



Lake Joondalup Baptist College

Staff Code of Conduct

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Staff Code of Conduct and Ethics

Lake Joondalup Baptist College encourages, educates, and equips students for faithful lives of service under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We exist to promote a biblical view of knowledge and learning in a Christian environment and educate students to explore possibilities through a diverse curriculum.

All students, parents, teachers, and staff have the right to be safe and feel safe in their College community. With this right comes the responsibility to be law-abiding citizens and to be accountable for actions that put at risk the safety or wellbeing of others.

The Code of Conduct has been developed to support staff. In all our dealings, we are expected to conduct ourselves in a manner that reflects Christian principles of compassion, sensitivity, honesty and grace. These embody the professional and personal conduct and competence expected of a member of staff by the College community. This includes the right to be respected, valued, and appreciated in all interactions.

This Code of Conduct provides members of the College Community with guidelines for the effective development of positive relationships within the community and assists in promoting the values that are in keeping with the College's Mission.

It is based on the values set out in the accompanying Code of Ethics, namely; integrity, respect and responsibility and relates to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.

Code of Conduct

Preface

Lake Joondalup Baptist College is committed to providing a child-safe environment which safe guards all students and is committed to promoting practices which provides for the safety, wellbeing and welfare of our children and young people. Lake Joondalup Baptist College expects all College community members including staff, volunteers, students, visitors and contractors to share this commitment.

College staff are in a unique position of responsibility and authority and must make every effort to make sure that our College provides a child safe environment. Teachers in particular are of primary importance when it comes to detecting abuse and preventing abuse from occurring.

Introduction

This Code of Conduct details the standards of behaviour expected of all employees of the College.

This Code does not attempt to provide a rigid, detailed and exhaustive list of what to do in every aspect of your work. Instead, it sets out general expectations of the standards of behaviour required and gives some examples of the types of behaviour that are or are not acceptable.

The Code places an obligation on all employees to take responsibility for their own conduct and to work with colleagues cooperatively to achieve a consultative and collaborative workplace where children are safe and people are happy and proud to work.

In all situations, and in particular regard to managing students' behaviour, the College forbids any form of child abuse, corporal and degrading punishment.

This Code of Conduct will not only help in making our College a safer environment for children, it will also reduce the risk that staff will be unjustly accused of unprofessional or abusive conduct.

Nothing in this Code should be taken to limit the circumstances in which the College may take disciplinary action in respect of an employee.

This Code should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection Policy, which can be found on the College website.

Principles of the Code of Behaviour

As the College has a duty of care to its students, the expectation and understanding is that all staff and students will act in the best interests of the students and that the welfare and safety of students will be of paramount concern. All interactions therefore should be transparent and meet the principles of the Code of Conduct.

This Code of Conduct is intended to provide staff and community members with guidance as to the expected behaviours of all staff, visitors, volunteers and contractors engaged by the College.

Staff are expected to behave in a manner which promotes the safeguarding role of the College, in a manner which is in accord with College expectations, professional expectations and best practice of the teaching profession, as well as the expected norms of our community. You must be fully aware that your actions will be subject to appropriate scrutiny by other staff and by the community and you must be prepared to give an account of your behaviours to leadership when requested.

Any staff member who is unsure about appropriate boundaries in a particular circumstance or must act contrary to either specific or implied boundaries, must consult as early as possible with their line manager to discuss the possible breaches. If a breach inadvertently occurs the staff member must bring it to the attention of senior management immediately.

Staff are responsible for their own actions and should avoid any conduct which might be construed by a reasonable person as inappropriate. When considering their actions, staff could consider the following:

- how might this interaction be perceived by others?
- am I treating this student differently from others?
- can I achieve the same outcome through a different interaction?
- would I do this or say this if a colleague were present?
- would I condone my conduct if I observed it in another adult?
- what guidance would my employer give me in this situation?

Principles

Principle 1 Employee expectations

As an employee, you must be familiar with the school's policies and procedures, know where you can access them for checking purposes and be able and willing to comply with the school's policies and procedures. The policies and procedures are available on the College Portal.

If you are uncertain about the scope or content of a policy with which you must comply, or any legal obligations to which you are subject, you should seek clarification from your direct supervisor, line manager or the Principal.

You should also be familiar with the legislation under which you are employed as this may specify requirements with which you need to comply.

As a school employee, you are expected to:

- (a) perform your duties to the best of your ability and be accountable for your performance;
- (b) follow reasonable instructions given by your supervisor or his/her delegate;
- (c) comply with lawful directions;
- (d) carry out your duties in a professional, competent and conscientious manner, while seeking suitable opportunities to improve your knowledge and skills, including through participation in relevant professional development;
- (e) act honestly and in good faith in fulfilling your duties;
- (f) be respectful, courteous and responsive in dealing with your colleagues, students, parents and members of the public;
- (g) work collaboratively with your colleagues;
- (h) ensure that your conduct, whether during or outside working hours, is consistent with the ethos of the school and does not damage the reputation of the school; and
- (i) dress in a professional manner that is appropriate for your role.

Principle 2 Good teaching practice

As a professional teacher it is expected that you will provide quality teaching appropriate for your students, cater to the diversity of learners in your care and make every effort to help all students equally so they have every chance of succeeding.

Good teaching also means you will work closely with your colleagues, and other carers of your students, and respond appropriately and promptly to any concerns they have.

Principle 3 Respect for people

Staff have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of students and other staff

The school expects employees to treat each other with respect and courtesy. Our daily interaction with others reflects on the school's reputation. Therefore, all employees are expected to be approachable, respectful, courteous, and prompt when dealing with students, parents, other employees, and members of the community.

Employees who work with students have a special responsibility in presenting themselves as appropriate role models for those students. Modelling courtesy and respect in your interactions with students can have a profoundly positive influence on a student's personal and social development.

Principle 4 Duty of care and Work Health and Safety

As a school employee, you have a duty of care to students in your charge to take all reasonable steps to protect them from risks of harm that can be reasonably predicted.

The duty encompasses a wide range of matters, including (but not limited to):

- the provision of adequate supervision
- ensuring grounds, premises and equipment are safe for students' use
- implementing strategies to prevent bullying from occurring in the school, and
- providing medical assistance (if competent to do so) or seeking assistance from a medically trained person to aid a student who is injured or becomes sick at school.

Duty of care

As an employee of the school, you have a duty of care to students in your charge. That duty is to take all reasonable steps to protect students from risks of harm that can be reasonably predicted. For example, preventative measures should be taken against risks from known hazards and from foreseeable risk situations. The standard of care that is required, such as the degree of supervision, needs to be commensurate with the students' maturity and ability.

Duty of care to students applies during all activities and functions conducted or arranged by the School. The risks associated with any activity need to be assessed and managed before the activity is undertaken.

You should ensure that you are aware of all the school's health, safety and student welfare policies, including Duty of Care, Excursions, inter School Sport and Exchange Programs.

Work Health and Safety

You also have a responsibility under Work Health and Safety legislation to take care of your own health and safety at work as well as that of others in the work place. It is also your responsibility to ensure that your activities do not place your own safety at risk or that of your co-workers, students or other persons that you may come into contact with at work.

Considerations of safety relates to both physical and psychological well-being of individuals.

You should ensure that you are aware of and comply with the School's Workplace Health and Safety Policy.

Principle 5 Maintain professional relationships between employees and students

Teachers need to treat their students with courtesy and respect and provide an environment that encourages their students to do the same.

As a school employee, you are expected to always behave in ways that promote the safety, welfare and well-being of children and young people. You must actively seek to prevent harm to children and young people, and to support those who have been harmed.

While not all employees are required to manage and supervise students, it is important for all school employees to understand and observe the school's child protection policies.

The detection and prevention of grooming behaviour is a vital consequence of complying with this principle.

Principle 6 Appropriate use of electronic communication and social networking sites

The school provides electronic communication facilities for its students and employees for educational or administrative purposes. It may monitor and view data stored or transmitted using the school's facilities. All staff and students must abide by the school's appropriate use of technology policies. The fast and permanent nature of electronic communication requires staff to be particularly vigilant with their own communications and that of their students.

Principle 7 Use of alcohol drugs or tobacco

Work Health and Safety is of fundamental importance to the school. Maintaining a safe work environment requires everyone's continuous cooperation.

You are responsible for ensuring your capacity to perform your duties is not impaired by the use of alcohol or drugs and that the use of such substances does not put at risk you or any other person's health and safety.

The use of illegal substances on the school property is strictly forbidden.

Principle 8 Identifying and managing conflicts of interest

Personal interests can, or have the potential to, influence a person's capacity to perform their duties impartially and in turn compromise their integrity and that of the school.

A conflict of interest can involve:

- (a) pecuniary interests i.e. financial gain or loss or other material benefits;
- (b) non-pecuniary interests i.e. favours, personal relationships and associations.

Conflict of interest also include:

- (a) the interests of members of your immediate family or relatives (where these interests are known);
- (b) the interests of your own, business partners or associates, or those of your workplace; or
- (c) the interests of your friends.

Principle 9 Declaring gifts, benefits or bribes

As an employee, you may be offered a gift or benefit as an act of gratitude. There are some circumstances when to refuse a gift would be perceived as rude, insulting or hurtful. You are expected to exercise sound judgement when deciding whether to accept a gift or benefit.

Accepting gifts and other benefits has the potential to compromise your position by creating a sense of obligation and undermining your impartiality. It may also affect the reputation of the school and its staff. You must not create the impression that any person or organisation is influencing the school or the decisions or actions of any of its employees.

Principle 10 Communication and protecting confidential information

School employees must maintain the confidentiality of school information. You should be mindful of confidentiality when in discussions with parents, staff, family members and others.

You cannot always give a guarantee of confidentiality especially if the matter under discussion is related to mandatory reporting.

School employees should be aware that there are strong legal requirements around the collection, release and protection of privacy of information.

Before asking for information or disclosing information staff need to assure themselves that they are acting in a legal manner. If unsure you should discuss the matter with your line manager.

Principle 11 Record keeping

All employees have a responsibility to:

- (a) create and securely maintain full, accurate and honest records of their activities, decisions, appropriate school-based interactions and other relevant transactions;
- (b) up load or store records in the school's record systems, as required; and
- (c) not deliberately access school information to which they are not authorised to do so.

Principle 12 Copyright and intellectual property

When creating material, you need to ensure the intellectual property rights of others are not infringed and information is recorded about any third-party copyright/other rights included in materials.

If you develop material that relates to your employment with the school, the copyright in that material will belong to the school. This may apply even if the material was developed in your own time or at home.

How to comply

I will:

- accept the College's Statement of Faith and agree to carry out all duties in accordance with, and to actively uphold and to contribute to, the Christian practice of the College
- declare to the Principal any foreseeable breaches of the Code of Conduct. This should be done in writing using: codeofconduct@ljbc.wa.edu.au
- Act in accordance with Lake Joondalup Baptist College's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures at all times.
- Behave respectfully, courteously and ethically towards children and their families and towards other staff.
- Listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they communicate (verbally or non-verbally) that they do not feel safe or well.
- Promote the human rights, safety and wellbeing of all children attending Lake Joondalup Baptist College.
- Demonstrate appropriate personal and professional boundaries.
- Consider and respect the diverse backgrounds and needs of children.
- Create an environment that promotes and enables children's participation and is welcoming, culturally safe and inclusive for all children and their families.
- report objectively observable behaviour which breaches or is suspected of breaching this Code, (other than those subject to mandatory reporting obligations) to:

Respondent

Non-teaching staff

Non-Teaching staff under CMT

Primary teachers PK-6

Heads of House

Secondary teachers

Secondary Heads of Learning

Heads of Department

College Management Team

College Principal

Contact Person

Executive Business Manager

College Management Team (CMT) Line Manager

Dean of Primary or a member of PrimLead

Dean of Students

Secondary Manager Staff Development or College Principal

Dean of Studies

Dean of Studies

College Principal or Chair of College Board

Member of CMT or Chair of College Board

- Involve children in making decisions about activities, policies and processes that concern them wherever possible.
- Contribute, where appropriate, to Lake Joondalup Baptist College's policies, discussions, learning and reviews about child safety and wellbeing.
- Identify and mitigate risks to children's safety and wellbeing as required by Lake Joondalup Baptist College risk assessment and management policy or process.
- Respond to any concerns or complaints of child harm or abuse promptly and in line with Lake Joondalup Baptist College and procedure for receiving and responding to complaints.
- Report all suspected or disclosed child harm or abuse as required by The Children and Community Services Act 2004, and by Lake Joondalup Baptist College's policy and procedure on internal and external reporting.
- Comply with Lake Joondalup Baptist College's protocols on communicating with children.
- Comply with
 - The Privacy Act (1988) and Amendments
 - *Records Retention Schedule for Non-Government Schools*;
 - Australian Society of Archivists Inc, 2nd Edition
- and Lake Joondalup Baptist College's policies and procedures on record keeping and information sharing.

I will not

- Engage in any unlawful activity with or in relation to a child.
- Engage in any activity that is likely to physically, sexually or emotionally harm a child.
- Unlawfully discriminate against any child or their family members.
- Be alone with a child unnecessarily.
- Arrange personal contact, including online contact, with children I am working with, for a purpose unrelated to Lake Joondalup Baptist College's activities.
- Disclose personal or sensitive information about a child, including images of a child, unless the child and their parent or legal guardian consent or unless I am required to do so by Lake Joondalup Baptist College's policy and procedure on reporting.
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children, or show or provide children with access to inappropriate images or material.
- Work with children while under the influence of alcohol or prohibited drugs.
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child harm or abuse.

What happens if I breach the Code of Conduct?

All alleged breaches of the Staff Code of Conduct will be subject to scrutiny and if substantiated the person may be warned, suspended or have their employment terminated. If the breach is suspected to have involved grooming behaviour, the school is obliged to report this to the Director General of the Department of Education as a reportable incident. Any potentially illegal activity will be reported to the Police and appropriate actions will be taken by senior management.

- The consequences of inappropriate behaviour and breaches of this Code will depend on the nature of the breach.
- Employees are required to report all objectively observable behaviour, that is not permitted by the Code, other than those subject to mandatory reporting obligations, to the Principal, a designated senior staff member - as tabled on page 7 of this policy or the chair of the school's governing body. NB: If the prohibited behaviour is by the Principal then it should be reported to the chair of the governing body.
- Factors the school may consider when deciding what action to take may include:
 - (a) the seriousness of the breach;
 - (b) the likelihood of the breach occurring again;
 - (c) whether the employee has committed the breach more than once;
 - (d) the risk the breach poses to employees, students or any others; and whether the breach would be serious enough to warrant formal disciplinary action.

- Actions that may be taken by the school in respect of a breach of the Code include management or remedial action, training or disciplinary action ranging from a warning to termination of employment. The school reserves the right to determine in its entirety the response to any breach of this Code. However, please note that circumstances where a formal warning is issued to a staff member or their employment is ceased, as a result of a breach that is suspected to have involved grooming behaviour, the school is required to be notified to the Director General of the Department of Education, as a critical incident.
- Section 42 of the *Teacher Registration Act 2012* outlines the circumstances under which registered teachers are to be reported to the Teacher Registration Board of WA (TRBWA). Circumstances where a formal warning is issued to a teacher or their employment is ceased, as a result of a breach of the Code of Conduct that is suspected to have involved grooming behaviour, fits within the requirements of s.42, as well as being a reportable incident to the Director General of the Department of Education.

What do I do if I see someone breach the Code of Conduct?

- Act to prioritise the best interests of children;
- Take actions promptly to ensure that children are safe;
- Promptly report any concerns to the school's designated person as tabled on page 7 of this policy
- Follow Lake Joondalup Baptist College's policies and procedures for receiving and responding to complaints and concerns, reports and/or allegations;
- Comply with legislative requirements on reporting if relevant, and with Lake Joondalup Baptist College's policy and procedure on internal and external reporting.

Lake Joondalup Baptist College will not tolerate victimisation or other adverse consequences that are directed towards any person who makes such reports in good faith.

Definitions:

Child abuse

Four forms of child abuse are covered by WA law and are defined by the Department of Communities:

- (1) Physical abuse occurs when a child is severely and/or persistently hurt or injured by an adult or caregiver.
- (2) Sexual abuse occurs when a child is exposed to, or involved in, sexual activity that is inappropriate to the child's age and developmental level, and includes sexual behaviour in circumstances where:
 - (a) the child is the subject of bribery, coercion, a threat, exploitation or violence;
 - (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.
- (3) Emotional abuse includes:
 - (a) psychological abuse; and
 - (b) being exposed to an act of family and domestic violence.
- (4) Neglect is when children do not receive adequate food or shelter, medical treatment, supervision, care or nurturance to such an extent that their development is damaged or they are injured. Neglect may be acute, episodic or chronic.

Corporal punishment

Any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light; typically involving hitting the child with the hand or with an implement; can also include, for example, forcing the child to stay in an uncomfortable position. It does not include the use of reasonable physical restraint to protect the child or others from harm. *[UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 8 (2006)].*

Degrading punishment

Any punishment which is incompatible with respect for human dignity, including corporal punishment and non-physical punishment which belittles, humiliates, denigrates, scapegoats, threatens, scares or ridicules the child [UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 8 (2006)].

Grooming

The use of a variety of manipulative and controlling techniques with a vulnerable subject in order to establish trust or normalise sexually harmful behaviour with the overall aim of facilitating exploitation and/or avoiding exposure. Please refer to Appendix 1 for information on recognising grooming behaviour.

Related Policies

- #140 Child Protection Policy
- #056 Duty of Care to Students Policy
- #044 Responsible Behaviours Policy
- #140 Positive Community Relationships Policy
- #96 Privacy Policy
- #58 Equal Opportunity Discrimination and Harassment Policy
- #086 Bullying in the Workplace Policy
- #64 Interstate and Overseas Tours Policy
- #124 JK-12 Camps Policy
- #084 Co-curricular Policy
- #119 Staff Professional Dress Code
- # 34 Social Media Policy
- #98 Workplace Health and Safety Policy

Staff Code of Ethics

As staff, we use our expert knowledge to provide experiences that inspire and facilitate student learning. We are a significant force in developing a knowledgeable, creative, productive and democratic society. The values that underpin our professions are **integrity**, **respect** and **responsibility**.

We hold a unique position of trust and influence, which we recognise in our relationships with students, parents (caregivers and legal guardians), colleagues and the community.

We demonstrate our **integrity** by:

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

We demonstrate our **respect** by:

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

We demonstrate our **responsibility** by:

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

The purpose of this code is to:

- state the values that guide our practice and conduct
- enable us to affirm our public accountability
- promote public confidence in our College

Appendix to this Code of Conduct

Understanding Grooming Behaviour

Grooming in a child protection context refers to deliberate actions undertaken to engage in sexual activity with a child. It differs from sexual abuse in that it is primarily a preparatory activity occurring before abuse occurs, but is continued during and after the abuse to ensure the safety of the groomer.

Grooming is a subtle, gradual, and escalating process of building trust with a child and those around the child, both children and adults, with the express purpose of the sexual gratification of the perpetrator, this generally involves engaging in sexual activity with the child. It is deliberate and purposeful and occurs both before and after the abuse. Abusers may groom children and supporting adults for weeks, months, or even years before any sexual abuse actually takes place. The grooming may occur in person, via cyber media and/or other forms of communication.

A committed offender will employ grooming behaviour from an early stage and because it is so subtle and gradual the child may not even be aware that the actual abuse when it occurs, is wrong or harmful. The grooming occurs with the child but also with those supporting networks around the child which might normally act as a deterrent or protective element. The perpetrator will invest significant energy and patience to minimise the risk of detection and exposure.

The groomer will employ manipulation, guilt, shame, bribery, coercion or exploit low self-esteem to psychologically manipulate the child. As a result, the child becomes increasingly dependent on the groomer and increasingly alienated from protective elements including possible sources to disclose to. This is a deliberate strategy employed to maintain the secrecy of the abuse and to ensure the silence of the child.

The groomer will exploit any vulnerabilities of the protective elements around the child, including parent and family circumstances and school systemic weaknesses. Groomers are very adept at identifying anomalies, boundary ambiguities and any lack of systemic awareness, and then using them to deflect attention from their own actions and intentions.

While distinguishing between appropriate intent and inappropriate intent is often difficult, particularly for a child, it is essential that schools have very clear expectations and boundaries around employee behaviours so that there can be rigorous accountability when dealing with staff.

Schools must work to improve their knowledge and understanding in this area so they are able to challenge existing practice, recognise unprofessional behaviour and build a shared understanding of what a safe school is.

Grooming behaviour with children may include, but is not limited to:

- Selecting and befriending a child and gaining his or her trust and then exploiting the child's vulnerabilities.
- Testing a child's boundaries through telling inappropriate jokes, roughhousing, backrubs, tickling, or sexual games.
- Moving from non-sexual touching to "accidental" sexual touching. This typically happens during play so the child may not even identify it as purposeful, inappropriate touching. It is often done slowly so the child is gradually desensitised to the touch.
- Manipulating the child to not tell anyone about what is happening. The abuser may use a child's fear, embarrassment, or guilt about what has happened. Sometimes, the abuser uses bribery, threats, or coercion.
- Causing the child to feel responsible for the abuse. Children may not notice or may become confused as the contact becomes increasingly intimate and sexual.

Grooming behaviour with adolescents may include additional strategies, such as:

- identifying with the adolescent. The abuser may appear to be the only one who understands him/her
- displaying common interests in sports, music, movies, video games, television shows, etc
- recognising and filling the adolescent's need for affection and attention

- giving gifts or special privileges to the adolescent
- allowing or encouraging the adolescent to break rules (e.g., smoking, drinking, using drugs, viewing pornography)
- communicating with the adolescent outside of the person's role (e.g., teacher, or coach). This could include, for example, texting or emailing the teen without the parents' knowledge.

In addition to grooming the child, the groomer will use deflection strategies to remain unchallenged. Some of these strategies may include where the perpetrator:

- promotes self and creates a reputation as caring, child-loving, competent, available, trustworthy, truthful
- raises doubts about the motives, mental health, reliability of the child or anyone else who might approach support services with allegations
- fosters dependency as someone the family can rely on
- positively represents child to others so as to be perceived as someone who would never harm the child.

Preventing or interrupting the grooming process:

Schools unfortunately provide a vast array of opportunities for groomers to enact the grooming process. Some abusers have a particular preference for children within particular age bands and some studies have shown that groomers will take child focussed employment primarily to get access to a particular cohort of children.

Within a school context, holding all staff members accountable to the school Code of Conduct and challenging boundary crossings and violations is one of the most effective strategies to combating grooming behaviour.