## (Name of School) SCHOOL COUNCIL INCORPORATED

## CODE OF CONDUCT

## Intent

This code of conduct applies to:

* 1. each member of the school council.

## Purpose

The purpose of this code of conduct is to:

* 1. set out the high standards of honesty, integrity and ethical behaviour expected in performing functions under the Education Act and Regulations; and
  2. guide members as to the practices necessary for confidence to be maintained in their integrity and for them to comply with their obligations in performing functions under the Education Act and Regulations.

## Requirements

School council members must:

* 1. **act with honesty and integrity,** this means:
     1. be open and transparent in their dealings; and
     2. not place themselves in a position of conflict of interest; and
     3. declare any conflict of interest that should arise; and
     4. strive to earn and retain school community trust of a high level;
  2. **act in good faith,** this means:
     1. demonstrate accountability for their actions; and
     2. accept responsibility for their decisions; and
     3. make all decisions in the best interests of students; and
     4. not engage in activities that may bring them or the school into disrepute
  3. **act fairly and impartially,** this means:
     1. avoid bias, discrimination, or self-interest; and
     2. demonstrate respect for others by always acting in a professional and courteous manner; and
  4. **use information appropriately**, that is, ensure that information gained in the performance of their functions is kept confidential and only used for proper purposes; and
  5. **use their position appropriately,** this means:
     1. not use their position to seek an undue advantage for themselves, family members or associates; and
     2. not cause detriment to the school; and
     3. ensure that they refuse any offers of gifts or favours that may cast doubt on their ability to apply independent judgement in performing functions; and
  6. **act in a financially responsible manner**, this means:
     1. be accountable for all school resources used in performing functions.

The (INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL) School Council Code of Conduct is based upon **these** ethical principles:

* A member shallconsider the best interests of all students and parents.
* A member shallbe guided by the school council’s mission statement.
* A member shallact within the limits of the roles and responsibilities of a school council, as identified by the Education Act & Regulations.
* A member shallrecognise and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community.
* A member shalltreat all other members with respect and allow for diverse opinions to be shared without interruption.
* A member shallpromote a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued.
* A member shallacknowledge democratic principles and accept the consensus of the committee.
* A member shallrespect the confidential nature of some school council business and respect limitations this may place on the operation of the council.
* A member shallbecome familiar with relevant school policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them.
* A member shallmaintain the highest standards of integrity.
* A member shallnot disclose confidential information.
* Amember shalllimit discussions at council meetings to matters under its mandate and of concern to the school community as a whole.
* A member shalluse established communication channels when questions or concerns arise.
* A member shalldeclare any conflict of interest.
* A member shallnot accept any payment or benefit financially through council involvement.

## PART ONE: RESPECT AND INTEGRITY

### Decision making.

School council decisions can affect the whole school community, so they must be fair, justifiable and based on relevant information. Good decisions take into account the school’s current and future needs. They bring together all the factors of school life: academic, social, environmental and economic. They don’t expose the school to problems that could be avoided. Our decisions should be clear and understandable to our school community.

### Legislative requirements

The school council must observe all legislative requirements and instructions from the department and the government. This includes acts, regulations, policies and procedures that have a direct bearing on the school community, including, but not limited to; the Education Act and Regulations, workplace relations and occupational health and safety acts; and antidiscrimination and freedom of information legislation.

*Note: This part of the code remains the same for all school councils as it is common practice by law and is part of good governance.*

### Protecting government confidentiality

Council members must respect the need for confidentiality and privacy with regard to sensitive matters that might arise at council meetings, especially where there are matters of a personal nature relating to staff, students or parents. Discussion must remain in the meeting only.

*Note: This part of the code remains the same for all school councils as it is common practice by law and is part of good governance.*

### Integrity in Practice

This means the intentions behind your actions. Behaving with integrity is about dealing with others openly and honestly, as well as observing all the relevant legislative, industrial and administrative requirements.

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### Reporting of misconduct, corruption or illegal activity

The community expects school council members will have a high standard of integrity and be free from misconduct, corruption or other illegal activity. All of us in the school community are accountable for any inappropriate conduct and the school council plays an important part in setting standards and ensuring standards are met. If required, council will report any inappropriate behaviour to the authorities.

### Internet and email use

School council members should only use school internet, intranet and email resources responsibly, safely and as part of their official responsibilities, in line with school policies.

### Intellectual freedom

School council members are free to take part in public debate and express opinion about education policy in general. However, they should not speak on behalf of the school council unless the person has been specifically chosen and the statements reflect agreed policy or true intent of the council. The principal and the Chairperson are the only council members who may make public statements on behalf of the school council.

When she or he is speaking officially, they do not speak from a personal position: what they say has to be based on council policy and decisions.

###### Note: This part of the code remains the same for all school councils as it is common practice by law and is part of good governance.

### Political activity

School council members are free to be involved in political activity as part of their daily lives. They do need to be aware that it could create, or at least look like creating, a conflict of interest with their official duties. Members need to talk to the school council Chairperson if there is a conflict or the potential for a conflict.

*Note: This part of the code remains the same for all school councils as it is common practice by law and is part of good governance.*

### Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest is where the financial or other interests of a school council member or associate are, or look to others as if they are, at odds to our duties as a school council member. We should all be on the look-out for any perceived, potential or actual conflicts of interest, financial or otherwise, and disclose to the council when they arise.

### Ensuring merit and equity

When we recruit some people for jobs at the school, we have to work to the merit principle. We choose people with the

* abilities
* aptitudes
* skills
* qualifications
* knowledge
* experience, and
* personal qualities to fit the job.

### Exerting influence and accepting gifts, benefits or favours

We must never use our position to give the impression that we can influence decisions. We should not accept gifts, benefits or favours which could influence, or be seen to influence, the decisions we make. Where a conflict arises, this must be declared.

### Integrity in financial reporting

Financial information in and about school council accounts must be accurate and people should be able to trust it. Members must not hide information, or try to influence, coerce, manipulate or mislead internal or external auditors.

A member should understand the financial, strategic and other implications of their recommendations or decisions.

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### Nepotism and patronage

It is unacceptable for school council members to favour relatives (nepotism) or people they know (patronage) in making decisions or getting jobs done.

Council members are expected to represent the school community. Members do not represent one viewpoint or the view of an individual. Council members therefore regularly seek the views and opinions of the whole school community.

*Note: This part of the code remains the same for all school councils as it is common practice by law and is part of good governance.*

### Use of school council money, property and facilities

School money, property and facilities should be used for official purposes only and with due care.

## PART TWO: RESPECT IN PRACTICE

‘Respect in Practice’ refers to how people are treated. As school council members, we should consider the impact of what we do and the decisions we make on other people.

## Cultural diversity

Cultural diversity is a valuable asset for the school community. School council members can expect to work within a culturally diverse environment. We should therefore be inclusive and responsive to everyone; recognising the culture, history, uniqueness and diversity of the different groups in our school community.

### Discrimination

School council members must not discriminate, directly or indirectly, in the way they deal with individuals or groups on the grounds of age, gender, race, disability, sexuality, marital status, pregnancy or any other ground covered by equal opportunity or anti-discrimination legislation.

*Note: This part of the code remains the same for all school councils as it is common practice by law and is part of good governance.*

### Environment

School council members must recognise our responsibility to respect, protect and improve the environment in their work.

##### *Or add your statement*

### Equity

Equity is about being fair and just toward all people, but it doesn’t necessarily mean treating everyone in the same way. We might often have to treat a person differently according to their circumstances and needs so they get an equal chance to others. School council and school services must be inclusive and responsive to everyone.

##### *Or add your statement*

### Privacy of personal information

Personal information is private and school council members have to respect it. We must recognise our responsibility to set the highest standards, as well as meeting legal requirements for collecting, managing, using and disclosing personal information.

## PART THREE: RESPECT AND COURTESY

Colleagues, school staff, students, stakeholders and members of the broader community are entitled to respect, courtesy and to maintain their dignity in their dealings with the School Council and the school. They must never be coerced or harassed.

The underlying principles of a council’s code of conduct include the promotion of:

* + schools, parents and communities **working together**
  + **respectful** partnerships
  + clear and **honest** two-way communication
  + **transparent** processes
  + **democratic**, informed decision making, and
  + personal and professional **integrity**.

Conflict between council members should be dealt with respectfully, fairly and in a manner that reflects the principles of natural justice.

### Bullying

Bullying is behaviour that demeans, humiliates, ignores, excludes or intimidates an individual or groups of people. Bullying is when these things happen repeatedly, and it is difficult for the person being bullied to defend against it or make the other person stop.

School council members must never bully colleagues, school staff, students, stakeholders and members of the broader community.

##### *Or add your statement*

### Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination that can involve sexual solicitation, physical advances or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature. Any behaviour that is unwelcome and offensive, creates a hostile work environment, or is sufficiently severe or intense to be perceived in the context as harassment to a reasonable person, is sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment can be a single act or a number of persistent acts.

##### *Or add your statement*

### PART FOUR: SERVICE TO COMMUNITY

Service to community is consistently providing the highest level of service to the school community. School council decisions should meet demand as it arises and should be based on research or professional expertise.

### Service awareness

Schools service their community best when they’re presented well, efficiently run and well-constructed. School council members should take this into account when they’re planning any development, including infrastructure projects that affect the school environment. We also need to let our school community know about the work the school council is doing.

##### *Or add your statement*

### Complaints handling

We should deal with complaints about the school council or school fairly and with respect. The school community is entitled to expect the highest standard of safety and service from the school, particularly when handling complaints.

##### *Or add your statement*

### Dimensions of service

School councils serve many different groups of people, so we need a high standard of service across the work environment. Measuring the quality of service involves thinking about how well and effectively people do things and what the results of their actions are. As school council members, we measure our own standards of service by how effectively we put into practice our commitment to the schools’ strategic goals and how consistently and effectively we work with and communicate what we’re doing to everyone involved in the school.

##### *Or add your statement*

### Responsive, timely, effective and efficient services

School council members should meet any requests from within our school community promptly, objectively and professionally. We need to think outside the square sometimes to develop the most efficient services to our community.

##### *Or add your statement*

### BREACHES OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

In the event the actions of a school council member are against the intent of this code, they could be asked to step down, or removed from the council.