



# BENTON JUNIOR COLLEGE

## CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

### **Rationale**

Benton Junior College (BJC) is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our college community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment. Together with the community, our staff will respect and foster the dignity and self-esteem of every child, and enable them to thrive in their learning and development.

### **Aims**

This Child Safe Code of Conduct aims to protect the students at our college and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage behaviours and situations that may place a student at risk. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, Department of Education policy, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

### **Implementation**

The following Child Safety Code of Conduct clearly describes the professional boundaries and acceptable and unacceptable adult/child relationships and behaviours. All staff members at our school are expected to have read and to implement the following 'Child Safe Code of Conduct' at all times.

### **Making a professional judgement**

Adults at BJC will:

- make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the child;
- take notes relating to what was said or directly observed and share notes with a member of the Principal Team;
- ensure response to a given situation is warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably;
- discuss any misunderstandings, accidents or threats with a leadership team member;
- be aware of their position of trust and ensure an unequal balance of power is not used for their own or others personal advantage or gratification;
- not use their position to intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce or undermine children;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others; and
- not promote relationships which create a personal friendship or are of a sexual nature, or which may become so.

### **Personal/living space**

Adults at BJC will:

- not invite a child into their home or any home or domestic setting frequented by them, unless the reason for this has been firmly established and agreed with parents and College Leadership or the home has been designated as a work place e.g. childminders, foster carers;
- be vigilant in maintaining their own privacy and mindful of the need to avoid placing themselves in vulnerable situations
- not ask children to undertake personal jobs or errands; and

- maintain professional boundaries.

### **Gifts, rewards and favouritism**

Adults at BJC will:

- be aware of their organisation's policy on the giving and receiving of gifts;
- ensure that gifts received or given in situations that may be misconstrued are declared;
- only give gifts to an individual child as part of an agreed reward system; and
- ensure that when operating reward systems, methods and criteria for selection of children for awards are fair and transparent.

### **Infatuations**

Adults at BJC will:

- deal with infatuations sensitively and appropriately to maintain the dignity and safety of all concerned;
- make sure their own behaviour is beyond reproach; and
- if they become aware of an infatuation developing or any indications that it may, record it and discuss it with College Leadership, so that action can be taken to avoid any hurt, distress or embarrassment.

### **Communication (including the use of technology)**

Adults at BJC will:

- ensure communication takes place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites and blogs;
- not share any personal information with a child;
- not request, or respond to, any personal information from a child, other than that which may be appropriate as part of their professional role;
- not give their personal contact details to children, including their mobile number, home phone or personal e-mail address, unless the need to do so is agreed upon by the Principal Team and parents;
- only use equipment e.g. mobile phones, provided by their organisation to communicate with children, making sure that parents/carers have given permission for this form of communication to be used;
- only make contact with children for professional reasons and in accordance with school policy;
- only use text messaging as a last resort when no other forms of communication are possible;
- not use internet or web-based communication channels to send messages; and
- use internal e-mail systems in accordance with the school's policy.

### **Social Contact**

Adults at BJC will:

- not have social contact with children unless the reason for this has been firmly established and agreed with the Principal Team;
- not have secret social contact with children and/or their parent(s);
- always approve any planned social contact with children with the Principal Team;
- advise senior management of any social contact that has occurred which may raise concern; and
- report and record any situation which may place a child at risk or may compromise the organisation or their own professional standing.

## **Sexual Contact**

Adults at BJC will:

- not engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of a child, or cause or incite a child to engage in or watch sexual activity, to do so would be considered a criminal offence;
- not have any form of communication which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative or make sexual remarks to, or about a child either verbally, written or electronically;
- not discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of, children;
- ensure relationships take place within boundaries of respect and professionalism;
- ensure language, attitudes and demeanour do not give rise to comment or speculation; and
- be aware that consistently conferring in appropriate special attention and favour upon a child might be construed as part of a grooming process, and as such will give rise to concerns about behaviour.

## **Physical Contact**

Adults at BJC will:

- be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described;
- only have physical contact with a child when it is necessary and in ways which are appropriate to their professional or agreed role and responsibilities, never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent;
- be aware of the child's reactions or feelings and, as far as possible, only use a level of contact which is acceptable to the child and for the minimum time necessary;
- seek permission from the child or the parent, if the child is very young, before physical contact is made and agree what contact is acceptable;
- not assume that when a child is distressed they seek physical comfort;
- always be prepared to report and explain actions and accept that all physical contact is open to scrutiny;
- always encourage children, where possible, to undertake self-care tasks independently;
- be aware of cultural or religious views about touching and sensitive to issues of gender;
- where there is regular physical contact needed, the nature of this must be agreed with College Leadership and the parent, as part of a formally agreed plan;
- where a child initiates inappropriate physical contact, you must sensitively deter them and help them understand the importance of personal boundaries.

## **Behaviour Management**

Adults at BJC will:

- not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a child;
- not use sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments;
- ensure any sanctions and rewards are part of an agreed behaviour management policy;
- try to defuse situations before they escalate;
- never use corporal punishment;
- follow the behaviour policy and only use physical intervention in exceptional circumstances and as a last resort, when other behaviour management strategies have failed and where there is a risk of physical injury or serious damage to property;
- when using physical intervention, use the minimum force necessary and techniques in line with recommended policy and practice and always report and document the incident; and

- be mindful of other factors which may be impacting on a child's behaviour, i.e. bullying, changes in home circumstances.

*Note: the use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence.*

### **Personal/Intimate Care**

Adults at BJC will:

- adhere to the college's code of conduct;
- make other staff aware of the task being undertaken;
- explain to the child what is happening;
- carefully and sensitively observe the emotional responses of the child, and record and report any concerns to School Leadership and parents, if appropriate;
- respect children's privacy at all times;
- avoid any physical contact when children are in a state of undress, other than as part of an agreed care plan;
- not change, in the same place as children;
- not shower or bathe with children; and
- not assist with any personal care task which a child can undertake themselves.

### **One to one situations/home visits**

Adults at BJC will:

- ensure that, when lone working is an integral part of their role, full and appropriate risk assessments have been agreed;
- avoid meetings with a child in secluded areas;
- always inform colleagues and/or parents about one to one contact beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by;
- carefully consider the need of the child when in one to one situations and always report any situation where the child becomes distressed or angry towards you;
- ensure the Principal Team has agreed to any home visit; and
- never put yourself into a one to one situation when little or no information is available about the child.

### **Transporting**

Adults at BJC will:

- ensure requirements around seat belts and car seats are adhered to;
- not offer lifts outside normal working duties unless this has been brought to the attention of College leadership and been agreed with parents;
- ensure they are fit to drive and free from any drugs, alcohol or medicine that is likely to impair judgement or ability to drive;
- record details of the journey in accordance with agreed DET procedures;
- ensure that there are proper procedures in place for vehicle, passenger and driver safety, including appropriate insurance; and
- ensure that any impromptu or emergency car transport is recorded and can be justified if questioned.

## **Trips and Outings**

Adults at BJC will:

- recognise that they are in a position of trust and ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times and stays clearly within defined boundaries;
- ensure staff/child ratios and gender mix are appropriate;
- always have another adult present in out of work activities, unless otherwise agreed with by the Principal Team;
- ensure risk assessments are undertaken;
- have parental consent to the activity;
- never share beds with children; and
- not share bedrooms unless it is a dormitory situation and the arrangements have been agreed with Principal Team, parents and children.

## **Photography and Videos**

Adults at BJC will:

- be clear about the purpose of any activity involving photography and what will happen to the images when the activity is concluded;
- be able to justify the reason for having images of children in their possession
- avoid making images in one to one situations or situations that may be construed as secretive or which show a single child with no surrounding context
- immediately report any concerns if any inappropriate or intrusive images are found
- have parental consent to take, display and/or distribute any images of children
- not use images that may cause distress or offence
- not use mobile phones or any other devices that have a camera to take images of children.

## **Access to inappropriate images and internet usage**

Adults at BJC will:

- not access, make or store indecent images of children on the internet, to do so would be illegal and lead to a criminal investigation;
- not make or store images of children, gathered as a result of their work, on personal equipment;
- follow our school's guidance on the use of IT equipment;  
ensure that children are not exposed to unsuitable material through ICT;
- ensure that any materials shown to children are age appropriate; and
- immediately report any concerns, if any inappropriate or intrusive images are found, to the school leadership and follow mandatory reporting policy.

Date created	June 2017
Date ratified by School Council	November 2017
Date to review policy	November 2019