



Staff Code of Conduct 2020

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Version History

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1.0	January 2020	New Illawarra Christian Education Policy from CEN Hub Policy (Illawarra Christian School and Calderwood Christian School)
1.1		

Illawarra Christian Education (Illawarra Christian School and Calderwood Christian School)
Mission: In Christ's service to partner with parents in providing a quality Christian Education founded on the Word of God.

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Important related documents:

ICE Staff Dress Code	Staff Handbook
ICE Staff Policy	Staff Induction Handbook
Employment Policy suite	Staff employment contracts (see Business Manager)
Child Protection Policy	Staff Multi Enterprise agreements (see Business Manager)
Welfare Policy	Illawarra Association for Christian Parent-Controlled Education Statement of Affirmation of Faith
Discipline Policy	
WHS Policy suite	
Grievance Policy	
Privacy Policy	

1 INTRODUCTION

References to Illawarra Christian Education below include reference to its schools Illawarra Christian School and Calderwood Christian School.

The aim of this Code of Conduct is to provide staff members with the school's requirements and principles in relation to professional and personal conduct; and standards of professional practice for all staff. It represents legal requirements and best practice.

It provides guidelines in modelling and building an educational environment that is faith-filled, collaborative, consultative and lawfully compliant. The intention of this document is to clarify parameters of appropriate and inappropriate conduct for workers in child-related employment; to develop and maintain a safe and supportive environment for students, staff and the school community; and to promote the vision and mission of the school.

This Code of Conduct has implications for staff when they are not in a school situation, as employees' conduct outside the school in a non-educational setting may nevertheless affect their professional standing in the community; as well as the school's reputation.

At all times, staff must exercise the care required of a skilled professional. This Code of Conduct is not intended to be exhaustive; nor to identify every possible scenario of concern in the workplace. Read in conjunction with the individual staff member's Employment Contract (Letter of Offer, or Change of Conditions Letter), school policies and procedures, and the Staff Policy and Staff Dress Code, this Staff Code of Conduct will offer a common understanding of the school's expectations.

Compliance with this Code of Conduct is a requirement of continued employment at Illawarra Christian Education for all staff.

2 CHRISTIAN RATIONALE

The school, as a Christian community, represents the body of Christ, with the command to love one another as Christ loves each one of us. Therefore the instructions in Scripture for building up the body of Christ are foundational to the ethos, aims and philosophy of the school, and are reflected in its policies, procedures and other documents.

This Code of Conduct is founded in the character of Jesus Christ:

Respect – for all people as created in the image of God

Love – sincere care, selflessness and compassion for others

Service – generous love for the needs of others

Justice – proper exercise of power and authority

As ambassadors of Christ, Christians are exhorted to live a life of exemplary behaviour in all circumstances. All actions of staff towards children must be motivated by a desire for the welfare of the child, bearing in mind that *love always protects*. (1 Corinthians 13:7)

This Code of Conduct concerns relationships, not rules; its principles can be summed

up: *Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves.* (Romans 12:10) Through the diligent outworking of the principles and guidelines of this document, staff will consistently foster the dignity and integrity of every person as made in the image of God; modelling Christ's love in mature relationships; and acting in a manner that creates a safe and effective educational and pastoral environment.

Real wisdom, God's wisdom, begins with a holy life and is characterized by getting along with others. It is gentle and reasonable, overflowing with mercy and blessings, not hot one day and cold the next, not two-faced. You can develop a healthy, robust community that lives right with God and enjoy its results only if you do the hard work of getting along with each other, treating each other with dignity and honour.

James 3:17-18, The Message

3 **LAWFUL AND REASONABLE DIRECTIONS**

Staff must comply promptly and conscientiously with all lawful and reasonable decisions and directions given by the Principal, or his/her delegate.

Staff must not knowingly impede compliance with, or implementation of, a lawful and reasonable decision or direction.

When making decisions or giving directions, staff must act within their legal and delegated responsibilities. Staff must make what they believe to be competent decisions, and give fair and reasonable guidance and directions.

4 **PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL CONDUCT**

- Staff must be seen to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the school's Statement of Faith, and the Christian ethos and practices of the school. Staff should provide a Christian example to all students and families.
- Staff should not act in ways they know, or ought reasonably to know, are contrary to the beliefs of the school. They should refrain from any deliberate conduct which is incompatible with the intrinsic character of their positions.
- Staff must act in a professional and respectful way that enhances their professional reputation and the reputation of Christian education. Staff should be aware that personal conduct and lifestyle outside of normal working hours can reflect on the school. Therefore staff should act appropriately at all times, especially in the presence of students.
- Employees must treat fellow employees, students and others within their work environment with the respect and dignity that all deserve.
- Employees whose work involves interacting with students have a special responsibility to comply with duty of care requirements.
- Staff must be familiar with the policies, procedures and delegations that are applicable to their roles and actions. Staff are required to read, and ensure that they understand, policy documents circulated to them. Staff who are uncertain about any aspect of policies and procedures, and their responsibilities, should seek advice from their immediate Coordinator.
- The Staff Handbook also contains valuable information for staff.
- Employees must uphold and comply with:

- applicable Commonwealth, State and local laws, regulations, industrial awards and agreements
- Illawarra Christian Education/Illawarra Christian School/Calderwood Christian School directives, policies and procedures
- applicable professional standards and codes of practice that do not conflict with government or Illawarra Christian Education/Illawarra Christian School/Calderwood Christian School policy
- Staff must act promptly in reporting any breaches of the law, school policies, government policies and directives, as well as misconduct according to this Staff Code of Conduct, to their immediate Coordinator or the Principal.
- Staff are expected to behave always in ways that promote the safety, welfare and well-being of students, fellow employees and others in their workplace environment, in accordance with relevant work health and safety legislation.
- Staff must perform their work duties competently and responsibly, with a focus on delivering or supporting high quality educational services to students and their families.
- Staff must maintain the accuracy, integrity and appropriate confidentiality of all information used in their professional dealings at Illawarra Christian School/Calderwood Christian School.
- Staff shall protect their own health, safety and welfare, and seek appropriate measures to ensure personal well-being.
- Staff shall follow correct procedures to resolve problems or disputes. See Grievance Policy
- Conduct contrary to the school's requirements, as set out in this, and associated documents, shall always have appropriate consequences. Disciplinary action ranges from counseling to termination of employment. See Employment Policy

5 DUTY OF CARE

Duty of care is the requirement to do everything reasonably practicable to protect others from foreseeable harm. While this applies in all aspects of a staff members' work, it is particularly important for staff who have interaction with, and responsibility for, students.

Teachers have a particular duty of care towards students; arising out of what is known as a fiduciary relationship, i.e. a relationship based on trust. There are two ethical principles:

- The responsibility to cause no harm to self, or others
- To actively promote the good of self, and others

All students have a basic right to a physical and emotional environment that is free from unreasonable risk of harm. Harm includes any significant detrimental effect to the student's physical, psychological or emotional well-being by any cause. It includes minor harm that is cumulative in nature and which would result in a detrimental effect of a significant nature to the student if allowed to continue.

The Child Protection Policy outlines the legal and professional responsibilities of staff in the care of children and young persons.

Staff must actively seek to maintain a physically safe environment for students. WHS Policy suite.

Staff must take reasonable steps to prevent harm to students and to support students who have been harmed.

A single serious failure to exercise appropriate duty of care, or persistent repeated failures, may constitute neglect or negligence according to law if actual harm is caused, or there is potential to cause significant harm to a child or young person.

6 DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

Illawarra Christian Education is committed to providing a workplace free of all forms of discrimination, victimisation and harassment.

All staff at Illawarra Christian Education have the responsibility to act fairly and evenly towards other staff, students and the general public in accordance with the School's policies and relevant legislation.

Discrimination, victimisation or harassment, intimidation, bullying and the breach of professional boundaries, or abuse of power, are a violation of relationships, and will not be tolerated. Such behaviour will be dealt with in accordance with existing policies. See Anti-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Workplace Anti-Bullying Policy These policies apply to any site or event organised by, or associated with, Illawarra Christian Education e.g. where the school is represented, either explicitly or implicitly.

Any allegation of discrimination, victimisation or harassment against an individual, shall be thoroughly investigated. If, following investigation, the allegation is deemed on the balance of probability to be true, the school may take disciplinary action. See Employment Policy

N.B. Criminal charges may be laid in cases where the allegation has been sustained.

7 PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF TO STUDENTS

- Support the core values of the school
- Exercise diligence in the performance of all duties and responsibilities
- Develop students' sense of value and worth as made in the image of God
- Ensure a positive, safe and effective teaching and learning environment
- Enhance students' educational opportunities by using well-planned and appropriate activities
- Engage in pastoral care subject to professional boundaries
- Model effective leadership and respect
- Comply with the law and lawful instructions of the Principal or his/her delegates
- Comply with school policies – seek clarification of Coordinator if in doubt
- Observe the duty of care, particularly in relation to supervision
- Report any risks of harm to the Section Coordinator or Principal
- Ongoing commitment to continued professional learning

8 PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS OF STAFF WITH STUDENTS

Staff must act in a professional manner, modelling appropriate relationships to all members of the school community at all times. Behaviour should never be that which a reasonable person would consider to be offensive.

Students should be treated by staff with Christian love and respect:

- Speech - polite, affirming; not sarcastic, demeaning, abusive or threatening; not blaming or making a scapegoat of a student, nor unfair criticism
- Actions - respectful; not embarrassing or victimising
- Expectations - reasonable, achievable; not excessive, unattainable, embarrassing, demeaning
- Treat students with respect without favouritism; and be consistent in treatment
- Avoid social interactions outside school, where there is potential for a breach of the Staff Code of Conduct
- Develop effective, non-confrontational and consistent discipline strategies in keeping with Discipline Policy
- Observe professional boundaries between Staff and Students
- Do not engage in tutoring or coaching outside school hours, except by arrangement with the Principal
- Do not engage in intimate and/or sexual relationships (behaviour or conversation) with a student
- Avoid situations that require being alone with a student in an enclosed space
- Promote the safety, welfare and well-being of staff and students in all things

Staff who find themselves thinking or behaving inappropriately toward students should seek immediate counselling and also speak about the issue with the Principal.

9 DISCIPLINE

- Corporal punishment is prohibited at Illawarra Christian School/Calderwood Christian School. Staff members must never punish a child using physical force, or strike a student, for any reason.
- Staff must never imply, or express, that a parent should use corporal punishment in respect to any issue at school. See Discipline Policy; Welfare Policy

10 PHYSICAL CONTACT

Physical contact must never be inappropriate.

If necessary, staff should only touch students on the shoulders, arms, upper back, though never in a way that could be construed as sexual.

Staff must never touch students on the thighs, buttocks, genitalia or breast except in extreme cases where not doing so would threaten the life or safety of the student or others. See First Aid Policy; Student Medication Policy

Physical Restraint

Staff members may use appropriate physical force in order to restrain a child, only if they reasonably believe that the child may cause harm or further harm to themselves, another person or equipment.

Physical force must be mild unless immediate danger. Appropriate restraint may be:

- Gentle pressure applied to the student's shoulder or arm in order to guide or settle the student
- To hold a student to stop them running away into possible danger.

Dragging or pushing a student is not acceptable.

Kissing

Staff members are not to kiss students except where it is to respond to a formal kiss on the cheek initiated by a (usually senior) student as a form of congratulation, greeting or farewell.

Hugging

Staff members should generally refrain from hugging or embracing students except in genuine congratulatory or comforting gestures that are clearly appropriate to the circumstances.

The staff member must always act in a way that does not risk imposing their will on the student.

Any act of physical comfort should not be prolonged or frequently repeated. Ensure the act of physical comfort is acceptable to the student; or ask whether there is someone else they would prefer.

If a student is upset, and it seems appropriate:

- Ask the student if they would like a hug e.g. 'Would a hug help?'
- Give a side hug only
- Be in public view

Hugs initiated by a student (especially lower Primary students) are acceptable, provided other conditions in this document are met.

Medical Treatment

Where students require medical attention to private areas of their bodies and they are incapable of doing it themselves (under instruction):

- assistance should be given, where practicable, by female staff member or,
- in the case of secondary school boys either by a male or female staff member, always ensuring that a suitable witness is present. See Student Medication Policy

Physical Assistance

Physical assistance, if required, should be:

- appropriate to the age, maturity, health or other characteristics of the child
- in accordance with any specific management plan for the child
- performed in accordance with the standard expressed throughout this Code of

Conduct

11 SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS

Staff members must endeavour not to be alone with a student wherever possible, but to always be in view of others.

Meetings

In one-on-one situations eg interview, detention, tutoring, counselling etc:

- Ensure the Pastoral Care Coordinator, or other staff member, is aware of the meeting
- Maintain appropriate distance between the student and the staff member
- Ensure the student feels safe and at ease in the situation
- Maintain a line of sight (but not overheard if confidential) to others e.g. in a room with windows, an office with a window in the door or with the door partly open
- Retain notes of the meeting

Excursions/Camps

Adults (staff, parents, other helpers) should make every attempt to be visible at all times. In an overnight stay where staff are required to sleep in the same room or tent as students, at least two adults should always be present in the room with the children. See Excursion Policy

Change Rooms

Staff should not normally enter areas where students are changing.

Exceptions:

- In the case of an emergency
- To deal with a disciplinary incident
- To help a student in need (e.g. helping Infants children to change)
- Or where the change area is a communal one, such as at public swimming pools

If a staff member also needs to use the facilities being accessed by the students, they should take reasonable steps to avoid causing embarrassment or offence before entering, and whilst in, the change area. E.g. Warning students upon entering; turning their back; or making reasonable efforts to change in an area physically separated from that of the students

On excursions, sleepovers, camps and sporting events where students are required to change, staff should ensure there are provisions for students to change in privacy.

12 INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

- Staff are in a privileged position of trust and authority, which must not be abused. Staff members should be aware that young people who are in the process of becoming sexually aware may be confused by the actions of an adult.
- Appropriate professional relationships between teachers and students must be

maintained at all times. Staff should be alert to avoid any behaviour which may lead to an allegation of grooming, or other sexual misconduct. See Child Protection Policy.

- Staff members are absolutely prohibited from courting, dating or developing an emotionally or physically intimate personal relationship with a student enrolled at the school.
- Should a student make an advance toward a staff member, or should the staff member suspect that a student might be developing a romantic attachment to, or infatuation with him/her, the staff member is required to report the issue to an executive staff member (Principal, Deputy Principal/ Heads of School or Business Manager).
- Married staff are also encouraged to tell their spouse about the issue.
- If a staff member believes a student is romantically attached to or infatuated with another staff member they are also required to inform an executive staff member (Principal, Deputy Principal/ Heads of School or Business Manager).

Grooming Behaviour

Staff must not engage in grooming behaviour. Grooming behaviour involves a pattern of conduct that is consistent with preparing a child or young person for sexual activity, where there is no other reasonable explanation for it.

Such behaviour may involve:

- Encouraging a child or young person into a 'special' relationship
- Testing, or setting unwise, boundaries
- Inappropriately extending a relationship outside of work
- Inappropriate personal communication
- Asking children to keep any aspect of their relationship secret

Existing Personal Relationships

Staff are advised to exhibit appropriate, transparent and prudent behaviour with family members, close personal friends etc, who are also a part of the school community.

Be alert to actions which may breach this Code of Conduct; or which may create a conflict of interest. If in doubt, refer to your immediate Coordinator.

Development of Relationships

Staff are in a position of trust and influence which may continue beyond the student leaving the school, or turning 18.

Extreme care should be taken before entering into a personal, intimate or sexual relationship. It may be considered sexual misconduct if it is established that the staff member used their position to develop or maintain an inappropriate relationship with a student before the student left the school, and/or turned 18.

Factors to consider include:

- The age and maturity of the student
- Time elapsed since leaving school
- Community perception

- The potential impact to the reputation of the school

13 COMMUNICATION

- Respect, and adhere to, confidentiality rules in relation to school matters. E.g. Discussion with parents, or matters arising from staff meetings/ memos.
- Comply with confidentiality rules imposed by child protection legislation; and other school policies.
- Present a courteous, professional manner to students, staff, parents and visitors.
- Avoid media comments without the express permission of the principal.
- Use of school ICT is explained in the ICT Policy and Staff Handbook.
- Be aware of the requirement for the family's, or individual's, consent to photograph, video or publish such images. Images must only be used for educational/ school-approved purposes.
- No photography or filming may be done secretly or without consent.
- Derogatory comments in any form, oral or written, including electronic communication, to students, parents, work colleagues or the general public is unacceptable behaviour. Recipients of such behaviour have recourse to the processes contained within the school's Grievance Policy.

Communication with Students

- All communications from staff members to students must be appropriate and within the bounds of professionalism.
- Communications should be directly related to a student's work or course of study, or approved school activities.
- Staff may not have conversations with students that are of a lewd or sexually suggestive nature.
- Staff should not expose a child or young person to material that contains violent, inappropriate sexual messages, or adult concepts or themes that are inappropriate given their age and level of maturity. If curriculum material is of concern to staff in this regard staff should seek the guidance of their Coordinator.

Email

Should the student need to correspond with staff by email, the staff member's school email address should be used for this purpose. This practice is generally suitable for senior students only.

Please note: if a student initiates contact with a staff member via personal email or text message, the teacher should not respond.

Emails to Parents

In general, email communication from staff to parents should be sent through the Principal's PA; excepting only staff in authorised job positions.

All email communication should be restricted to the subject of the matter only.

Other Social Media

- Staff members must not correspond with students via text/sms messages on any personal matter, nor become “friends” with students on Facebook or any other cyber-social media, excluding students of whom they are the parent/guardian.
- Staff are warned to be cautious in inviting/accepting invitations from ex-students, or parents of current students as friends on social media. Maintain professional relationships.
- If staff feel they have become an online target of inappropriate communication from students, or a member of the school community, they should advise their immediate Coordinator.
- Staff members are warned that supposedly ‘private’ postings on job ratings websites, LinkedIn connections and Facebook etc may have serious consequences for the staff member if such proceedings are damaging to the school, or bring it into disrespect.

Students Employed in After School Care

Students employed by the school in the after school care program, or similar program, must not communicate with students from Prep to Year 8, by email, text/sms messages, or cyber-social media, ie Facebook and others, excluding students who are family members, close family friends/ church members.

14 DRESS

Staff should always dress modestly both as an example to students, and to avoid causing others to sin. Dress, personal appearance and hygiene are important elements of professional presentation. Employees must ensure that their personal appearance and presentation are clean, tidy and appropriate for their work role. Additional information is outlined in the Illawarra Christian Education Staff Dress Code.

15 COLLEGIAL RELATIONSHIPS

It is expected that staff will conduct themselves in a professional, respectful and cooperative manner towards all other staff members. Staff should remain above reproach in all relationships both inside and outside the school context.

- Each staff member must take responsibility for their own conduct.
- Maintain a positive teaching and learning environment with other staff.
- Maintain loyalty to the school and all members of the school community.
- Staff are expected to act in good faith: not making unfounded complaints with malicious, frivolous or vexatious intent against another.
- Ensure confidentiality and privacy of information – do not give out contact details to parents, students or others without permission.

16 DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS

Staff members must report to the Principal any allegation of reportable conduct of which they become aware.

Staff members must notify the Principal if they become the subject of an Apprehended Violence Order or reportable conviction.

17 OTHER MATTERS

Drugs, Alcohol, Smoking

- Staff may not purchase or consume alcohol at any time whilst on duty or at any time during a school excursion.
- Smoking is not permitted in school facilities or grounds, nor while staff have direct responsibility for, or contact with, students.
- The illicit use of drugs at any time whilst engaged in school-related activities, on campus or off campus, is strictly prohibited.
- Staff must ensure their capacity to perform their duties is not impaired by any substance – even if prescription medication. The section Principal must be informed if this may be the case.
- Staff must not supply, offer or administer to students (including those over 18) any illegal drug, restricted substance or medication (other than arranged according to the Student Medication Policy); or alcohol or tobacco.
- Staff must not condone the use, or use by students, of illegal drugs, restricted substances, tobacco or alcohol.

Conflict Of Interest

A conflict of interest may exist when an employee's private interests have the potential to interfere with the proper performance of his /her work duties. A potential or actual conflict of interest must be identified, declared and resolved in favour of the interest of the school.

Staff should use wisdom in the matter of inappropriate gifts, benefits or favours to ensure no compromise of their judgement or partiality; or of the values and reputation of the school.

Record Keeping

Staff are expected to maintain appropriate records and data in relation to professional practice.

Privacy And Confidentiality

Staff at Illawarra Christian Education may be entrusted with access to information of a sensitive nature to enable them to carry out their duties. The requirements of the Privacy Act, and school procedures are detailed in the school's Privacy Policy and Privacy of Information User Manual. The Business Manager is the Privacy Officer, for further information.

- All personal and sensitive information must be handled carefully, such that the

integrity of that information is maintained at all times.

- Information must only be used and/or disclosed according to the provisions of the Privacy Policy.
- Staff must exercise caution and wisdom in discussing other people's confidential and personal information; and should not disclose contact details without permission.
- A staff member must not, after leaving employment at Illawarra Christian Education, use confidential information obtained during the course of his/ her employment for any other work, or non-work related purposes.

Grievance

In the event of a grievance, complaint or dispute, staff should follow the procedures outlined in the Grievance Policy.

Any investigation will be conducted in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness; unless procedures pertaining to the Child Protection Policy take precedence.

18 IN THE EVENT OF BREACH OF CODE OF CONDUCT

This Code of Conduct applies to all paid employees, whether permanent, temporary or on a casual basis; also volunteers, contractors, consultants, and students on tertiary practicum placements. This Code of Conduct forms part of the employment contract, or understanding by which a person is engaged or appointed by the school.

- A breach of this Code of Conduct, either apparent or alleged, will be dealt with in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness.
- Depending on the nature of the breach, or recurring breaches, sanctions may be applied, from counseling to termination of employment, in accordance with the Child Protection Policy, Employment Policy and/or Grievance Policy.
- Where legally applicable, staff in breach of the Code of Conduct may seek access to dispute resolution processes.
- If an employee believes this Code of Conduct has been breached by a person at work, he/she must refer the matter to their immediate Coordinator, or to the Principal if the matter involves the Coordinator.
- The Principal shall take disciplinary action against any employee who attempts to intimidate, coerce or take reprisal against an employee who has disclosed unethical or unlawful behavior. See Employment Policy

Your continued appointment is conditional upon you maintaining an active commitment to, and involvement with, a Christian church; a lifestyle consistent with Biblical principles; and a firm personal belief in the Statement of Faith.

If a member of staff is in doubt about anything contained in this Code he/she should speak to his/her Section Coordinator or to the Principal.

Please sign the Illawarra Association for Christian Parent-Controlled Education Staff Statement of Affirmation of Faith for 2020.