

## **CODE OF ETHICS**

**Adapted from a code published by the Association of Colleges December  
1997 (Revised November 2012)**

<b>CODE OF ETHICS</b>			
<b>Last EqlA date</b>		<b>Status</b>	Live
<b>Next review date</b>	31 October 2015	<b>Post-holder responsible:</b>	Clerk to the Corporation
<b>Last review date</b>	10 January 2013	<b>Approval required from:</b>	Search & Governance Committee
<b>Last Approved date</b>	06 March 2013	<b>Approval required from:</b>	Corporation

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# **EASTON and OTLEY COLLEGE**

## **CODE OF ETHICS**

### **1. Introduction**

This paper sets out the Code of Ethics for Easton and Otley College. It does not seek to rehearse the legal framework governing the operation of the College, but takes as its starting point the distribution of powers and responsibilities set out in legislation. Nor does it seek to provide detailed guidance on every question of conduct which might arise: Rather it lays down general principles which can be used to determine action which will conform to the standards and values expected within further education.

### **2. General**

- a) In all College activities it is important to develop and promote a set of core values, relevant to its mission to provide high quality learning opportunities for students.
- b) 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
- c) The College recognises its obligations to all those with whom it has dealings - students, employees, employers and other sponsors, suppliers, other educational institutions and the wider community - and also to the taxpayer.
- d) 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.
- e) The College demands and maintains the highest ethical standards in carrying out its activities.
- f) In its dealings with individuals the College will adhere to the principles of natural justice.
- g) 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 students. It has in addition adopted procedures on whistleblowing by which employees and students can express genuinely held concerns about behaviour or decisions they perceive to involve serious impropriety, and have them investigated, with a guarantee of confidentiality.

- h) The College will seek the views of staff and students on the determination and periodic review of the educational character and mission of the institution and the oversight of its activities and will publish arrangements for obtaining such views.
- i) The College is committed to complying fully with the Equality Act 2010 and to promoting the values of equality and diversity within the College.
- j) The College is also committed to ensuring that it conducts its business in accordance with the highest ethical standards - including those required by the Bribery Act 2010.

### **3. Students**

- a) The College believes that integrity in dealing with its students or prospective students is a prerequisite for success, and an important statement of the values it offers.
- b) The College will not give deliberately inadequate or misleading information on its learning programmes or other services.
- c) In all advertising and public communications, the College will avoid untruths, concealment and overstatement about its programmes and achievements.
- d) The College will avoid recruitment practices, which involve the offer of improper financial or other inducements to students.
- e) The College will deliver learning programmes and support services to meet the individual needs of students efficiently and effectively to accepted quality standards, and will take steps to rectify any shortcomings in the service delivered.
- f) Learning support, information, advice and guidance offered to students will be impartial and guided by the best interests of the student.
- g) The College has adopted a charter setting out what students and others can expect of the College. It will deal with all students with equal care and respect.
- h) The College will ensure that complaints are dealt with fairly, openly and efficiently.
- i) Within the requirements of the law, the College will maintain the confidentiality of information on individual students.

### **4. Educational Partners**

- a) The College will compete vigorously but honestly with other educational institutions offering similar learning opportunities, but always seek to act in collaboration in order to present the widest possible range of educational provision to the community.
- b) The College will not seek to damage the reputation of competitors either directly or by innuendo.
- c) The College will provide information on individual students to the All Age Careers Service and other institutions engaged in providing for the learning needs of the student in accordance with agreed procedures within Data Protection Act guidelines.
- d) The College will not seek to acquire information regarding competitors by unfair or disreputable means.

- e) The College will not engage in unfair or restrictive practices in regard to the recruitment or retention of students.
- f) The College will consult with partners who might be affected on any significant proposals for change in the learning programmes or services it offers.

## **5. Governing Body**

- a) The Governing Body 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.
- b) The Code of Conduct requires the maintenance of a register of Governors' interests, which is open to inspection by the public. Governors 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.
- c) The Governing Body of the College seeks 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.
- d) The Governing Body is responsible for determining the educational character and mission of the College and for oversight of its activities; for the effective and efficient use of resources, the solvency of the corporation, and the safeguarding of its assets; for the approving of annual estimates of income and expenditure; and for the appointment, discipline, pay and conditions of service of staff, in accordance with the Articles of Government.
- e) The Governing Body has adopted procedures, which ensure sound financial decision-making, control and monitoring to meet the requirements of the funding body and public audit.
- f) The Governing Body makes information on its agenda and decisions widely available, having regard to proper confidentiality.

## **6. Management and Staff**

- a) The College has a Code of Conduct for its employees, based on similar principles to that for Governors.
- b) The staff Code of Conduct prohibits employees from soliciting or accepting inducements in respect of any matter connected with the operation of the College and embraces the standards required by the Bribery Act 2010.
- c) The staff Code is consistent with best practice regarding Freedom of Speech, in respecting the freedom within the law of academic staff to question and test received wisdom, and to put forward new ideas or controversial or unpopular opinions through appropriate channels, without placing their employment in jeopardy. 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.
- d) Where the College includes confidentiality clauses in severance contracts this will not prevent staff who have legitimate concerns about malpractice raising those concerns with the appropriate authority.

## **7. External Relationships**

- a) The College recognises that it is responsible to the community it serves and has taken steps to ensure that information on its activities is made widely available.
- b) The College is responsible 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.
- c) The College will provide timely and accurate information on individual students to employers or others providing sponsorship.
- d) The College will use its best endeavours to ensure that it only contracts with organisations which comply with acceptable ethical standards.

## **8. The Environment**

- a) The College will endeavour to conduct its operations in a way that minimises hostile impact on its environment.
- b) The College will endeavour to follow best practice in ensuring that environmental considerations are taken into account in all major planning decisions.

## **9. Compliance and Verification**

- a) The Corporation have appointed their Clerk to be responsible for monitoring adherence to the Governors Code by members of the Governing Body, investigating alleged breaches and reporting to the Governing Body. The Governing Body will decide on any action to be taken to ensure compliance with the Code.
- b) The Principal will be responsible for initiating and supervising investigations into alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct by members of staff, and for ensuring that appropriate action is taken.
- c) The College auditors may be asked to report on any practice which appears to breach the code.
- d) The College will ensure that its Codes are published and made widely available.