



# Code of Ethics

## Staff Code of Ethics for Safe and Professional Relationships

Lutheran schools seek to ensure that each member of the school community (students, employees, parents, volunteers, independent contractors, agents and work experience personnel) enjoys a safe, healthy and respectful workplace.

The LEA *Code of Ethics for Safe and Professional Relationships* provides a clear statement of principles and expectations for behaviour based on the values that Lutheran schools adhere to and promote. It makes explicit the practices that are needed to build school communities that are safe for all and are characterised by the highest level of ethical and professional behaviour.

### Love

*In response to God's love for us, we demonstrate the same kind of love for others.*

Therefore we:

- uphold and promote the Lutheran Christian ethos, both in and beyond the school;
- demonstrate grace, forgiveness, and compassion in our relationships with others, particularly in critical areas school life, such as pastoral care, behaviour management, resolution of conflict and management of complaints;
- are courteous, caring, kind and respectful in our words and actions, both at school and at school functions;
- develop positive relationships with families, based on mutual trust and open communication;
- do not engage in sexual behaviour or sexual relationships with students;
- take reasonable care to establish and maintain a working environment that minimises the risk of physical, mental and emotional harm to ourselves and others;
- are vigilant in fulfilling duty of care responsibilities.

### Justice

*Through genuine concern and through developing a conscience for the rights and well being of others, we act with fairness and consistency and respond to injustice with courage and integrity.*

Therefore we:

- respect and value the uniqueness of each person ;are fair, consistent and just in our dealings with all students, parents and caregivers, colleagues and members of the wider school community;
- maintain sensitive information with appropriate confidentiality and therefore refrain from discussing school issues or others' personal or professional problems in situations where the information may not be treated confidentially;
- are aware of and fulfil the ethical, moral and legal responsibilities relevant to our position;
- are truthful when making statements about our qualifications and competencies.

## Compassion

*We are open and responsive to the needs and concerns of others, and exercise the ability to reach out to and actively care for them.*

Therefore we:

- take notice of others' reactions to our actions, tone of voice and manner;
- raise any concerns, issues, problems with the appropriate level of school management as soon as possible;
- ensure all allegations and suspicions of abuse to young people are recorded and acted upon;
- ensure that our personal behaviour does not contribute to inappropriate conduct by others;
- ensure that any physical contact with a child is in response to the situation, the needs and wishes of that child, non-secretive and appropriate for the child's age, health and developmental stage;
- are cautious, sensitive and respectful about making personal comments and asking personal questions when caring for students;
- recognise that social relations between staff and students can be problematic.

## Forgiveness

*We pardon the wrongs others have done to us, seek pardon for the wrongs we have done to others and in doing so, focus on making a new start.*

Therefore we:

- deal proactively, openly and decisively with dysfunctional relationships and see them as opportunities for God to transform and heal;
- accept our obligations to put damaged relationships right;
- understand that genuine forgiveness can be a difficult process, but that it is a biblical imperative, made possible in the lives of people through the grace of God;
- accept that at times our actions lead to consequences (including disciplinary action) and that these are not incompatible with forgiveness.

## Service

*We give our love, time, energy, gifts in response to the needs of others and to make a difference in their lives, without expecting recognition or reward*

Therefore we:

- put the needs of others ahead of our personal agendas;
- do not seek recognition at the expense of professional objectivity;
- consult with parents and caregivers when making decisions which have an impact on the education or wellbeing of a student;
- respond to others' concerns in a timely and appropriate manner;
- do not exploit our position for personal or financial gain;
- ensure that personal or financial interests do not interfere with the performance of our duties.

## Humility

*We recognise and value the gifts and abilities of others equally to our own and therefore respect and learn from their experience.*

Therefore we:

- acknowledge and support the personal strengths, professional experience and diversity which colleagues bring to the school community;
- consider other viewpoints fairly;
- demonstrate the ability and willingness to work effectively in teams;

- build collaborative relationships based on trust, respect, honesty and diplomacy;
- make every effort to use constructive methods to manage conflict and differences of opinion in a spirit of collegiality, without blame and with respect for different opinions, strategies, practices and viewpoints;
- give respectful feedback and accept feedback;
- are aware of the role of other professionals, services and agencies that can assist us support students and their families, and know when to refer on.

## Courage

*We have the strength of heart and firmness of spirit to stand up for what is right and 'have a go' despite difficulties, uncertainty and setbacks.*

Therefore we:

- use constructive action and appropriate forums to debate issues and to bring about change;
- challenge negative interpersonal behaviours when we observe them and use appropriate processes to deal with them;
- protect students from intimidation, humiliation and harm;
- seek advice, support and assistance when we are facing personal challenges.

## Hope

*We place our trust and faith in God's provision of the things we need to handle all kinds of situations and events, and look forward with trust and confidence.*

Therefore we:

- appreciate that all interactions are opportunities for the Holy Spirit to work;
- actively seek to develop our personal resilience;
- are realistically aware of our personal gifts and talents.

## Quality

*In every task, every relationship, every interaction we strive always to use our gifts, abilities, skills and talents to bring about the best outcome.*

Therefore we:

- create and maintain safe, healthy environments which enable learning, development, engagement, initiative, self-worth and resilience;
- are committed to, and model, highly professional conduct and best practice;
- conduct ourselves in a manner that is consistent with the responsibility to be a positive role model to children and as a representative of our school;
- present the school in a positive light to the community.

## Appreciation

*We recognise and value highly the gifts and blessings given to us and surrounding us.*

Therefore we:

- recognise and value the gifts and talents of others;
- celebrate the positive aspects of our work environment;
- provide support for one another;
- value and care for school property and other physical assets.

Source: *Valuing Safe Communities*, Lutheran Education Australia, November 2008