Code of Conduct for Staff

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Responsibility:	School Chair	Scheduled Review Date:	June 2027/30

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to inform all staff, and the broader community, of the standards of conduct Tarremah Steiner School requires as a condition of employment.

2.0 Policy Statement

Through the professional attitude and behaviour of all staff, Tarremah Steiner School is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment that promotes the care and education of students through the philosophical and pedagogical framework of Steiner Education. Tarremah strives to develop good relationships among staff and develop the confidence and trust of students and parents.

Tarremah Steiner School expects that all staffs conduct themselves with the highest professional standard, demonstrating respect and consideration towards colleagues, parents, students and members of the broader community. The School recognises its obligation to require all members of the Tarremah community - staff, parents, volunteers, contractors and visitors to model, engage in and encourage, behaviour that protects students from harm. Staff must support the ethos of the School and the School's stated policies. The ethics articulated in this Code of Conduct reflect the principles of service, impartiality and a continual striving for improvement.

This document will refer to 'staff' in recognition of the contribution that all staff make in upholding our ideals and values. The School understands that these expectations look slightly different according to the roles and responsibilities as outlined in individual Positions Descriptions.

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

We recognise our responsibility to share concerns about child safety to relevant regulatory bodies, including through mandatory reporting. If there is a concern that a child may be at imminent risk of abuse, staff must call the police on 000 immediately.

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3.1 Scope of Policy

This Policy applies to all staff, including employees, casual staff, School Council and committee members, volunteers and contractors involved with Tarremah Steiner School. It applies in all our operational environments, wherever children and young people are participating in our organisation's activities, programs, services or facilities.

3.2 Guiding Principles

Principles of conduct for teaching staff are taken from the Code of Professional Ethics for the Teaching Profession in Tasmania; our obligations and commitment to keep children safe; the AITSL professional standards; and expectations derived from an Anthroposophical approach to teaching.

3.2.1 Code of Professional Ethics for Teachers in Tasmania

The Code of Professional Ethics for the teaching profession guide staff in honouring and implementing the following five principles:

- **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.

3.2.2 Safeguarding and Empowering Children

In recognition of our responsibility to keep children and young people safe the following values guide our actions and decision-making.

1. Safeguarding children and young people is a shared responsibility. We are reliant on all individuals within our organisation to keep children and young people safe.
2. Any form of abuse or neglect towards children and young people will not be tolerated. Working to ensure safety, suspected harmful or abusive behaviours will be investigated and reported to relevant authorities including the police when appropriate.
3. The best interest of the child will be the primary consideration in all actions and decisions concerning the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person.
4. We are accountable to the children and young people we work with by fostering high ethical standards in a culture of openness and transparency.
5. We empower children by modelling nurturing and upholding their rights and responsibilities. We create opportunities for them to speak up about any matters of importance to them, including if something goes wrong.

3.2.3 AITSL Standards

Tarremah teachers are required to uphold the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership's (AITSL) Seven Professional Standards:

- To know students and how they learn.
- Know the content and how to teach it.
- Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning.
- Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments.
- Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning.
- Engage in professional learning.
- Engage professionally with colleagues/parents/carers and the community.

3.2.4 An Anthroposophical Approach

Tarremah Steiner School is also informed by the ideas born out of an Anthroposophical perspective on life. Upon employment, 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 staff can conduct themselves and their professional activities harmoniously. All staff are asked that they strive to cultivate the following five ideals:

- Staff 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.
- Staff 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 their care.
- Staff must always uphold the truth. Their teaching and the way they present subjects will only bear the stamp of truth when they strive for it with the depths of their being.
- Staff must never compromise in their heart or mind.
- Staff must strive to never grow stale or sour and to always cultivate a fresh and healthy state of mind.

3.2.5 Steiner Education

As a Steiner School, affiliated with Steiner Education Australia, all teachers at Tarremah Steiner School are expected to be teaching from the Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework which has been approved by the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

4.0 Procedure

The School Executive will provide access to the Code of Conduct and all relevant policies as required by staff. Staff must apply and implement these policies and procedures and be familiar with them. Policies are available as hard copies from the office, otherwise are available on the Schools' electronic management system -TASS. New staff are guided through this Code of Conduct as well as key policies set out in the School's Recruitment Policy. They acknowledge their willingness to abide by the School's Code of Conduct Policy by signing a declaration at induction.

Staff 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.

5.0 Professional and Ethical Conduct

In the course of their employment, staff must act professionally and respectfully to enhance their reputation, the reputation of Tarremah Steiner School and the standing of Steiner Education.

Staff must treat colleagues, students and others within their work environment in a fair and just manner, as Tarremah Steiner School seeks to promote a supportive environment that is free from harassment, victimisation and discrimination.

Staff are expected to behave in ways that promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of students, colleagues and others in their workplace environment. Staff must comply effectively with all lawful and reasonable decisions and directions given by the School Executive.

5.1 Providing a Safe Environment.

It is the responsibility of all at Tarremah, from the School Executive to each different category of staff (employees, practicum students, volunteers and contractors) to protect children and young people from all forms of abuse and neglect by staff or other students. Staff must be alert to possible incidents of child abuse and neglect occurring outside the scope of the School's operations and services that may have an impact on our students. We must all create and maintain a child safe culture that is understood, endorsed and actioned by all staff.

We expect all within the School, regardless of their role or level of responsibility, to act to safeguard children and young people from such harm by adopting appropriate safeguarding practice and behaviour set within policies and procedural guidelines.

Staff must report knowledge or suspicion of abuse and or neglect to the School Chair and/or to external authorities. * refer to *Child Safety and Mandatory Reporting Policy*.

5.2 Education and Training

Staff 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 and pedagogical framework of Steiner Education for child development and education.

Staff need to maintain professional competence through appropriate professional development or learning experiences with a particular focus on the principles of Rudolf Steiner Education.

5.3 Communication and Relationships

Staffs need to maintain accuracy, integrity and appropriate confidentiality about their dealings with and information involving students, parents, staff and visitors.

Staff 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.

Dress, personal appearance and hygiene are important elements of professional presentation. Staff must ensure that their appearance and presentation are appropriate for their work role in accordance with the expectation of the School.

5.4 Duty of Care

Duty of Care is a duty to do everything reasonably practicable to protect others from foreseeable harm.

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 staff 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).

- Staff have a responsibility to assist in managing a safe physical and emotional environment that is free from harm. Harm includes any significant detrimental effect on a staff member's or student's physical, psychological or emotional well-being. It also includes minor harm that is cumulative and which would result in a detrimental effect of a significant nature to a staff member 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 or harassment
- Self-harm

Staff are referred to Tarremah's Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Policy, which presents the reporting procedures required of staff based on their obligations under the *Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997.*

5.5 Physical Contact

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

There may be occasions, however, where physical intervention is appropriate to protect students, other people 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.

5.6 Discrimination

Tarremah Steiner School will endeavour to provide a workplace free of discrimination. Staff must not discriminate against a student or an adult based on age, disability, family responsibilities (including breastfeeding), 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.

5.7 Sexual Misconduct

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

Staff interactions with students and colleagues must be, and be seen to be, professional at all times.

Staff have a particular responsibility towards students. Staff must not engage in any form of romantic relationships or engage in any sexual acts with a student. To do so is not only a criminal offence, but also a breach of trust, an abuse of authority, and professional misconduct.

5.7.1 The following interactions constitute 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 colleagues 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.

5.8 Student Use of Medication

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

5.9 Use of School Resources

Staff 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, provided it does not adversely affect the performance of the employee's work duties, the work duties of others, or the business or reputation of the School.

The expectation that staff will do all that is reasonable to take responsibility for their safety and that of others, extends to afterhours and personal use of the School's facilities. The School requires staff to seek permission to use the School's facilities for personal use, including afterhours use.

Staff are required to take personal responsibility of their own actions when using the School's facilities for personal use. Staff are responsible of any injury that occurs as a result of such personal use and are personally responsible for any damage caused.

The School does not take responsibility for staff's personal use of School facilities.

Apart from materials necessary for the preparation of lessons and activities, staff 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.

Staff 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.

All staff have a responsibility to uphold to strongest integrity when using the School's financial resources. Those with designated budgets must keep spending within the allocated amount, only using these funds for their own designated purposes. School credit cards must only be used for purchasing goods or services for the School. All receipts must be provided to the accounts officer within 48 hours.

6.0 Procedure for Dealing with Breaches of the Code of Conduct

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 School's ~~Grievance Policy~~ Complaint Management Policy, Performance and Conduct Management Policy, and Child Safety and Mandatory Reporting Policy, depending on the breach.

Staff have an obligation to report breaches and potential breaches of the Code of Conduct to the School Chair, who informs the School Executive. The School Chair will inform the Council Chair of breaches, confirming that an investigation is underway.

As detailed in the *Child Safety and Mandatory Reporting Policy*, Staff members who become aware of a reportable allegation or reportable conviction against a staff member, contractor or volunteer must **immediately** report this to the School Chair, even if that person is no longer employed or engaged by the School. If the allegation is against the School Chair, the information must be reported to the Council Chair.

The School Chair is required to ensure reportable allegations and reportable convictions are brought to the attention of the Independent Regulator. This includes alleged instances of a historic nature. This report must be made within three business days of becoming aware of the allegation or conviction.

Staff should be aware that the School Chair, in consultation with the School Executive, may apply sanctions if this Code of Conduct is breached. Depending on 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
- Referral to relevant authorities for investigation.

7.0 Responsibilities

- School Executive
- All Staff
- School Chair

8.0 Related Documents

- Child Safety and Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Complaints Management Policy
- Equal Employment Opportunity Policy
- Drug Education and Management Policy
- Behaviour Support Policy
- Workplace Health and Safety Policy
- Authorisation and Administration of Medication Policy
- Performance and Conduct Management Policy

9.0 Reference/Legislation

- Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013
- Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997
- Anti-discrimination Act 1998
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Sex discrimination Act 1984
- Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023
- Criminal Code Act 1924
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- Australian Government National office for Child Safety – Complaint Handling Guide https://www.pmc.gov.au/resource-centre/domestic-policy/complaint-handling-guide-upholding- rights-children-and-young-people
- https://pmc.gov.au/child-safety
- http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0008/228680/Child_protection.pdf

- School Registration Board Standards
- Code of Professional Ethics for the Teaching Profession in Tasmania (Teachers Registration Board)
- Education Act 2016

10.0 Contact Point

- School Chair

11.0 Authorisation

Executive:	Council Chair:
Signature:	Signature:
Name:	Name:
Date:	Date: