

**Holy Family Primary School
GOWRIE**



**PROFESSIONAL
CONDUCT
Policy**



Professional Conduct Policy

Related Policies

CE Child Protection (ACT) Responding to Child Protection Complaints Made Against School Employees

CE Work Health and Safety *under review*

CE Complaints

HF and CE Privacy Policy

HF and CE Complaints and Grievances Policy

HF and CE Work, Health and Safety Policy

Purpose

This policy provides details and procedures for the management of a professional conduct of all staff who work at Holy Family Primary School, COOSH program and at the ELCC. These procedures promote a common understanding and consistency in expected standards of behaviour for workers, religious and all those working and/or volunteering at Holy Family Primary School.

Policy

It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that any person involved in the provision of educational programs is deemed appropriate to be working with children. This extends to all staff and volunteers at the school and to any individual who works with the children providing a part of the educational program and/or an educational program in addition to the school's curriculum. These adults must be suitably trained and screened for the role they are undertaking. They are also expected to act professionally at all times.

Procedures

Holy Family Primary School adopts this policy from the Catholic Education Guidelines for Professional Conduct in the Protection of Children and Young People, January 2014.

Professional Responsibilities

At Holy Family all staff support the core values of the school and the system. In doing this they avoid by word or action any influence upon students that is contrary to the teachings and values expressed by the Catholic Church.

All staff members at Holy Family have a responsibility to meet the high standards of professional and ethical behaviour required by the employer, students' families and the Catholic and wider community.

The staff at Holy Family undertake their responsibilities within the framework of the law and lawful instructions from their employer. They comply with legislative and industrial requirements, with this Code and the policies and procedures that are implemented at Holy Family Primary School and the Catholic Education Office.

All staff members at Holy Family have a duty of care to our students. This duty of care is to take reasonable steps to protect students from a reasonable foreseeable risk of injury. This duty applies equally to school based activities and out of school activities involving the school and its students.

Professional Relationships

Interactions with Students at school

The staff at Holy Family are caring and compassionate adults who take an interest in their students and set up appropriate boundaries within those staff-student relationships.

The staff at Holy Family are aware that interactions with students are based on a trusting relationship arising from the nature of their work, and that those relationships are open to scrutiny.

At Holy Family there is no place for sarcasm, derogatory remarks, offensive comments or any other inappropriate conduct that may result in emotional distress to a child. The staff at Holy Family treat all of their students with respect.

Behaviour that may cause psychological harm to a student includes:

- Targeted and sustained criticism, belittling or teasing
- Excessive or unreasonable demands
- Hostility, verbal abuse, personal rejection or scapegoating;
- Using inappropriate locations for social isolation, outside of the school's discipline policy, as punishment.

The staff at Holy Family always treat their students in a consistent manner without inappropriate familiarity or spending 'special time' with a student.

Some indicative behaviour that may suggest a student is not being treated in a consistent manner could include:

- Giving gifts to a child (for example giving a birthday gift to a particular student when this is not the practice with other students, or asking the student to keep the secret from others).
- Showing special favours to a student.
- Allowing a student to over-step rules, except where it is clearly articulated in a student's Individual Education Plan or Individual Behaviour Management Plan.
- Sharing secrets with a student.
- Inconsistent consequences or allowances.

Interactions with students outside of school

At Holy Family staff members are conscious that their position places extra obligations on them. When social interactions between staff and students form outside of school, staff follow the policy and procedure set out by the school.

Examples of when staff members are to seek guidance from their Principal:

- Visiting students at their home eg. for birthday parties;
- Inviting students to visit the staff member's home;
- Making telephone calls of a personal nature to students;
- Sending e-mails of a personal nature to students; and
- Sending sms (text) messages to students.

When congratulating a student at Holy Family, staff are consistent in their approach and are in line with the school and system practice.

Staff are conscious that their actions, particularly physical gestures may be open to the scrutiny of others. The staff at Holy Family develop and exercise prudent judgement and sensitivity regarding appropriate physical interactions with students.

The staff at Holy Family, wherever possible, endeavour not to drive a student in their car unless they have specific permission, and do so in accordance with the school system policy. In the event of an emergency, staff will attempt, where possible, to obtain parental consent and also report the matter to the Principal prior to the journey commencing.

Staff members at Holy Family only engage in tutoring or coaching students outside of school hours in accordance with the prior approval of the Principal. With the exception of our Kids on Keyboard program which is conducted by our Music teacher at lunch times.

Working alone with a student

Staff at Holy Family avoid, as far possible, situations where they are alone with a student. At times staff may be required to work in a one on one situation with a student. In such situations staff follow the school's policy and procedure.

When responsible for a single student, a staff member will:

- Have previously discussed arrangements with the Principal or Leadership team.
- Maintain visibility into the room.
- Where possible, interact with the student in an area open to observation.

Alcohol and Tobacco

The staff at Holy Family do everything within reason to ensure that alcohol, tobacco or prohibited substances including illegal drugs are not consumed by students on the school's premises or at school functions, camps or excursions. The staff do not give to students, nor do they encourage or condone the use by students of, the abovementioned substances.

Staff drinks on a Friday afternoon or at a special function (eg. Melbourne cup drinks) do not commence until the end of the supervision of children at 3.45pm.

The staff at Holy Family School who attend afternoon drinks are aware that one person attending is not permitted to drink alcohol and those drinking are to remain under the legal (.05) standard limit of drinks.

All drinks are purchased individually and may only be consumed in the staffroom. Soft drinks are always available as an alternative.

To respect the needs and privacy of our staff, children are not permitted to attend afternoon drinks or staff functions.

In order to provide a relaxed environment for all staff at Holy Family School, children are not permitted in the staffroom at any time.

Administration of prescribed medications should be in accordance with school policy.

Staff are prohibited from smoking or using illegal drugs on the school premises.

Student Relationships

The staff at Holy Family do not, under any circumstances, engage in intimate and/or sexual relationships with a student or engage in any conduct of a sexual nature with a student. It is irrelevant whether the relationship is heterosexual or homosexual, consensual or non-consensual or condoned by parents or caregivers. The age of the student or staff member involved is also irrelevant.

Improper conduct of a sexual nature by a staff member against a student includes sexual intercourse and any other form of sexual misconduct. Sexual misconduct includes:

- Obscene language of a sexual nature;
- Suggestive remarks or actions;
- Jokes of a sexual nature;
- Obscene gestures;
- Unwarranted and inappropriate touching;
- Sexual exhibitionism;
- Undressing in front of students;
- Personal correspondence with students in respect of the staff member's feelings for the student;
- Deliberate exposure of students to sexual behaviour of others, other than in the case of prescribed curriculum material in which sexual themes are contextual;
- Possession, distribution or display of pornography;
- Electronic transmission of messages or files which are sexually explicit, offensive or contain inappropriate jokes; and

- Sending sms (text) messages that are sexually explicit, offensive or contain inappropriate jokes.

Pastoral Care

The staff at Holy Family, in their pastoral care role are cautious of the context of their discussions with students.

Staff members exercise caution when:

- Making personal comments about a student;
- Asking questions that probe a student's sexuality or personal relationships;
- Discussing personal details of lifestyle of self or others;
- Disclosing their personal contact details to students.

Staff members do not:

- Discuss matters of a sexual nature relating to himself or herself.

If a student should engage, or attempt to engage, in inappropriate behaviour of a sexual nature with a staff member, then the immediate steps will be taken to discourage the student and the matter will be immediately reported to the Principal.

Staff will notify the Principal immediately should they suspect a situation involving any form of reportable conduct (NSW) or concern of risk of harm to students. Staff are all aware of the individual mandatory requirements under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW), Children and Young People Act 1999 (ACT). It is not the responsibility of the staff to investigate allegations or suspicions of a child protection nature.

Maintaining Professional Boundaries

The following self-assessment is used to assist staff in assessing their application of professional boundaries:

- Am I dealing in a different manner with a particular student than with others under the same circumstances?
- Would I do or say this if a colleague or parent was present?
- Is my dress/availability/language different from normal with a particular student/s?
- Are the consequences of my actions likely to have negative outcomes?
- Are my personal feelings translating into inappropriate actions?
- Could my conduct with a student be perceived as demanding or belittling?

Staff at Holy Family bring to the attention of the Principal any potential, perceived or actual contraventions of any of these boundaries set out in this Code, whether by themselves or colleagues. The requirement to report any possible contraventions is essential given the duty of care owed to students within the school environment. In addition, all staff notify any allegation of reportable conduct (NSW), complaints relevant to the safety or well being of a student (ACT) or reportable convictions

(NSW) or relevant convictions (ACT) of which they become aware in accordance with current legislation and school policy.

Duty of Care

Holy Family school owes a duty of care to its staff and students. At Holy Family, staff are expected to contribute to the fulfilment of this legal duty.

Staff exercise with diligence, the duty of care that they owe to our students. In addition to this, staff are expected to take all reasonable steps to protect students from risk of harm. This may require making formal notifications/reports to government agencies as well as referring matters of concern to relevant personnel within the Catholic Education office.

Staff members at Holy Family cooperate with the school leadership team to maintain a workplace environment that is positive, open and healthy for members of the school community. Each staff member has a significant role to play in achieving and maintaining this objective. It is expected that any matters that threaten the fulfilment of this objective be reported to the staff member's direct supervisor.

The supervisory role of staff is aimed at enhancing a student's educational opportunities, building self-esteem, and ensuring students are safe and supported. Whilst in a supervisory role, the staff member has an obligation to fulfil duty of care requirements.

The staff at Holy Family comply with the arrangements for student supervision put in place by the school for all activities where the student is under the duty of care of a staff member. Playground supervision is an integral part of this responsibility. Staff must actively supervise their designated area, be vigilant and constantly mobile. Punctuality is an essential element of this compliance.

Staff should be alert to bullying or any other form of harassment or discriminatory behaviour, act on and report incidents in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy.

Ill or injured students are attended to by the supervising staff member. Should additional assistance be required the first-aid officers are contacted.

Attention to the personal care needs of a student is done in accordance with the school's policy and procedure and individual management plan.

Staff members at Holy Family remain with students at after school activities in accordance with school policy.

Risk Management

All staff at Holy Family are aware of risks that arise in the school and take steps to minimise and/or eliminate those risks. Staff appreciate that in order for the school to exercise its duty of care for its students and staff, from time to time they may be required to conduct a risk assessment.

Student Management

Student discipline practices at Holy Family aim to facilitate the development and experience of responsible self-discipline amongst students and to promote the well-being, safety and effective management of the school community.

It is the responsibility of each staff member to develop effective, consistent and appropriate management strategies in day to day interactions with students as a preventative system of behaviour management. These strategies should include a clear, consistent and graded method of dealing with inappropriate behaviours and should be developed in accordance with the school's Pastoral Care, Student Welfare and Management Policy (SWAMP). It is the responsibility of each staff member to familiar with these policies.

As a general rule, staff will use their management strategies in their initial dealings with students. However, students who display recurrent challenging behaviours, particularly unsafe behaviours should be referred to the Principal.

Physical Contact with Students

At Holy Family when physical contact with a student is a necessary part of the teaching/learning experience staff exercise caution to ensure that the contact is appropriate and acceptable for the duty to be performed.

Assessing a student who is injured or ill may necessitate touching. A staff member should advise the student of what they intend to do and, where possible, seek the student's concurrence.

Teaching sport, music and other activities may require the physical handling of a student to demonstrate a particular action or skill.

Physical contact with students, which may be appropriate, includes:

- Comforting an upset student;
- Guiding a student in a non threatening manner;
- Tapping a student on the shoulder to gain his/her attention after verbal requests were unsuccessful;
- Protecting a student from imminent danger to himself/herself or to others.

The physical contact above is only acceptable if the contact was reasonable for the purpose of discipline, management or care of the student.

Some examples of when it may be appropriate to use physical intervention as a last resort include:

- A student attacking a staff member;
- A student attacking another student;
- Students physically fighting;
- A student causing, or at risk of causing, injury to self or others;
- A student misusing dangerous materials, substances or objects where it is likely that this will cause imminent harm.

As any physical intervention involves some risk of injury to the student or staff member, staff must weigh this risk against the risks involved in failing to physically intervene when it may be warranted. All staff using physical interventions are responsible and accountable for the manner in which they exercise that authority.

Confidentiality

Staff should be aware of, respect and adhere to, the established lines of communication in the school.

Where matters arise in a school under Child Protection Legislation, staff should maintain the confidentiality of all parties concerned. In any matters where a staff member is in doubt as to the requirements of confidentiality, they should seek the advice of the Principal or the Principal's delegate, without discussing the matter with any other person.

Unacceptable Conduct

Conduct that is contrary to this Code may amount to a reportable conduct investigation under Child Protection Legislation and/or inquiry by the Catholic Education Office in accordance with Catholic Education Office policy. Unacceptable conduct may result in disciplinary action by the employer or in some circumstances referral to Police or other agencies.

Clarification of the Code

If there is any conflict between this code and applicable legislation, the legislation will prevail. If a staff member is in doubt about the interpretation of this code then the matter should be discussed with the Principal or Human Resources Officer at the Catholic Education Office. If this matter cannot be clarified at a local level, the matter may be referred to the Catholic Commission for Employment Relations.

Annually staff will participate in a professional development workshop where the code of conduct is explained prior to teachers signing individual copies of the code of conduct. It is expected that all teachers will sign the Code of Conduct and these are filed in the teacher's personal files.

References

Nil

Forms

Code of Conduct form

Approved by:	Holy Family School Board
Implementation Date:	2012
Policy last Updated:	August 2014
School Contact Officer:	Anne-Marie Marek