

Melton College, York. Staff Code of Conduct

Last Reviewed: Tuesday, 10 September 2024

The following provides guidelines and expectations for staff, associated adults (e.g. Group Leaders, outside providers) and students in order to ensure that responsible and respectful relationships are fostered at all times. It has been drawn up with the intention of setting boundaries and establishing professional relationships with students.

Maintaining a Professional Relationship with Students:

- Be an excellent role model for students; be punctual, polite, use appropriate language and respect others
- Be kind and positive towards students. Talk to students, listen to them and praise them when appropriate
- Be somebody that students can trust
- Always be friendly to students, but remember you are not their friend. Maintain professional boundaries i.e. do not talk or joke or play games with them as you would with your peers
- Do not meet up with students off campus during or after the course. Do not exchange personal contact details or link up with students online.
- Never provide transport for students in any vehicle not sanctioned for use to transport students. This includes private cars.
- Put their interests before your own and their safety before your convenience
- Maintain a calm manner with students at all times. Only raise your voice in emergencies – there are other ways of exerting control over students
- Protect students and yourself: avoid being on your own with a student in a room with the door closed
- Understand and exemplify the core British Values
 - Democracy
 - rule of law
 - individual liberty
 - mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Do not engage in any behaviour which could bring Melton College, York into disrepute
- Staff must understand that they are in a position of trust.

*Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over who is in **a position of trust** to engage in any form of sexual activity/have a sexual relationship with an under 18 year old, even if the relationship is consensual. If convicted of such an offence, a person is likely to serve a custodial sentence and have their name added to the sex offender's register, which would bar them from working with under 18s again.*

Communication with Students:

(including social media and other digital technology)

- Staff should not make friends/connect with students via technology e.g. social networking sites, messaging apps, gaming sites, phone, email. The only exception to this rule is where the staff member and student/student's host are members of the same family
- Staff should ensure their social media profile photos are appropriate and that their profiles are private so that students will not see inappropriate content if they search for them online
- Staff should not give out personal phone numbers to students. Where possible, Melton College, York will provide a company mobile phone for staff to use on excursions, on airport duty etc.
- If students make contact with staff after the course, staff must ignore the contact and inform the Principal, Campus Manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Favouritism and Infatuation

Staff should treat all students fairly to avoid perceptions of favouritism or unfair criticism.

To avoid allegations of favouritism, discourage gifts and report the receipt of any gift of significant value (over £5) to the Principal, who will decide if it can be kept by the staff member. Staff must always report gifts which imply an emotional or romantic attachment. Staff may not give personal gifts to students but

may offer prizes if allowed.

Occasionally, a student may develop an infatuation with a staff member. Staff should deal with this situation sensitively in order to make sure their own behaviour is not misinterpreted and the student and staff member are not unduly embarrassed by the situation. Any staff member who suspects that a student is infatuated/has a crush on them or another member of staff must report this to the DSL or Assistant Safeguarding Leads (ASLs). They will decide on the best course of action.

Younger students may also be 'clingy' and want to spend a lot of time with a particular staff member. Staff should deal with this sensitively and encourage the student to make new friends with others of their own age.

Staff Dress Code:

- Staff should ensure their appearance and clothing promote a professional image and are expected to dress as appropriate to their role/duties
- Look presentable at all times: brushed hair, clean clothes, clean shaven/trimmed facial hair
- Show restraint in the wearing of rings, earrings and other jewellery (including body piercings) and remove them to be removed when advised or prohibited by health and safety regulations)
- Dress with an awareness and sensitivity to cultural practices at all times: no revealing clothes or clothes which might distract or cause embarrassment (i.e. no short shorts, ripped clothing, vest tops, transparent or excessively tight clothing)
- Teachers should wear smart clothes in class (e.g. no casual jeans, T-shirts, shorts, vest tops)
- In formal teaching sessions tattoos should be covered. At other times staff may be asked to cover other tattoos if they are deemed inappropriate
- Staff leading and monitoring activities/excursions should be dressed appropriately

Maintaining a Professional Relationship with Staff

Maintain positive, professional relationships with other staff members. You don't have to like people to treat them with due courtesy and respect.

Smoking, Alcohol and Substance Abuse:

- Consuming alcohol is not permitted at any time on campus or during working hours with the exception of College celebrations where the presence of alcohol is covered by the risk assessment. This, for example, would cover Gold Course 'Beer Tastings'
- Illegal substance and drug abuse is, obviously, not permitted
- When coming to work all staff must be fit to interact with students. Melton College, York takes this to mean that staff should be under the legal drink-driving limit in England
- Melton College, York has a strict no-smoking policy within all school buildings/on campus. Smoking is restricted to the designated smoking areas. Staff should endeavour not to smoke in front of students at any time even when off-site
- Failure to abide by these guidelines is treated as a disciplinary matter

Physical Contact with Students and 'Reasonable Force'

It is now accepted that a 'no contact' policy can leave staff unable to fully support and protect their students. UK government policy encourages schools to adopt sensible policies, which allow and support their staff to make appropriate physical contact:

- Never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent i.e. never touch a child below the shoulder level unless there is a justifiable reason. Do not take part in 'horseplay' or games involving physical contact
- On occasions it is entirely appropriate for staff to have physical contact with students. E.g. to comfort a distressed student, to keep a young child safe by holding hands, to prevent a child from injuring themselves or walking into a road
- If staff make physical contact with students, this should be in response to their needs at the time, be of limited duration, be appropriate and take place in an open environment, never to be secretive or provide gratification to the staff member
- Do not perform tasks of a personal nature that students are capable of doing for themselves

e.g. applying sun cream. If it is necessary, make sure it is done in a public place with other adults present.

Reasonable Force – Guidance for Staff

The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is needed'. The use of force may involve either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of the classroom, restraining a child to prevent violence or injury.

In extreme cases, where physical restraint is necessary to protect the lives of staff or students:

- Remain calm and try to use your voice to halt the incident
- If possible, call for additional help
- Remove other students from the area if possible
- Use only necessary and careful restraint to halt the danger. Do not use violent actions which may harm the student

Policy for Dealing with Unacceptable Staff Conduct

Everyone who joins a Melton College, York course should experience a positive and harmonious environment where they are treated with respect. We aim to provide **Safe and Happy Language Learning**. This aspiration covers everyone involved in the College, staff and students. If staff experience or see any examples of unacceptable behaviour by other staff they must challenge it if appropriate and report it immediately to the Principal or Campus Manager.

Reporting a Concern

See Safeguarding Policy 2023 for definitions

In the case of a minor infringement of the Staff Code of Conduct (i.e. wearing inappropriate clothing, being rude to another member of staff), their line manager will:

- Explain what the unacceptable behaviour is
- Provide appropriate guidance/training to ensure it doesn't happen again
- Ask the staff member (if appropriate) to apologise to the person(s) affected

The Principal, DSL or Campus Manager must make a written record of the issue and how it has been addressed and email it to the secure Safeguarding email (safeguarding@meltoncollege.co.uk).

These procedures do not form part of staff contracts of employment and Melton College, York reserves the right not to use the disciplinary procedure. More serious disciplinary issues will be dealt with by the Principal. See 'Disciplinary Procedure' in the Employee Handbook.