



# **PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS & CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CAMPUS EMPLOYEES**

**Updated September 2020**

**(Primarily in relation to COVID-19)**

# Terms of Reference

Milton Keynes College seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment where the welfare and health and safety of students is paramount.

Employees (also referred to as colleagues) should seek to act professionally at all times but we recognise that tensions and misunderstanding can occur in the context of interaction between colleagues and students.

This guidance aims to help colleagues safeguard students and themselves to reduce the risk of conduct which could be mistakenly interpreted as inappropriate and lead to allegations being made against an individual.

This document is for all employees and workers at Milton Keynes College and does not replace nor supersede any established College procedures.

# Professional Boundaries for All Colleagues

## Principles

- The welfare of young people and vulnerable adults is paramount
- Colleagues are responsible for their own actions
- Colleagues should be seen to work in a transparent way
- All colleagues should report any incident which may give rise to concern to their manager, and if appropriate log it on the College CPOMS
- All colleagues and work placement providers should be aware of and follow the College's safeguarding procedure
- Employees who breach this code of conduct may be subject to the College's disciplinary procedures
- Serious breach of this code may result in a referral being made to an external or statutory agency such as the local authority Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, the LADO or the Police

## Working with Students

All employees have a duty of care to keep students safe and are accountable for the way in which they use their authority and position of trust. This duty can be best exercised through the development of caring but professional relationships.

Employees should ensure that their relationships with students are appropriate to the age and gender of the student, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when dealing with adolescent boys and girls and vulnerable students.

Comments by employees to young and vulnerable students, either individually or collectively, can be misconstrued. As a general principle, colleagues must not make unnecessary comments to and/or about students, which could be construed to have a sexual connotation.

It is also unacceptable for employees to introduce or to encourage debate amongst students in a class, training situation or elsewhere, which could be construed as having a sexual connotation that is unnecessary given the context of the session or the circumstances.

However, it is recognised that a topic raised by a student is best addressed rather than ignored. It is appropriate for employees to advise the student where they can access further advice and support.

### Colleagues should:

- Treat all students with respect and dignity
- Always put the welfare of the student first
- Understand that the systematic use of insensitive, disparaging or sarcastic comments such as those that refer to a young person's body, intelligence, gender, sexual orientation or ethnicity in any way are unacceptable
- Not swear or use offensive or discriminatory language
- Never make sexual remarks to a student or discuss your own personal sexual relationships
- Avoid any communication which could be interpreted as sexually provocative
- End the discussion if it becomes uncomfortable or embarrassing

- Work in an open environment avoiding private or unobserved situations and encourage open communication
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Always challenge inappropriate language from students or colleagues
- Never allow allegations made by a student to go unrecorded or not acted upon
- Not do things of a personal nature for a student that they can do for themselves

## **One to One Situations**

**Employees should be aware of the potential risks which may arise when working alone with a student.**

**It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews or meetings must take place:**

- If possible leave the door open or use a room with a window in the door
- The use of “engaged” signs or lights are not advisable
- Where such conditions cannot apply, employees are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the meeting is taking place
- Never meet a student away from the College unless your line manager has given permission
- Avoid travelling in a car with one student and inform someone if the situation is unavoidable

## **Educational Visits and College Activities**

Colleagues should take extra care in less formal situations and remember they are still in a position of trust.

## **Confidentiality**

**Employees should never share information about students in a casual manner or allow students access to information on colleagues’ computers or in offices or staff rooms.**

**Employees should:**

- Never give out their own personal details or a student’s personal details to other students
- Log off or lock their computer whenever leaving it unattended
- Not allow students to use your computer unless you have logged off

## **Behaviour**

**Employees should adopt high standards of personal conduct at all times.**

- Clothing should reflect a professional appearance and should be suitable for the occupational area in which they are working
- Colleagues should dress in a manner which will avoid inappropriate comments
- Never act in a way that can be perceived as threatening
- Accessing or bringing images of pornography i.e. sexualised images without artistic merit on site is never acceptable, regardless of format
- Storing or disseminating such material is illegal and if proven will lead to the person being barred from working with young people

- When communicating with students electronically, employees should only use college mobiles/desk phones, college email or official college internet sites
- Employees should never keep images of students on personal equipment

## Social Contact

**Employees should never make contact with a student outside of the College for the purpose of friendship. This is particularly important when there is a possibility of a student becoming infatuated.**

**It is recognised that there may be occasions when accidental or reasonable social contact may be unavoidable, e.g. meeting students at social venues open to the general public or in shops or at private parties. In such circumstances, colleagues should be mindful at all times of their professional relationship with students.**

- Providing lifts to students as part of a private arrangement is never acceptable without prior permission from your line manager. Giving lifts should never be a regular occurrence with any student other than family members, or their close friends, while they are present. Any lift that you provide to a student must be declared to your line manager
- Employees should never lend money to students. Students who are in need of money for food or travel should be directed to the Bursary and Welfare Department where an emergency loan can be made
- Do not accept gifts that could be construed as bribes (end of term gifts are fine)
- Never give out personal contact details, mobile phone numbers or personal email or Facebook addresses
- Never accept friendship or access requests from students on any social networking sites
- Report any suspected infatuation
- Report any situation which you may feel compromises your professional standing

## Use of the College Network–ESafe

**All employee and student devices connected to the College Network whether they are in College or connected remotely are constantly monitored by ESafe.**

ESafe provides the College with daily reports which highlight any potential safeguarding and prevent incidents or concerns. Any use of inappropriate web content by employees or students will be reported to a member of the Safeguarding Team.

If you do have any queries about keeping safe online please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Safeguarding Team or Digital Learning Team.

## Sexual Contact

There is NO acceptable behaviour between a student and an employee that has either explicit sexual connotations or innuendo. Any such behaviour will always be treated as extremely serious and must be reported immediately.

It is a criminal offence for a person in a position of trust to engage in any sexual activity with a person aged under 18 irrespective of the age of consent, even if the basis for their relationship is consensual.

## Physical Contact

**It is not necessary to have physical contact with students, outside your job description, even when they are distressed and this should be avoided at all times.**

- Try to defuse a situation before it escalates
- Never endanger your own safety
- Contact the Security team for support when you have a concern not related to safeguarding such as a fight breaking out

## Incidents that must be reported

- If a student is accidentally hurt
- If you are concerned that a relationship is developing that could represent an abuse of trust
- If you are concerned that a student is becoming attracted to you or a colleague
- If you are concerned that a colleague is becoming attracted to someone in his/her care
- If a student misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done
- If you have had to use reasonable physical restraint to prevent a student harming themselves, or another, or from causing significant damage to property
- If a student makes an allegation of abuse
- If you see any suspicious marks on a student
- If you notice sudden changes in behaviour

## Whistleblowing

**Whistleblowing should be part of transparent work practices and is not intended to set up mistrust or suspicion among employees.**

It can be difficult to accept that a colleague may deliberately harm a vulnerable person. It may also be that the behaviour that causes concern is bad practice rather than abuse. The College will support and protect all employees and students who, in good faith and without malicious intent, report suspicions of abuse or concerns about colleagues in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Policy (Whistleblowing) using [Speak Out](#) which is an online application which enables confidential reporting if necessary.

## Reporting Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Disclosures and Concerns

**Employees should follow the process below if a student tells them about possible abuse:**

1. Listen carefully and stay calm
2. Do not interview the student, but question normally and without pressure, in order to be sure that you understand what the student is telling you
3. Do not put words into the student's mouth
4. Reassure the student that by telling you, they have done the right thing
5. Inform the student that you must pass the information on, but that only those that need to know about it will be told. Inform them of whom you will report the matter to
6. Make a detailed note of the date, time, place, what the student said, did and your questions etc.
7. Note the main points carefully

8. Do not investigate concerns or allegations yourself, but report them immediately via the College CPOMS and ensure to 'Alert' a member of the Safeguarding Team

Child and Vulnerable Adult protection records are recorded and stored securely on the College CPOMS (Child Protection Online Monitoring System). Employees will be informed of relevant information in respect of individual cases on a 'need to know basis' only.

# Code of Conduct for All Employees

As an employee of Milton Keynes College, you will be expected to:

## RESPECT:

- Ensure you're punctual and prepared for every meeting and appointment
- Take pride in your work and listen to and value the contribution from others
- Actively seek to promote diversity and challenge inequality
- Ensure an appropriate professional appearance is reflected at all times
- Ensure you maintain appropriate professional boundaries at all times

## EXCELLENCE:

- Deliver a level of service that meets and exceeds expectations for all customers particularly our students
- Work collaboratively and contribute purposefully to the team and wider college
- Be an ambassador externally and a role model internally

## INTEGRITY:

- Act in the best interests of the College, customers and colleagues at all times
- Take responsibility and be accountable for your own actions
- Be open, honest and prepared to challenge appropriately

## INSPIRE:

- Motivate and inspire others in day-to-day activities
- Instil confidence in the strengths and abilities of our team and organisation
- Demonstrate energy and passion to engage others in delivering the ambition of the College

## INNOVATE:

- Continually seek to develop new ways to improve our products, services and processes
- Seek to challenge your thinking and be open to new ideas to improve our working practices
- Create opportunities for change
- Welcome feedback and take responsibility for your own professional development



## Professional Standards – Teaching

As a professional at Milton Keynes College in a student facing role which includes teachers, trainers, progress mentors and personal tutors you are expected to show commitment to the following in your professional practice, the values of the College (Excellence, Integrity, Innovation, Inspire, Respect) and respect the Milton Keynes College Code of Conduct for Employees.

### Professional values and attributes

#### Develop your own judgement of what works and does not work in your teaching and training

- Reflect on what works best in your teaching and learning to meet the needs of diverse groups of learners
- Evaluate and challenge your practice, values and beliefs
- Inspire, motivate and raise aspirations of your learners through your enthusiasm and knowledge
- Be creative and innovative in selecting and adapting strategies to help learners to learn
- Value and promote social and cultural diversity, equality of opportunity and inclusion
- Build positive and collaborative relationships with colleagues and learners

### Professional knowledge and understanding

#### Develop deep and critically informed knowledge and understanding in theory and practice

- Maintain and update knowledge of your subject and/or vocational area
- Evaluate your practice with others including students and assess its impact on learning
- Manage and promote positive learner behaviour
- Understand the teaching and professional role and your responsibilities
- Professional skills and practice

#### Develop your expertise and skills to ensure the best outcomes for learners

- Motivate and inspire learners to promote achievement and develop their skills to enable progression
- Plan and deliver effective learning programmes for diverse groups or individuals in a safe and inclusive environment adhering to the Milton Keynes College Health and Safety, Safeguarding and Equality and Diversity strategies
- Act as a role model for your learners arriving punctually and well prepared for every teaching engagement
- Use and promote learning technologies and support learners in their use
- Contribute to organisation development, success and the achievement of the Milton Keynes College Strategic aims through collaboration with colleagues and others
- Enable learners to improve their maths and English and work creatively to overcome individual learners' barriers to learning
- Enable learners to share responsibility for their own learning and assessment, setting goals that stretch and challenge
- Apply appropriate methods of assessment and provide constructive feedback within a three week period which supports achievement and progression

- Maintain and update teaching and training expertise and vocational skills, working with employers as appropriate

**In return Milton Keynes College will**

- Invest in your professional development through formal and informal learning opportunities
- Ensure you receive appropriate support from your line managers, Assistant Principals and others
- Ensure you receive recognition for outstanding work

## COVID 19 (Updated September 2020)

Due to the global pandemic, Milton Keynes College has needed to adopt and develop safe ways of working and engaging with students and colleagues in line with guidance from Public Health England. These guidelines, protocols and policies will be communicated on the College website and also in Unity.

Colleagues are expected to work within the guidelines which may be updated from time to time. They must ensure they take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing as well as taking reasonable steps to protect the health of students and colleagues and minimise the risk of spreading the virus

Breaches to guidelines, protocols and policies may be considered as disciplinary matters and so everyone should be sure that they are aware of what is in place. Everyone is expected to support and challenge students and colleagues to ensure as safe a working environment as possible. Any breaches by colleagues will be dealt with by the Line Manager in the first instance but may be escalated to SLT where an individual demonstrates persistent lack of attention and care or where there is repeated failure to adhere to what is in place. Measures to deal with breaches may be dealt with through formal Disciplinary Procedures if necessary. However, we trust our College values and caring culture will ensure that we all take responsibility to adhere to guidelines, protocols and policies in place to keep us safe and well.