

1. Purpose

All employees at Walsall College have a legal and moral duty to keep students safe at all times and protect them from physical and emotional harm, including the risk of grooming for sexual exploitation or radicalisation. So it is vital that our behaviour and approaches are exemplary. This Code of Conduct clearly sets out the behaviours we expect that will ensure the wellbeing of students and employees and minimises the potential for any allegations, which may be made against us as employees. This duty of care also applies to Apprentices and Assessors who visit/work in the workplace and to volunteers and governors.

The Code of Conduct underpins the core values and strategic ambitions of Walsall College, by placing students at the heart of what we do.

Conduct outside of work also has a bearing on our work in College because of the close working relationship we have with children and adults at risk of harm. If an employee/volunteer/governor is arrested/cautioned/bailed by the Police for a sexual offence who is seen to hold a Position of Trust (POT) the College will be notified and will have to take suitable safeguarding action.

2. Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to all employees of Walsall College and anyone working within it on a voluntary or placement basis. It is the responsibility of all employees to familiarise themselves with it. Failure to comply with the standards outlined in this document may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the College's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Communication

- Always communicate respectfully and professionally to students, employees and parents (including via email), avoiding sarcasm, innuendos, ambiguous and inflammatory language.
- You should avoid, where possible using your own device to contact students or parents.
- For pictures/digital images of students see section 6 of the E-Communication Policy and check if permission was given from student on enrolment form and if parental consent is required.
- Do not accept students as contacts or “friends” on social networking sites.
- Inappropriate or abusive communication from students, employees or parents should be reported immediately to your line manager or HR.

Confidentiality

- Never promise confidentiality to students or employees.
- Do not share confidential information about students or employees with anyone, other than on a professional need to know basis.
- Internal emails should not be forwarded to external clients, including parents.
- Never pass on confidential information relating to the College and/or its internal/ external clients without first seeking guidance.
- Confidential data and information relating to students or employees must be stored securely and should be treated in accordance with the Data Protection Policy.
- Any confidential information taken off-site must be stored securely and must not be accessible to anyone except you.

Transporting Students

- You may transport students with consent from a member of SMT and/or Duty Manager with adequate insurance
- Never transport a student to hospital in your own vehicle following an accident. Call an ambulance.
- Where it is acceptable by the College for students to be given lifts by employees, the appropriate car insurance must be obtained; otherwise the employee may be liable for damages.
- Transport arrangements for trips should be Risk Assessed in line with the Out of College Activity Policy.

Dress

- Dress in a way which is appropriate to your role and duties and present a professional image.
- Wear protective clothing if role requires it.
- Always wear the Walsall College ID Badge and Lanyard, when representing the College on-site and off-site for identification and safeguarding reasons.
- Under no circumstances should your Walsall College ID badge be shared with anybody else.
- Shorts should only be worn when delivering sport.

Prevent

- The College has a legal duty to have due regard to the *Prevent* agenda/strategy – to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.
- Employees should not engage in any activities linked to terrorism or violent extremism.
- If you suspect that a student or employee is at risk of radicalisation it is your duty to report it to a Safeguarding Officer immediately.
- Employees must undertake *Prevent* awareness training to help prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

Finance

- Employees should not enter into any personal financial transactions with students.
- Employees must not accept gifts from students, excluding token gifts. If of a greater value than a token gift, employees should declare it to the Director of Finance.
- Employees should not handle finances for students, unless pertinent to your role.
- Employees should not lend money to students or borrow money from students. In situations of extreme hardship students should be referred to a Student Finance Officer based on the CASC desk. (See Financial Regulations).
- Employees who utilise College facilities or benefits, such as the Nursery, Gym or Cycle to Work scheme must ensure that fees are paid in a timely manner.

Whistleblowing

- If you feel anyone is behaving inappropriately towards students, or you suspect grooming (for sexual abuse or radicalisation) might be taking place, you have a duty to report it to the Head of HR or the Head of Student Experience (see Safeguarding Policy and Procedure and Whistleblowing Policy).
- If you do not feel able to escalate child protection concerns internally you can contact The NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line confidentially on 0800 028 0285.

Equality & Diversity

- Walsall College is passionate about inclusion, respect and diversity, enabling all students and employees to reach their full potential.
- Employees should not act in a way which is discriminatory towards individuals or groups for reasons of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, sex, sexual orientation, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership (see Equality and Diversity Policy and Procedure).

Relationships

- You must not form a close personal relationship with a student.
- It is a criminal offence for a person in a position of trust e.g., employees/volunteers to have a sexual relationship with anyone under 18.
- Employees must inform their line manager if they have a close personal relationship with another employee, a student, client or customer of the College, which could be considered as impacting on the way they conduct themselves at work.
- The College does not condone any sexual relationships between students and employees, regardless of age.

Physical Contact

- Physical contact with students should be avoided unless employees have received 'Team Teach' training (see Positive Handling Procedure). Employees may only intervene through physical contact if there is reasonable belief that a student might injure themselves or others.
- Do not use physical intimidation and respect a student's personal space.
- Never try to bar a student's way or physically prevent them leaving a room unless it is done clearly for their safety or the safety of others.
- Always try to diffuse situations without physical intervention.
- Employees who are required to administer personal care should adhere to the Personal Care Policy.

Propriety

- Employees should treat all students and colleagues fairly and equally.
- Be aware of how your actions may be viewed by others.
- Do not engage in any sexual activity with students under the age of 18/vulnerable adults.
- Do not make remarks to a student or a colleague or behave in a way, which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative.
- Do not discuss your own sexual relationships with or in the presence of students.
- Do not bring any dangerous items into work.
- Academic staff and Academic related staff have the right to academic freedom in teaching and discussion, carrying out research, disseminating and publishing research findings and participating in trade union activity.

One to One Situation

- Avoid putting yourself or students at risk by meeting with an individual student in an area where you are not visible to others
- Ensure there is visual access and/or an open door. Be wary of using 'do not disturb' or equivalent signs.
- Try to ensure other employees are around or at least aware that a 1:1 meeting is taking place with a student, where possible.
- If you have reason to be concerned prior to a meeting, arrange for a colleague to be present.
- If anything happens which you feel uncomfortable about, speak to your line manager/senior manager or a Safeguarding Officer, if appropriate, as soon as possible.

Behaviour Management

- Do not use language or behaviour, which may be interpreted as threatening, bullying or sexualised.
- Avoid over-familiarity and banter – both may be misinterpreted
- Keep professional boundaries at all times.
- Employees must not attend work or carry out duties whilst under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or other substances or consume non prescribed drugs or drink alcohol whilst at work. Employees can drink alcohol in moderation during social events arranged by the College but should always remain fit for work. (See Alcohol and Drugs Policy).
- With express consent, an employee may be subject to a search if there is a reasonable belief that the employee is in the possession of illegal drugs or dangerous weapons (with the exception of Sacred Kirpan). The search must be carried out by an authorised and trained individual in line with the Search Policy. If an employee refuses to be searched in these circumstances or where there is evidence of prohibited items, the College reserves the right to contact the Police.