CASPIAN
SCHOOL OF ACADEMICS

Procedure 7.10

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF STUDENTS

Human Resources, Health and Safety | August 2026

Staff Code of Conduct in Respect of Students

Procedure 7.10 - Human Resources, Health and Safety

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Introduction

All staff at the Caspian School of Academics (CSA) which includes lecturers, support staff and managers, have a duty of care towards the School's students. This is particularly the case in respect to children (defined legally as all young people up to their eighteenth birthday) but also applies to all other students.

The School's values stress the importance of respect and care for students but wider national pressures and those in society generally are adding to the importance associated with this care. These pressures include:

The national emphasis being placed on safeguarding children and adults at risk of abuse or neglect.

The growing complexities associated with the use of IT, social media, and the use of mobile phones and related devices.

The Office for Students regulatory requirements Condition E6 which requires that students are protected from misconduct by those in authority.

This Code is provided to help School staff discharge their responsibilities for the care of students by:

Assisting them to work safely and responsibly.

Setting clear expectations of behaviour and clarifying which behaviours constitute safe practice and which should be avoided

Giving a clear message that unlawful, unruly or unsafe behaviour is unacceptable and that, where appropriate, disciplinary or legal action will be taken.

Reducing the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations being made against staff

Reducing the incidence of positions of trust being abused or misused.

In addition to the above principles The Education and Training Foundation has developed

Professional Standards that apply to all teachers and trainers in education (England). The Standards outline the commitments expected from teachers and trainers in relation to their professional role under the following categories:

Professional values and attributes • Professional knowledge and understanding

Professional skills.

Guidance in this Code is also drawn from 'Guidance for Safer Working Practices for Adults who work with Children and young People' prepared by the Allegation Management Advisers (now the Safeguarding Adviser Network). It addresses a number of key areas of staff behaviour but cannot cover all eventualities. In circumstances not addressed in this Code, staff should ensure that they act [1]

always to serve the best interests and welfare of the students in their care and seek the advice of their manager.

1 Safer Working Practices | Safeguarding Network

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This Code of Behaviour addresses the following issues:

Power and positions of trust

Social contact

Propriety and behaviour

Personal living space

Sexual relations

Use of IT

The Code concludes by referring to the procedures the School carries out where staff behaviour is deemed inappropriate, including referrals that may need to be made to relevant professional bodies including the Local Authority Designated Officer for Safeguarding and to the Police.

Staff conduct of power and positions of trust

As a result of their knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, all CSA staff are in positions of trust in relation to students. This applies to adults as well as younger students and those who may be classified as 'vulnerable adults'.

The relationship between a member of staff and a student cannot be a relationship between equals and therefore it is essential that this unequal balance of power is not misused. Intimate relationships between students and staff are viewed as inappropriate and classified as '**Prohibited Relationships'**.

Staff must maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid any behaviour that exploits that position of power, or which may be perceived by others as so doing. The Office for Students has developed a definition of harassment as: '*harassment, including sexual harassment, includes unwanted behaviour or conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment because of, or connected to, one or more of the following protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation'*; and *'a course of conduct conducted on at least two occasions that harasses one other person, or a course of conduct that harasses two or more persons at least once each. References to harassing a person include alarming the person or causing the person distress.'* Sexual misconduct "includes but is not limited to" sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape.

Staff's relationships with students must be strictly professional. The development of friendships, relationships and **especially sexual relationships are deemed inappropriate**, and in the case of the last of these in respect to children and vulnerable adults at risk of abuse or neglect, illegal.

There may be occasions when adults joining the School as students already have a relationship with a member of staff. Such relations should be declared by the member of staff to his or her line manager and the Human Resources Manager, particularly when the member of staff is the student's teacher. The relationships will be categorised as '**Excluded Relationships'**.

Under no circumstances should staff seek to utilise their position of trust to influence or entice a student into a personal relationship or to use their influence, including through assessment of work to advantage or disadvantage a student. Any such action will be deemed as a breach of the Code of Conduct and the member of staff will be subject to disciplinary action which may include dismissal.

Social Contact

Staff may need to contact students about their progress, attendance or behaviour. Contact may be necessary by phone, email or text with students at home. It should only very rarely be necessary to visit a student at his or her home. Such arrangements should be agreed in advance by the Principal or, in the case of Student Services staff, by the Head of Student Services. **Staff should not visit a student's home unaccompanied**.

There may be circumstances where the social network of a member of staff includes students of the School – for example the sons or daughters of neighbours, or the friends of members of the family.

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Clearly in such circumstances the students concerned may visit the member of staff's home. In this case members of staff should be aware that their behaviour is, so to speak, in the public domain and the risks set out below should be borne in mind.

It is most unlikely, however, ever to be appropriate for a member of staff to invite a student directly into their home. Similarly, it is unlikely ever to be appropriate for a member of staff themselves to initiate social contact with a student or their family, or to visit their home socially.

Propriety and behaviour

School staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare of students, uphold high professional standards and uphold the reputation of the School. It is expected, therefore, that all staff will adopt high standards of personal conduct.

High standards of personal conduct are essential for all School staff, who also need to be aware such expectations extend beyond the School. There may be circumstances, for example, where behaviour in private life can come to public attention and bring the School into disrepute. This could include misuse of drugs, alcohol, antisocial behaviour, acts of violence, sexual impropriety or extreme political views inciting racial hatred or violence that can call into question or compromise their perceived suitability to work in an educational setting or bring the School and/or the teaching profession into disrepute.

Similarly, there may be occasions when staff are with groups of students in social settings, for example, during School trips or visits. Staff behaviour here too is also under public scrutiny. The ability of cameras and access to social media pose the risk that what may appear to be private behaviour is placed by others into the public domain. In an increasingly transparent society, staff need to be very mindful of this danger.

In all settings, both inside the School and beyond it, staff's behaviour and demeanour towards students should be within professional boundaries. Humour, for example, is to be encouraged where appropriate but, should not extend to teasing, innuendo or ridicule. Inappropriate familiarity should be avoided, and staff should take care that in one-to-one situations with students such as tutorials, their behaviour is above reproach and that it cannot be misinterpreted or misconstrued by either the student concerned or by others.

In some settings it may be necessary to have some physical contact with students, for example in sport or dance. As a general rule, however, it is unwise for any physical contact to take place with a student and staff should be aware that even well-intended physical contact may be misconstrued by the student concerned or by a third party.

Staff should not make the assumption that it is acceptable practice to use touch as a means of communication. There are cultural and religious views about touching and of course sensitive issues in respect to gender. Hitting or any action similar to this it is never acceptable.

It may sometimes be necessary for students to be provided with a lift in a member of staff's car. This should never be routine but may be necessary if the student is at risk: for example needing hospital treatment. Care should be taken in these circumstances, staff should advise their manager or a senior member where practicable to do so. Certainly, it is essential that the member of staff is insured for business use of their car. It is unwise for a member of staff to take a student unaccompanied. Wherever possible, staff should make alternative arrangements including the use of taxis to transport students in emergency situations or where transport is needed at short notice.

Employee standards and code of conduct

Sexual relations

The development of sexual relationships between staff and students is always inappropriate and, in the case of children under 18 and adults at risk of abuse or neglect, is an offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. As discussed above, members of staff are in a position of trust in relation to students and it is critical that the imbalance of power is not exploited or perceived to be exploited. This is particularly the case where staff teach the student concerned or have a close working relationship with them. Staff **must**

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avoid any circumstances or situations in which a relationship could develop with a student (for example one-to-one situations in the School and in social contexts outside of the School) and should not:

Have any form of communication with a student which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative, i.e., verbal comments, letters, notes, electronic mail, phone calls, texts, physical contact.

Make sexual remarks to, or about, another student or person.

Discuss their own sexual relationships with or in the presence of students.

Behave in a way that could reasonably be interpreted as 'grooming' behaviour.

Procedures where the Code of Conduct is not upheld.

As set out below, any allegation that a member of staff may have a sexual relationship with a child or vulnerable adult requires the School to report this to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Use of IT

The wide availability and use of new technology including mobile phones, text messaging, emails, digital cameras and videos, social media and personal blogs all pose difficult challenges for staff in maintaining professional boundaries.

Staff should:

Not give students their personal contact details.

Ensure that telephone, text, or email contact with students is for School business and that the tone and content of the communication upholds professional standards.

Not invite students to be a friend on any personal websites e.g. Facebook or through other social network platforms.

Be very careful about behaviour in any environment that could be posted by others onto websites and bring them or the School into disrepute.

Staff should refer to the Social Media and use of Public Media Procedures and the Appropriate Use of IT Policy on the shared drive.

In circumstances where staff are believed to have transgressed this Code of Conduct to the extent that the School's disciplinary rules have been infringed, the School's Staff Disciplinary Procedure will be invoked.

Where an allegation is made, or suspicion raised that a member of staff working with a student who may at risk of being subjected to inappropriate pressure, harassment or being put in an uncomfortable or stressful situation including being the subject of sexual misconduct, then the situation will need to be promptly and fully investigated. This may include where a member of staff has:

Behaved in a way that has harassed or subjected a student to unwanted behaviour which is intimidating, hostile or humiliating and creates an offensive atmosphere

Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or adult at risk of abuse or neglect or

Otherwise behaved in a way that indicates that he or she is unsuitable to work appropriately with students who may also include vulnerable adults or a person aged under 18 years.

The School is obliged to investigate all allegation according to its Safeguarding Policy and where appropriate to refer these concerns to the Local Authority Designated Officer for Child/ Vulnerable Adult Protection.

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