

Code of Conduct for Employees

Policy No:	11 (3.2)	Version:	3 (June 2020)
Responsibility:	School Chair	Scheduled Review Date:	June 2022

1.0 Purpose

- To inform all employees of the standards of conduct Tarremah Steiner School requires as a condition of employment. The School strives for high standards of conduct from its employees.
- To comply with the Schools Registration Board Standard 4.11: Code of Conduct (employee).

2.0 Policy Statement

Through the professional attitude and behaviour of all employees Tarremah Steiner School seeks to provide, a secure and supportive environment that:

- Promotes the care and education of students through the philosophical framework of Steiner education,
- Develops good relationships among staff,
- Develops the confidence and trust of parents.

Tarremah Steiner School expects that all employees behave professionally, with respect and consideration towards colleagues, parents, students and members of the broader community. Employees must undertake to support the ethos of the School and the school's stated policies. The ethics articulated in this Code of Conduct are governed by the principles of service, impartiality and a continual striving for improvement.

The School seeks to provide a workplace that is free from discrimination and harassment, where employees act with care and diligence when fulfilling the requirements of their employment contract, while maintaining confidentiality and complying with any applicable Australian laws.

3.0 Policy Elements

Principles of conduct for teaching staff are taken from the Code of Professional Ethics for the Teaching Profession in Tasmania and from expectations derived from an Anthroposophical approach to teaching.

Tarremah employees are committed to honouring the following five principles from the Code of Professional Ethics for the Teaching Profession in Tasmania.

- The Principle of Dignity, by upholding the intrinsic worth of all persons, including self, students, colleagues and parents.
- The Principle of Respect, by having due regard for the feelings, rights and traditions of all persons, and by developing relationships that are based on mutual respect and trust.
- The Principle of Integrity, by acting impartially and responsibly and by being honest, trustworthy and accountable with regard to the obligations that concern the profession.
- The Principle of Empathy, by being aware of the feelings and perspectives of others and by being open-minded and responding compassionately.
- The Principle of Justice, by being fair and reasonable and committed to the wellbeing of individuals, the community and the common good.

Tarremah Steiner School is also informed by the ideas born out of an Anthroposophical perspective on life. Upon employment, teachers and support staff have a responsibility to reconcile their own personal worldview with the Anthroposophical worldview as they come to understand it. Such reconciliation is important so that all school employees can conduct themselves and their professional activities in a harmonious way. We ask of all teachers that they strive to cultivate the following five ideals:

- Teachers must be people filled with initiative: never careless or slow to act. They should stand in full consciousness of how each word is spoken and how each concept or feeling is developed, and with full responsibility for everything they do in the school and how they act toward the children, their colleagues and the parents.
- Teachers should be interested in every aspect of the world and humanity, and be able to enter into anything, great or small, that interests every single child in our care.
- A teacher must be someone who never compromises in their heart or mind with what is untrue. Our teaching and the way we present subjects will only bear the stamp of truth when we ardently strive for truth in the depths of our being.
- A teacher must strive to never grow stale or sour, and to always cultivate a fresh and healthy state of mind.

4.0 Procedure

The School Executive will provide access to the Code of Conduct and all relevant policies as required by employees. Employees must be cognisant of these policies and procedures and be familiar with them. New employees acknowledge their willingness to abide by the School's Code of Conduct Policy by signing a declaration at induction.

Employees who need clarification or advice on the policies and procedures, which apply to them should examine the relevant information and seek advice from the School Executive.

1. Professional and Ethical Conduct

- 1.1 In the course of their employment, employees must act in a professional and respectful manner that enhances their reputation, the reputation of Tarremah Steiner School and the standing of Steiner education.
- 1.2 Employees must treat fellow employees, students and others within their work environment in a fair and just manner, as Tarremah School seeks to promote a supportive environment that is free from harassment, victimisation and discrimination.
- 1.3 Employees are expected to behave in ways that promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of students, colleagues and others in their workplace environment.
- 1.4 Employees whose work involves interacting with students have a special responsibility to comply with Duty of Care statements and provide appropriate role models for students.
- 1.5 Employees must perform their work duties competently and responsibly, with a focus on delivering or supporting high quality educational services to students based on the philosophical framework of Steiner Education for child development and education.
- 1.6 Employees need to maintain professional competence through appropriate professional development or learning experiences with a particular focus on the principles of Rudolf Steiner Education.
- 1.7 Employees need to maintain accuracy, integrity and appropriate confidentiality about their dealings with and information involving students, parents, staff and visitors.
- 1.8 Employees must act promptly in reporting breaches of the law and Tarremah's Code of Conduct to the School Chair or a member of the School Executive.
- 1.9 Employees must comply effectively with all lawful and reasonable decisions and directions given by the School Executive or a person having authority to give such directions.
- 1.10 Dress, personal appearance and hygiene are important elements of professional presentation. Employees must ensure that their personal appearance and presentation are appropriate for their work role in accordance with the expectation of the School.

2. Duty of Care

- 2.1 Duty of Care is a duty to do everything reasonably practicable to protect others from foreseeable harm.
- 2.2 Teachers have a particular duty of care towards students that arises out of what is known as a fiduciary relationship; that is, a relationship based on trust. Professional boundaries safeguard the student from harm or abuse and employees should always act within these boundaries. The teacher's position is one of authority so consideration should always be given to maintaining the balance of power by protecting students from situations where their power to

act freely has been denied. (For example, one-on-one conversations should be conducted in an open space or with a witness).

- 2.3 Employees have a responsibility to assist in managing a safe physical and emotional environment that is free from harm. Harm includes any significant detrimental effect to a staff member's or student's physical, psychological or emotional well-being. It also includes minor harm that is cumulative in nature and which would result in a detrimental effect of a significant nature to an employee or student if allowed to continue. Amongst other things, harm can be caused by:
- Physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect
 - Sexual abuse or exploitation
 - Domestic or family violence
 - Bullying
 - Self-harm
- 2.4 Employees are referred to Tarremah's Child Protection Policy, which presents the reporting procedures required of employees based on their obligations under the *Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997*.

Terminology

- A **child** is a person under 18 years of age; a young person is a child of 16 or 17 years of age.
- **Sexual abuse** is any act in which a person with power or authority over a child uses the child for sexual gratification. An abuser may be an adult, an adolescent or an older child. Sexual abuse includes both contact and non-contact behaviour.
- **Physical abuse** occurs when a person with power or authority over the child subjects the child to non-accidental physically aggressive acts, including (but not limited to) shoving, hitting slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning or kicking. These may result in injuries, whether intentional or inadvertent.
- **Verbal abuse.** Apart from offensive, insulting or insensitive words, verbal abuse occurs when the content or volume of voice is greater than justifiably required to be heard by the child.
- **Emotional or psychological abuse** occurs when a person with power or authority over a child repeatedly rejects or threatens the child. There is often a pattern of emotional or psychological abuse, rather than one single incident. Such abuse may involve humiliating, terrorising, name-calling, belittlement, inappropriate symbolic acts or continual coldness toward the child, to the extent that significant damage results to the child's physical, intellectual or emotional wellbeing and development.
- **Neglect** occurs when those responsible for the care of a child fail to provide the child with the basic necessities of life. Neglect includes failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical attention or supervision to the extent that the child's development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed.

3. Physical Contact

- 3.1 Employees must not use any form of discipline that involves corporal punishment, or engage in contact that could physically harm a student or another adult.

3.2 There may be occasion, however, where physical intervention is appropriate in order to protect students, another person or property. In these circumstances this would be deemed reasonable action providing that the physical intervention is to prevent physical harm where possible. The physical intervention would need to be proportionate to the circumstances.

4. Discrimination

4.1 Tarremah Steiner School will endeavour to provide a workplace free of discrimination. Employees must not discriminate against a student or an adult on the basis of age, disability, family responsibilities (including breast feeding), gender, sexual orientation, irrelevant medical or criminal record, marital relationship or parental status, political or industrial belief or activity, pregnancy, race or ethnicity or religious belief or activity in accordance with relevant school policies and legislation including the Anti-Discrimination Act 1998.

5. Sexual Misconduct

5.1 Tarremah Steiner School seeks to provide an environment that is free from harassment, including sexual harassment.

5.2 Employees' interactions with students and other employees must be, and be seen to be, professional at all times.

5.3 Employees have a particular responsibility towards students. Employees must not attempt to sexualise a relationship with a student. To do so is a breach of trust, an abuse of authority, professional misconduct and criminal.

5.4 The following behaviour constitutes either misconduct or sexual misconduct:

- Unwarranted and inappropriate touching,
- Inappropriate communication or actions of a sexual nature,
- Obscene behaviour including gestures, language and jokes,
- Inappropriate and deliberate exposure of students or other employees to the sexual behaviour of others,
- Dating a student,
- Expressing romantic feelings towards a student,
- Inappropriately responding to advances of a sexual nature initiated by a student.

6. Use of Tobacco, Alcohol, Other Drugs and Medication

6.1 Upon the written request of parents, employees are authorised to administer prescribed medication in accordance with the School Policy on The Administration of Medication.

- 6.2 Employees have a Work Health and Safety obligation to ensure that their use of alcohol and drugs, whether illicit, over the counter or prescribed as medication, does not adversely affect their work performance or endanger the health and safety of others.
- 6.3 Employees must not provide students with alcohol, tobacco or drugs and must not encourage or condone the illegal use of alcohol (such as underage drinking) or the excessive use of these substances.
- 6.4 Smoking is not permitted on the school campus. Similarly, smoking is not permitted whilst staff members have direct responsibility for or contact with students off the school campus.
- 6.5 Use of illegal substances is not permitted on the school campus. Similarly, use of illegal substances is not permitted whilst staff members have direct responsibility for or contact with students off the school campus.
- 6.6 Employee consumption of alcohol is generally not permitted at any school activity or event where students may be present such as fairs, barbecues and graduations. However, in special circumstances where the School Executive has authorized the selling or serving of alcohol, the limited consumption of alcohol by adults may be permitted, following the Responsible Serving of Alcohol protocols.

7. Use of School Resources

- 7.1 Employees must ensure that all school equipment and resources are used appropriately for the work and business of the school. Limited and occasional private use of school equipment and resources may occur providing it does not adversely affect the performance of the employee's work duties, or the work duties of others, or the business or reputation of the school.
- 7.2 Apart from materials necessary for the preparation of lessons and activities, employees must have approval from the School Executive to use school equipment and resources off site for work purposes and must ensure that they are safely stored and secured.
- 7.3 Employees must not use any school resource, including mobile phones, the internet, electronic mail systems or other means of electronic communication for accessing, storing or transmitting words, images or other material that are illegal, sexually explicit or violent.

8. Procedure for Dealing with breaches of the Code of Conduct

- 8.1 Potential breaches of the Code of Conduct, including apparent breaches and allegations, will be dealt with in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice. Potential breaches will be addressed in the context of the Tarremah Steiner School Grievance

Policy, Staff Issues Resolution Process or Performance and Conduct Management Policy depending on the breach.

8.2 Employees have an obligation to report breaches of the Code of Conduct to the School Chair who informs the School Executive and the Council Chair that an investigation is underway.

8.3 Employees should be aware that the School Chair, in consultation with the School Executive, may apply sanctions if this Code of Conduct is breached. Depending of the nature of the breach, various sanctions such as the following may be applied:

- Appropriate warnings in writing or documented discussion,
- Counselling,
- Enforced leave,
- Dismissal,
- Laying of criminal charges or civil action.

5.0 Responsibilities

- School Executive

6.0 Related Documents

- Child Protection Policy,
- Grievance Policy,
- Equal Employment Opportunity Policy,
- Duty of Care Policy,
- Administration of Medication Policy,
- Alcohol, Tobacco and Drugs Policy
- Authorisation and Administration of Medication Policy
- Performance and Conduct Management Policy

7.0 Reference/Legislation

- Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997,
- Anti-discrimination Act 1998,
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992.
- Code of Professional Ethics for the Teaching Profession in Tasmania (Teachers Registration Board)
- Education Act 2016

8.0 Contact Point

- School Chair

9.0 Authorisation

Executive:

Council:

Name:

Date: