1.2 Computer hacking which is an offence contrary to Section 1 of the Computer Misuse Act 1990.
 - 1.3 Accessing and/or distributing material which promotes the activities of extremist organisations.
2. Employees must abide by the [College's e-Policy](#) which also deals with the appropriate use of social media.

Health & Safety

1. Employees must take all reasonable care in relation to their own safety and the safety of others and must not engage in any conduct or activities likely to endanger themselves, colleagues or students or likely to cause damage to the College or College property.
2. Employees have an obligation to report any unsafe situations on College premises, including unsafe working practices, to the Bursar.
3. Employees must abide by all of the College's Health & Safety policies

Trips

Employees must follow the correct procedures for seeking and gaining approval for trips involving students which take place in the UK or outside the UK. There are no such things as 'quasi-official' trips at St Clare's and every trip must be organised according to the guidelines laid down in the various Trips Policies as appropriate. For the sake of clarity, any trip involving students at St Clare's on both sites which takes place during weekends or College holidays is governed by the relevant Trips Policies.

As explained in Section A, one of the purposes of this Code is to state what will happen if standards are breached. The College takes a strict approach to breaches of this Code, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious breaches and occurrences of low-level concerns or 'blurring the boundaries' may amount to gross misconduct, resulting in immediate dismissal. If there are several reports of low-level concerns relating to one employee, this will be re-classified as 'allegation'. Where appropriate and/or required, the College will report any actual or alleged breach to the relevant authorities and further regulatory, professional or criminal sanctions may follow.

Approved by the SMG: September 2021

Reviewed by the Governors - March 2021