

BHASVIC

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT & MODEL OF PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR

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BHASVIC

Staff Code of Conduct and Model of Professional Behaviour

1 Purpose and Context

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to provide a clear set of principles to guide staff in how they are expected to conduct themselves in their day to day work (the Code of Conduct) and how they should behave towards one another (the Model of Professional Behaviour).
- 1.2 Article 14 of the Articles of Government states that 'After consultation with staff, the Corporation shall make rules relating to the conduct of staff'.
- 1.3 Article 15 states that: 'In making rules under Article 14, the Corporation shall have regard to the need to ensure that academic staff at the institution have freedom within the law to question and test received wisdom, and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions, without placing themselves at risk of losing their jobs or any privileges which they may enjoy at the institution.'

2 Policy Statement

- 2.1 Even if it were desirable to do so, it would not be possible to write an exhaustive list of rules governing staff conduct. Staff should be trusted in the discharge of their responsibilities, which implies allowing room for initiative and judgement. In fairness to staff, however, it is important to set out guidance as to where the exercise of that initiative and judgement could potentially bring them into conflict with others.
- 2.2 There may be occasions when a member of staff wants to know how a particular aspect of conduct might be regarded, when measured against the Staff Code of Conduct. Staff should seek advice from the HR Manager in the first instance, or a member of SMT.

3 Scope

- 3.1 This Code of Conduct and Model of Professional Behaviour applies to all staff at the College, irrespective of anyone's position or role in the College, together with any agency/casual staff and any workers at the College who are here on a voluntary basis.

Staff Code of Conduct

1. Working with Students

In their dealings with students the College expects that all staff will:

- Ensure their relationships with students are never of a kind that could compromise their professional responsibilities.
- Promote College standards of student behaviour.

2. Working with Colleagues

Staff must attend meetings and other commitments on time and meet other deadlines on which their colleagues depend.

Staff must adhere to the College's policies and procedures because their actions have consequences for others. If staff have any doubts or concerns about their own or a colleague's actions, they should seek advice from within their line management chain. All College Policies and Procedures are on BHASVIC Central.

Smoking is not permitted on College premises except in designated places.

Professional Prejudice

BHASVIC sets an expectation of mutual respect among all staff at all times regardless of professional role and we therefore do our best to avoid 'professional prejudice'.

Professional prejudice is the belief, based on presumption rather than evidence, that one part of an organisation's staff are in some way more professional than another part of its staff or that some skills within the organisation are more important or somehow superior to others.

Professional prejudice harms the effectiveness of organisations because it attacks victims' self-esteem.

Professional prejudice is frequently unintentional and inadvertent and, for example, can show as:

- Not understanding that what Support Staff support is the College's mission
- Failing to act on instructions correctly or respond to a colleague's request with reasonable promptness
- Careless use of language when referring to colleagues
- Assuming that other colleagues are under less work pressure than oneself
- Failing to treat a colleague's skills and abilities with the respect one would expect for one's own.

3. Representing the College

In order to preserve the reputation of the College, staff must:

- Obtain approval from the Principal, or in the Principal's absence, the Vice Principal, before contacting the press.
- Check with the relevant budget holder before committing College resources other than those for which they have responsibility.
- Take care over the use of College's name in association with all communication, in any format, whether virtual or otherwise, and in particular:

- Ensure that written communication conforms to the Organisational Visual Identity Manual.
- Check carefully, especially if they are uncertain, in regard to spelling, punctuation, grammar, content, factual accuracy and tone.
- Maintain professional standards of conduct towards others when acting in a College capacity including following the guidance on Alcohol at Work given in paragraph 7 of this document.
- Dress appropriately when acting in a professional capacity and with due regard for the conclusions others may draw from their attire (*see appendix for further guidelines*).
- Use appropriate language at all times.

4. Additional Professional Responsibilities

Whilst it is proper that staff should receive the rewards of their own professional and academic endeavours, it is also essential to the mutual interests of both staff and the College that these are not achieved at any cost to primary contractual commitments. To this end, staff should be clearly aware of the importance of ensuring that the Principal is kept informed as to their intentions in the following areas:

- Except in the case of employees with supply contracts, the proposed undertaking of additional paid employment
- Any interest they may have regarding the appointment of staff, selection of students or contracts with which they may be involved on the College's behalf.
- Private tuition of BHASVIC students by BHASVIC staff for payment is not permitted. Private tutoring of non-BHASVIC students must be kept entirely separate from staff's College work and staff should not use College stationery, email, telephones or premises for this purpose.

In addition, staff are reminded that they are expected at all times to observe the following professional obligations:

- To preserve the confidentiality of information relating to the College's staff, students, finances, marketing and strategic planning, together with any further information rightly to be judged the property of the College (except as outlined in the Whistleblowing Policy)
- To preserve this same degree of confidentiality for twelve months after leaving the College's employment.
- In the event of their being offered hospitality or gifts of any kind to ensure that they comply with the College's Anti-Bribery Policy.
- To wear their College ID at all times so that it is visible to others.

5. College Property

In order to preserve the quality of the College's environment and physical resources staff must ensure that:

- They, and students for whom they are responsible, look after College premises and property which they use
- Procedures for borrowing College equipment are observed
- Energy is conserved wherever possible
- The security of College property is maintained as well as possible and not put at risk
- They pay the College for any costs incurred by the personal use of College equipment (e.g., phone, fax, photocopier). However, in calculating this staff should bear in mind any costs they may have incurred by the use of their own equipment on College business (e.g., phone call on College business made from home).

Staff should also assist with the security of the College by directing to Reception anyone who they think might be a stranger on site.

6. Staff Standard of Appearance

1. The broad standards we should all adhere to are:
 - (i) when working with students or other staff, the standard of appearance should be smart-casual.
 - (ii) when representing the College, for example at Parents' Evenings and Open Evenings, the standard of appearance should be smart.
2. In cases where these standards are not upheld, they should be dealt with through the line-management chain.

Guidelines

The purpose of these guidelines is NOT to set rules. They are offered to assist staff in meeting the broad standard in point 1 above. Staff are expected to conform to that standard and it seems reasonable to publish advice that would assist in giving greater clarity about what the standard means. The guidelines below should be read in the spirit of paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2 of the Staff Code of Conduct. Please also note that the guidance only touches on the issue of clothing, not other aspects of appearance; the guidance is only intended to assist the fundamentals of staff professional discretion and SMT's duty to support.

When working with students or other staff, the standard of appearance should be smart-casual as a minimum. Clothing which:

- (i) displays inappropriate slogans or images
- (ii) reveals underwear or inappropriate bare flesh
- (iii) is dirty, holed or fraying
- (iv) resembles beach-wear, including shorts and flip flops

is likely to be judged inappropriate. There may be obvious exceptions however, for example sportswear and protective clothing appropriate to role. Again, staff professional discretion is key. If in doubt, ask.

When representing the College, for example on Open Evenings and Parents' Evenings, the standard of appearance should be 'smart'. Visitors should feel that staff have dressed well out of courtesy to them. Please speak to your line manager or any member of CMT if you require clarification.

7. Alcohol at Work

The definition of 'at work' is wider in law than one might think. The College would, for example, be exposed to 'vicarious liability' if a member of staff behaved inappropriately while under the influence of alcohol during the course of his or her employment. In addition, an individual employee would also be personally liable for their actions. This applies even if the alcohol is consumed outside the College's timetabled day. 'Alcohol at work' should therefore be taken to mean 'alcohol consumed during, or directly following, a work-related activity'.

Within this definition, all staff have a duty to ensure their behaviour is not so affected by alcohol that they:

- infringe the College's Health and Safety, Dignity at Work or Race and Equality policies;
- become a nuisance to other people;
- cause other people to feel they ought, or need to take responsibility for them;
- bring the reputation of the College into disrepute

All staff who are organising activities at which alcohol will be consumed must remind participating colleagues of the duty above. This can best be done by including the reminder in the invitation. Where alcohol is consumed in an informal, social setting, it is nevertheless the duty of a member or staff to be mindful of this guidance.

The BHASVIC Model of Professional Behaviour¹

The BHASVIC Model of Professional Behaviour grew from discussions with all College managers in January 2007 and with all College staff on the morning of 12 March 2007. The following points should be noted:

- The Model is not a job description; nor does it attempt to describe a member of staff's sense of their vocation. Its purpose is to define how all staff should aspire to behave as they interact with one another. In essence, it helps clarify that what is needed from us at work is professional, rather than personal discretion: we have to ask 'What would best support the College Mission?' not, 'What would best suit me?'
- The Model is arguably open to the criticism that it is full of things that are obvious and with which no one could disagree. But the test of the Model is how far we live up to it. As a community we have a collective expectation that as individual members of staff we are all aspiring to conform to it 100% of the time in our interactions with colleagues. We will welcome help in making this aspiration a reality.
- Like all College policy and strategy, the Model belongs to and applies to all staff equally, irrespective of anyone's position or role in the College.

A. Staff should support the College mission and College processes

All staff should:

1. Demonstrate an awareness of the wider College context
2. Demonstrate good time-management and personal organisation
3. Act in accordance with College policy and procedures
4. Manage collective decisions effectively even when they hold personal reservations

In addition, all College managers should:

5. Demonstrate an understanding of the abilities, aptitudes, circumstances and roles of the staff they line-manage
6. Enable the team they lead to understand the wider College context

B. We should all feel trusted and supported

All staff should:

7. In all their interactions with colleagues, assume the best of them
8. Seek support when they need it, and offer it when appropriate

¹ Reference to College managers in the Model means teachers who are paid on the management pay spine, members of the support staff who have the title of manager and members of the Senior Management Team.

9. Communicate with due consideration to time, place and manner
10. Work collaboratively with all members of the College community
11. Thank or praise colleagues when appropriate
12. Be discreet whenever information needs to be treated confidentially

In addition, all College managers should:

13. Delegate effectively and supportively
14. Be visible, accessible and approachable
15. Coach and mentor staff effectively where appropriate
16. Seek or offer support, as appropriate, when difficult conversations are needed, ensuring that relevant College policy is understood

C. Staff should be committed to continual improvement

All staff should:

17. Reflect on their own practice, and that of the College
18. Propose, and welcome, new ideas and constructive feedback
19. Be willing to modify their professional behaviour based on an understanding of how their colleagues perceive them

In addition, all College managers should:

20. Create the conditions in which the team(s) they lead can perform to the best of their ability
21. Respond to poor behaviour and performance (ie that detracts from or falls short of our mission and values or the model of professional behaviour) promptly and supportively
22. Always take time to give staff the 'big picture'. This means (i) the fundamental whys and wherefores for doing something, (ii) everything that is involved and (iii) the timescales
23. Involve all staff who are affected by a plan early enough for their views to shape it
24. Be as clear as possible when planning, defining who will do what by when

HELPING MANAGERS GET THE BEST FROM ONE ANOTHER

When you need the assistance of another College Manager, maximise the support that's available by:

- Holding an initial conversation with the other Manager 1-2-1 so that they are not put in a position of having to juggle a reply to you with a response to what they know their staff are thinking.
- Being aware that dealing with your request may mean the other Manager having to postpone scheduled tasks which are important.
- Explaining who else is helping and how they are helping, besides the further support you are requesting.
- Making clear 'the big picture' (as the BHASVIC Model of Professional Behaviour instructs), so that everyone involved has a full understanding.
- Asking how something could be achieved rather than asking a Manager if they can do it. The difference is that it places the emphasis on a problem to which they can contribute rather than one they have to solve.
- Sending a confirming email noting what's been agreed. Putting it in writing will help ensure there are no misunderstandings.
- When thinking about events it may help to ask the question:

"If this were happening in my house would I expect to be consulted?"

If the answer is 'yes' you probably need to talk to at least one other College Manager before the event happens.

Related documents:

Staff and general documents:

- Absence and payments for Additional Work for External Organisations
- Absence Management Policy
- Acceptable Use of Computers (Staff) Policy
- Anti-Bribery Policy
- BHASVIC Staff Handbook
- Changing Staff Contracts Policy
- Children of Staff on Site Policy
- College Mission Statement and Values Statement
- Complaints Policy
- Conditions of Service Handbooks
- Contracts of Employment
- Credit Card Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Directed Time Guidelines for teachers
- Disciplinary Policy
- Environment Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Overseas Travel (Staff) Policy
- Probation Policy
- Professional Development Review (PDR) Policy
- Race Equality Policy
- Smoking Policy
- Staff Development Policy

- Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Staff References Policy
- Visual Identity Manual
- Whistleblowing Policy

Student documents:

- Admissions Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- College Charter
- Educational Visits Policy
- Marketing Policy and Codes of Conduct
- Student Planner