



Guidelines for Staff-Student Interactions

Preamble

Our School is one where we desire all students and staff to be engaged in positive and productive learning, both in and out of the classroom. As a professional learning community, we want to be characterised by consistent application of professional values and standards. These guidelines are designed to help all staff, both academic and non-academic, to interact with students in appropriate ways.

There are a very limited range of situations these guidelines do not cover; these include some confidential matters involving the Headmaster, the School Counsellor and members of Cabinet.

Guidelines

1. Staff-student interactions should be characterised by courtesy, respect and dignity as befitting a School that seeks to live as a Christian community. Favouritism and inappropriate familiarity with students are not professional behaviours befitting our School.
2. Staff should avoid being alone at any time with a child of either sex, no matter what their age. If a staff member needs to speak with a student in a manner that requires confidentiality, they should have another staff member or student present; this observer should, where possible, be of the same gender as the student being interviewed.
3. Staff should avoid being alone in a School building with a child of either sex at any time. Under no circumstances should a staff member lock or block the entrance to an area where they are meeting with a student such that the staff member and student could not be interrupted.
4. When discussing personal or confidential matters with a student or students, the discussion should take place in a conspicuous situation (i.e., with a door open, or in the playground).
5. Staff should not discuss personal or confidential matters with a student or students behind closed doors, and should avoid discussing these sorts of matters with children of the opposite sex. Staff should not initiate such discussions, and should not discuss their own personal or confidential matters with students under any circumstances. To do so is to compromise professional standing.
6. In rendering first aid to a child, staff should take care to ensure that another student or staff member is present. If this is not possible, the rendering of first aid should take place in a conspicuous location. If the injured student is female, a male staff member should only administer first aid as a last resort when there is no female staff member available.
7. Staff should not touch a child of either sex. There are a few situations, however, where this may not be possible, eg, demonstration of skills in PE, sport coaching. In these cases, teachers should ensure that any interaction takes place in a conspicuous situation, and must never allow the child to feel that they have been compromised; staff should always let the student know what they intend to do and to seek the students permission to do so. Staff should discourage students from touching them. If, however, a child initiates by touching a teacher (eg, a Kindergarten child holding the hand of a teacher on playground duty), the teacher should respond in such a way that the student feels comfortable, and should not encourage the situation to continue. A teacher should never touch a student in any way if they are alone with a student.

8. Staff should not use any form of physical restraint in dealing with students.
9. Staff should not use confinement or segregation in dealing with discipline matters; staff who may consider a situation serious enough for such action should refer the matter immediately to the Director of the relevant School (Junior/Middle/Senior) or the Deputy Head.
10. Staff should never expose students to any form of discipline which either harms the child psychologically or has the potential to do so. Such staff behaviours can include, but are not limited to:
 - making excessive or unreasonable demands;
 - scapegoating, rejection, humiliation, verbal abuse, including shouting;
 - derogatory remarks;
 - failure to respond appropriately to threats of self harm;
 - failure to respond to evidence of neglect.
11. In the case of activities which involve staff interacting with students out of school time, staff should ensure that their professional standing is not compromised. The compromising of professional standing may lead to disciplinary action being taken against the member of staff.
12. Staff are encouraged to assist students with their academic studies outside normal class times at the School. They are not, however, to do so for financial or other gift reward. Any staff involved in assisting students should notify the Deputy Head.
13. Staff should not have students travel in their car without express permission of the student's parents or guardian. Staff should not convey any student in their car without first seeking the approval of the Headmaster or the Deputy Head.
14. Staff should seek to uphold the good name and reputation of the School at all times. As members of the wider community, staff are recognised as representatives of the teaching profession and the School; as such, they have a responsibility not to bring the School into disrepute by their behaviour.
15. If a staff member is unsure whether any possible action is appropriate, they should discuss this with the Headmaster or the Deputy Head before they undertake the action.