

CODE OF ETHICS

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A GENERAL

1. In all College activities it is important to develop and promote a set of core values, relevant to our mission to provide high quality learning opportunities for learners.
2. As an institution within the public sector, the College accepts that those values must be in conformity with the principles laid down by the Nolan Committee for those holding public office, namely -
 - selflessness
 - integrity
 - objectivity
 - accountability
 - openness
 - honesty
 - leadership
3. The College recognises its obligations to all those with whom it has dealings - learners, employees, employers, suppliers, other educational institutions and the wider community - and also to the public generally, and the taxpayer.
4. The reputation of the College and the trust and confidence of those with whom it deals is one of its most vital resources, the protection of which is of fundamental importance.
5. The College demands and maintains the highest ethical standards in carrying out its activities.
6. In its dealings with individuals the College will adhere to the principles of natural justice and individuals' civil and human rights.
7. The College will seek to encourage a culture of openness aimed at ensuring that matters connected with the operation of the College can be discussed frankly with staff and learners. It will in addition adopt and maintain procedures on whistleblowing which will enable concerns to be raised on a confidential basis, where that is appropriate both inside and, if necessary, outside the organisation.
8. The College is committed to securing equality of opportunity for staff and learners alike and to discharging its legal duties under relevant discrimination legislation.

B. LEARNERS

1. The College believes that integrity in dealing with its learners or prospective learners is a prerequisite for success, and an important statement of the values it offers.
2. The College will not give deliberately inadequate or misleading information on its learning programmes or other services.
3. In all advertising and public communications, the College will avoid untruths, concealment and overstatement about its programmes and achievements.
4. The College will avoid recruitment practices which involve the offer of improper financial or other inducements to learners.
5. The College will make all reasonable attempts to deliver learning programmes and support services to meet the individual needs of learners efficiently and effectively to accepted quality standards, and will take reasonable steps to rectify any shortcomings in the service delivered.
6. Learning support, information, advice and guidance offered to learners will be impartial and guided by the best interests of the student.
7. The College has all students sign a behavioural contract setting out what learners and others can expect of the College. In addition the College provides on its website details of its complaints and appeals procedures. It will deal with all learners with equal care and respect.
8. The College will ensure that complaints are dealt with fairly, openly and efficiently.
9. Within the requirements of the law and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, the College will maintain the confidentiality of information on individual learners.

C EDUCATIONAL PARTNERS

1. The College is committed to collaborative arrangements that will benefit the institution and its learners. Where the College is competing with others, it will compete vigorously but honestly with other educational institutions offering similar learning opportunities.
2. The College will not seek to damage the reputation of competitors or other third parties either directly or by innuendo.
3. The College will provide information on individual learners to the Careers Service and other institutions engaged in providing for the learning needs of the student in accordance with agreed procedures, within the Data Protection Act 2018, and any other legal requirements.
4. The College will not seek to acquire information regarding competitors by unfair or disreputable means.
5. The College will not engage in unfair or restrictive practices in regard to the recruitment or retention of learners.
6. The College will consult with institutions and/or service providers who might be affected on any significant proposals for change in the learning programmes or services it offers.

D CORPORATION GOVERNING BODY

1. The Corporation is the Governing Body of the College. The Corporation has adopted a Code of Conduct for itself consistent with the principles laid down by the Nolan Committee and the requirements of its Instrument and Articles of Government.
2. The College maintains a register of Corporation members' interests which is open to inspection by the public. Corporation members are required to register those interests which are of relevance to the work of the College in sufficient detail to allow the nature of those interests to be understood by enquirers.
3. The Corporation will seek to ensure that its members are appointed on merit, after an open selection process, and are drawn widely from the community it serves, having regard to the need for continuity and freshness, and for a range of skills and interests.
4. In accordance with the current Articles of Government, the Corporation is responsible for:
 - (a) Determining and periodically reviewing the educational character and mission of the College and oversight of its activities;
 - (b) Approving the quality strategy of the College;
 - (c) The effective and efficient use of resources, the solvency of the College and the Corporation, and safeguarding the assets of the College and Corporation;
 - (d) Approving annual estimates of income and expenditure;
 - (e) The appointment, grading, suspension, dismissal and determination of pay and conditions of service for Senior Post-holders and the Clerk;
 - (f) Setting the framework for the pay and conditions of service of all other staff.
5. The Corporation will adopt procedures which ensure sound financial decision-making, control and monitoring to meet the requirements of the funding body and public audit.
6. The Corporation will ensure that information on its decisions is made widely available, having regard to proper confidentiality as determined by the Corporation and any legal requirements.

E MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

1. The College has adopted a Code of Conduct for its employees based on similar principles to that for Corporation Members.
2. The staff Code of Conduct forbids employees from soliciting or accepting inducements in respect of any matter connected with the operation of the College.

3. The freedom within the law of staff to question and test received wisdom on academic matters, and to put forward new ideas or controversial or unpopular opinions, without placing their employment in jeopardy is respected and included in staff contracts of employment. This includes the right of staff to speak freely and without being subject to disciplinary sanctions or victimisation about academic standards or related matters, provided they do so lawfully, without malice and in the public interest.
4. Where the College includes confidentiality clauses in contracts of employment this will not prevent staff who have legitimate concerns about malpractice raising those concerns with the appropriate authority.
5. As Accounting Officer for the College under the Financial Memorandum, the Principal will be responsible for the propriety of financial decision making, and will advise the Corporation Governing Body of any requirements in respect of matters before it.

F EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

1. The College recognizes that it is responsible to the community it serves and will take steps to ensure that information on its activities is made widely available noting any requirements for confidentiality that may be applicable and which shall be explained as necessary.
2. The College will be responsive to its community and, within the framework of its own Mission Statement, will seek to provide programmes and services relevant to the needs of individuals and employers.
3. The College will provide timely and accurate information to the best of abilities on individual learners to employers or others providing sponsorship within the confines of the Data Protection Act 2018, and any other relevant legal requirements.
4. The College will ensure that it contracts with organisations which comply with The Equality Act 2010.

G COMPLIANCE AND VERIFICATION

1. The College will require all its employees to adhere to its Code of Conduct for staff.
2. The College will create mechanisms by which employees and learners can express genuinely held concerns about behaviour or decisions they perceive to involve serious impropriety, and have them investigated, with every reasonable assurance of confidentiality as appropriate.
3. The Corporation Governing Body will appoint a Clerk to be responsible for monitoring adherence to their Code of Conduct by Governors, investigating alleged breaches and reporting to the Corporation Governing Body. The Corporation Governing Body will decide on any action to be taken to ensure compliance with the code.
4. The Principal will be responsible for initiating and supervising investigations into alleged breaches of their Code of Conduct by members of staff, and for ensuring that appropriate action is taken.
5. The College auditors may be asked to report on any practice which appears to breach the Code.
6. The College will ensure that its Codes of Conduct are published and made widely available.

H REVIEW OF CODE

1. This Code will be reviewed bi-annually by the Clerk to the Corporation.