



St. Francis School

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STAFF STUDENT INTERACTIONS – A CODE OF CONDUCT

Introduction

The Code of Conduct for staff/student interactions has been developed by St. Francis School staff in consultation with the school stakeholders. The policy should be read in conjunction with all other relevant school policies. The board of Management of St. Francis School fully endorse the content of this policy.

Rationale

To protect the welfare and safeguard the dignity of our students and staff.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

St. Francis School School endeavours to provide a safe, secure and happy environment where students can grow and develop into confident adults capable of realising their full potential.

Aims

To outline the code of conduct on staff student interactions for all the stakeholders to ensure that:

- staff are fully aware of appropriate staff student interactions as outlined in this policy
- students will have the freedom to reach their full potential in a safe environment
- students will be protected from inappropriate interactions

Guidelines

General

- All interactions with students will be positive and encouraging. When a student attempts communication with staff, care will be taken to ensure he/she is encouraged and responded to.
- Interactions between staff working with students will be encouraging and positive with the ultimate benefit of the student in mind.

Physical Interactions

- Teaching programmes will be put in place to ensure that students have an understanding and acceptance of appropriate ways of interacting.
- Students will be encouraged to use acceptable means of greeting and interacting with others e.g. shaking hands, 'High Fives' and verbal greetings rather than hugging.
- Staff will be aware of appropriate physical interaction at all times and refrain from unnecessary physical contact. Well intentioned gestures such as hugging/kissing/putting an arm on student shoulders/carrying a student on staff shoulders/sitting a student on staff's knee or lifting any student are considered unnecessary and inappropriate. Where positive physical interaction is considered appropriate a hand greeting such as a 'High Five', a handshake or a hand touch can be used as an acceptable alternative.
- Any form of physical sanctioning of students is unlawful as is any form of physical response to challenging behaviour unless it is by way of restraint to avoid injury to another person or to self.

Where Physical Contact May Be Acceptable

Sensory Curriculum: Touching, including massage, may form a part of the sensory curriculum for some students with profound and multiple learning difficulties or those with sensory impairments. The use of such techniques should be clearly recorded in the teacher's planning folder or the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Behaviour Support Plan (BSP). Parents will be informed of any sensory programmes in place for students.

Physical prompting: Some staff are likely to come into physical contact with students from time to time in the course of their duties, for example, showing a student how to use a piece of apparatus or equipment; supporting students for safety reasons; demonstrating a move or exercise during games, PE, dance or drama and using a physical prompt to enable the acquisition of a new skill. Careful clear instructions will be given to minimise the physical prompts required for any given task and such prompts will be gradually reduced as soon as it is feasible, so as to ensure progress towards independent use of the skill.

Physical support: Some of our students with physical disabilities or sensory impairments will require some physical support at least in the short term, such support will be agreed in consultation with class teacher, school principal, parents and clinic team. Some students may require physical support to ensure their safety. Such support will be determined by the individual needs of each student and will be agreed in consultation with class teacher, school principal, parents and clinic team. Acceptable forms of physical support for safety reasons are handholding, linking arms or guiding shoulder lightly. This support should be kept to a minimum and faded out when possible in the interest of encouraging independence.

Intimate care: Many of our students need assistance or support with intimate care. See intimate care policy

Challenging Behaviour: In the event of a student refusing to move away from an unsafe situation, or if needing to move because of time constraints, verbal prompts will be initially used, and then an attempt made to hold his/her hand to assist him/her in moving. Failing this, the student may need to be lifted. Staff will follow appropriate lifting procedures. If lifting is deemed necessary, the dignity and care of the student will be safeguarded and the principal will be informed. If this happens more than once, a behaviour management strategy will be decided on to outline the prevention and management of future incidents.

There may be occasions where it is necessary for staff to use a physical intervention to restrain a student to prevent him/her from injuring him/herself or others. A physical intervention using body contact will only be used when a student presents an imminent danger to him or herself or others and when all behaviour management strategies have been exhausted. Where a member of staff has taken action to restrain a student he/she will immediately inform the school principal and a behaviour support strategy will then be decided on to outline the prevention and management of future incidents. Following all incidents of challenging behaviour where a student is lifted or restrained an incident report will be written.

Verbal Interactions

- Language used by staff for instruction and in conversation with and/or about students will be positively phrased
- Staff will speak calmly and clearly and will not shout at students under any circumstances
- Staff will ensure that their conversations with students are appropriate to the age and gender of the students

Working with individuals in small groups and one to one sessions

Some staff work with small groups of students or in a one to one situation with a particular student as part of their individualised timetable.

In such cases:

- if a member of staff is in a room alone with a student(s) the door will never be locked
- staff will use a room with a visual access/glass panel on the door or use a room/area which is easily accessed or often frequented by others.

Personal relationships between staff and individual students

Staff members will maintain a professional relationship at all times with students

Staff can:

- visit students in hospital in consultation with the principal
- attend a special birthday party/family celebration when invited by the family. In such instances staff will inform the principal of the invitation. If a staff member attends such a celebration the professional relationship as a staff member representing the school will be maintained and this code of conduct will be followed.
- The delivery of Home School Provision or any Department of Education Home initiative is regarded as a professional relationship and is allowed.
- Home School Liaison or any similar Department of Education initiative is regarded as a professional relationship and is allowed.

It is not acceptable, and is a reason for immediate termination of employment for a staff member to have any kind of an intimate relationship with a student attending St. Francis School.

Reporting Incidents that Cause Concern to Staff

Staff who have concerns in relation to any aspect of staff student interactions should inform principal.

Related Policies

Child Protection, Code of Behaviour, and SPHE Curriculum Statement.

Timeframe for Implementation

This policy will be implemented following notification by the Board of Management.

Timeframe for Review

This policy will be reviewed in November 2023 or sooner if required.

Responsibility for Review

Board of Management

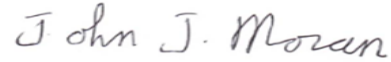
Ratification and Communication

This Child Code of Conduct was adopted by the Board of Management on Tuesday 8th November 2022 and will be reviewed on 7th November 2023



Signed: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management



Signed: _____

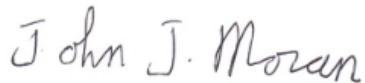
Principal

Date: 8th November 2022

Date: 8th November 2022

Date of next review: 7th November 2023

Signed:



John J. Moran, Secretary, Board of Management

Secretary Board of Management

