



Maranatha Christian School

Code of Conduct

Introduction

Maranatha Christian School's Code of Conduct has been adapted from the VIT Code of Conduct and is designed to be compliant with the (2016) requirements for child safety. It applies to all staff either employed directly by the school or engaged indirectly eg music tutors, Outside School Hours Care. While much of the code relates specifically to teaching, and therefore to the relationship between teachers and students, the Code of Conduct identifies a set of principles which describe the professional conduct, personal conduct and professional competence expected of a staff member at Maranatha Christian School. In doing so, it promotes the building and maintaining of a Professional Christian Learning Community across all sites of our school

The MCS Code of Conduct is based the school values, namely:

Christ centredness
Integrity
Discipleship
Excellence
Accountability
Learning community
Service

The Code of Conduct codifies what is already common practice within the teaching profession, and within our school. Its purpose is to provide a set of principles which will guide MCS staff in their everyday conduct and assist them to solve ethical dilemmas in a Biblical manner. In doing so, this will promote public confidence in the school by affirming our accountability to the wider community.

Our professional conduct is characterised by the quality of the relationships we have with students, parents (or guardians and caregivers), colleagues, and the wider community.

The Code of Conduct is unlikely to cover every situation. If in doubt, staff should use their professional judgment having consulted with a member of the senior leadership team and/or the Principal/CEO

Section 1: Professional conduct

Professional conduct is characterised by the quality of the relationships staff members have with students, parents (including guardians and caregivers), families and communities and their colleagues.

Relationships with students

Principle 1.1: Maranatha teachers provide opportunities for all students to learn

The main focus of teaching is student learning. Teachers demonstrate their commitment to student learning by:

- a. knowing their students well, respecting their individual differences and catering for their individual abilities
- b. maintaining a safe and challenging learning environment
- c. accepting professional responsibility for the provision of quality teaching
- d. having high expectations of every student, recognising and developing each student's abilities, skills and talents
- e. considering all viewpoints fairly
- f. communicating well and appropriately with their students
- h. modelling the fruits of the spirit in both word and action to students

Principle 1.2: Maranatha staff treat students with courtesy and dignity

They:

- a. work to create an environment which promotes faithfulness and mutual respect
- b. model and engage in respectful and impartial language that reflects that all are equal in God's value
- c. protect students from intimidation, embarrassment, humiliation or harm
- d. enhance student autonomy and sense of self worth, and guide them towards understanding their identity and purpose in God's world, and encourage students to develop and reflect on their own values
- e. respect a student's privacy in sensitive matters, such as health or family problems, and only reveal confidential matters when appropriate. That is:
 - if the student has consented to the information being used in a certain way
 - to prevent or lessen a serious threat to life, health, safety or welfare of a person (including the student)
 - as part of an investigation into unlawful activity
 - if the disclosure is required or mandated by law
 - to prevent a crime or enforce the law.
- f. refrain from discussing students' personal problems in situations where the information will not be treated confidentially
- g. use consequences commensurate with the offence when disciplining students, in accordance with the policies and values of the School
- h. ensure they do not ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

Principle 1.3: Maranatha staff work within the limits of their professional expertise

In fulfilling their role, Maranatha staff carry out a wide range of responsibilities. They support students and each other by knowing their strengths and the limits of their professional expertise. They:

- a. seek to ensure that they have the physical, mental, spiritual emotional capacity, to carry out their professional responsibilities,
- b. are aware of the role of other professionals and agencies and when students should be referred to them for assistance
- c. are truthful when making statements about their qualifications and competencies.

Principle 1.4: Maranatha staff maintain objectivity in their relationships with students

In their professional role, Maranatha staff do not behave as a friend or a parent.

They:

- a. interact with students without displaying bias or preference
- b. make decisions in students' best interests
- c. do not draw students into their personal agendas
- d. do not seek recognition at the expense of professional objectivity and goals
- e. speak and act towards students from the foundation that all people are of inestimable value to Christ

Principle 1.5: Maranatha staff, especially its teachers are always in a professional relationship with the students in their school, whether at school or not

While teachers hold a unique position of influence and trust that should not be violated or compromised, all staff can influence children and the School. In Christian schools, where church members, and family members are quite likely to be connecting with each other in; professional relationships at school, familial relationships at home, and communal relationships at church, it is expected that the staff of Maranatha will demarcate effectively between these roles/relationships, and manage their speech and actions according to the setting. It may be important that we sometimes verbally clarify for students, parents or friends, the demarcation of their varied roles/relationships. Maranatha staff exercise their responsibilities in ways that recognise that there are limits or boundaries to their relationships with students. The following examples outline some of those limits.

A professional relationship will be violated if any staff member:

- a. has a sexual relationship with a student
- b. uses sexual innuendo or inappropriate language and/or material with students
- c. touches a student without a valid reason. This may include sitting them on your lap
- d. holds conversations of a personal nature, or has contact with a student via written or electronic means including email, letters, telephone, text messages or chat lines, without a valid context
- e. accepts gifts, which could be reasonably perceived as being used to influence them, from students or their parents.
- f. puts children at risk of abuse
- g. does things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes without a valid context

A professional relationship may be compromised if a member of staff:

- a. attends parties or socialises with students without a valid context (especially if alcohol is involved)
- b. invites a student or students back to their home, particularly if no-one else is present or travels with student(s) in a private vehicle without parents' knowledge and approval.
- c. 'friends' a current student via social media.

Relationships with parents (including guardians, caregivers), families and communities

Principle 1.6: Maranatha staff maintain a professional relationship with parents (including guardians and caregivers)

All staff should be respectful of and courteous to parents. We:

- a. consider parents' perspectives when making decisions which have an impact on the education or wellbeing of a student, as well as on matters carrying denominational implications or differences relating to interpretations and practices of the Christian faith
- b. communicate and consult with parents in a timely, understandable and sensitive manner
- c. take appropriate action when responding to parental concerns.

Principle 1.7: Maranatha staff work in collaborative relationships with students' families and communities, and each other

Maranatha staff recognise that the School's students come from a diverse range of cultural contexts, including church backgrounds, and seek to work collaboratively with students' families and communities within those contexts.

Relationships with colleagues

Principle 1.8: Collegiality is an integral part of the work of the School

Maranatha staff demonstrate collegiality by:

- a. treating each other with courtesy, respect, forbearance, kindness and gentleness
- b. valuing the input of their colleagues, making it a priority to listen to each other
- c. using appropriate forums for constructive debate on professional matters
- d. sharing expertise and knowledge in a variety of collaborative contexts, seeking the best outcomes for students
- e. respecting different approaches to teaching
- f. providing support for each other, particularly those new to the profession, seeking to stir each other up to 'love and good works.'
- g. sharing information relating to the wellbeing of students
- h. respecting varying interpretations and practices of the Christian faith
- i. seeking to resolve conflict according to Biblical principles

Section 2: Personal conduct

Principle 2.1: The personal conduct of a member of the Maranatha staff will have an impact on the professional standing of that person, the School, and for teachers, the profession as a whole

Although there is no definitive boundary between the personal and professional conduct of a teacher, it is expected that Maranatha staff will:

- a. be positive role models at school and in the community; modelling speech and behaviour reflective of Christ
- b. respect the rule of law and provide a positive example in the performance of civil obligations
- c. not exploit their position for personal or financial, or any other self-motivated gain
- d. ensure that their personal or financial interests do not interfere with the performance of their duties
- e. act with discretion and maintain confidentiality when discussing workplace issues, and actively yet sensitively seek resolution of workplace issues in a partnership-building manner.

Section 3: Professional competence

Principle 3.1: Maranatha staff value their professionalism, and set and maintain high standards of competence

Maranatha staff:

- a. are knowledgeable in their areas of expertise
- b. are committed to pursuing their own professional learning
- c. complete their duties **in** a responsible, thorough and timely way
- d. ensure God is honoured in all they all do

Principle 3.2: Maranatha staff are aware of the legal requirements that pertain to their profession and the School. In particular, they are cognisant of their legal responsibilities in relation to:

- discrimination, harassment and vilification
- negligence
- mandatory reporting and child safety
- privacy
- occupational health and safety
- teacher or other professional registration.