

## EASTON AND OTLEY COLLEGE CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This policy sets out clear guidance on the standards of behaviour expected from all employees at the College. The principles underlying the guidance aim to encourage employees to achieve the highest possible standards of conduct and minimise the risk of inappropriate conduct occurring.
- 1.2 Employees are in a unique position of trust and influence as role models for students. Therefore, employees must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all students within the College.
- 1.3 Employees also have an individual responsibility to maintain both their reputation and the reputation of the College, both inside and outside working hours.
- 1.4 Employees must always consider the impact of their behaviour and actions to contemplate if they are placing themselves in a vulnerable situation.
- 1.5 For the purposes of this policy, someone is considered to be a student for up to 12 months after the receipt of their results.

### 2.0 POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 The College sets high expectations that its employees will carry out their jobs to the best of their ability in accordance with their terms and conditions of employment and will abide by the College's rules and professional standards.
- 2.2 This policy applies to all employees in the College regardless of their position, role or responsibility. Where the policy refers to students, this can include students who have recently left the College. If employees have any concerns or require clarity about contact with former students then they must liaise with their line manager for advice.

This policy is based upon the Nolan standards for people working in the public sector, as follows:

#### **Selflessness**

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

#### **Integrity**

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Code of Conduct Policy</b>		
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### **Objectivity**

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

### **Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

### **Openness**

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

### **Honesty**

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

### **Leadership**

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

It is the responsibility of all employees to familiarise themselves with these principles and the details contained within this policy.

## **3.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **3.1 Line manager responsibilities:**

- To ensure employees are appraised of any potential conduct issues in a timely manner;
- To provide support including training as required to enable improved performance and understanding;
- To ensure that the employee is fully aware of expectations and the required professional standards for their role;
- To role model expected behaviours.

### **3.2 Employee responsibilities:**

- To ensure that you fully understand the College's expectations and the required professional standards for your role;
- Read and understand the information contained within this policy;
- To always uphold the expected behaviours.

### **3.3 HR responsibilities:**

- To provide advice and guidance to managers and employees on any issues or concerns regarding conduct and professional standards;
- To assist managers if an investigation process is required, which could result in the formal disciplinary process.

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## 4.0 PROCEDURE

### 4.1 Professional Behaviour and Conduct

- Employees are expected to show loyalty to the College and act in good faith in its interests at all times. This includes activities inside and outside the College, on or off the College's premises.
- Employees must act honestly and diligently, pursuing the best interests of the College and its students. This means setting high standards, delivering everything promised, on time and to the highest possible standard.
- Employees should be ready for work at their agreed start time and work through until their agreed end time except for their agreed break times.
- Employees should report any concerns regarding professional standards and/or conduct to their Line Manager, Senior Manager or Human Resources.
- Employees should be aware that even off duty they remain an employee of the College and have a duty to maintain professional standards and not to bring the College into disrepute in any way. Failure to follow this can mean that even if the event occurred in non-working time, and outside the College, employees might still be held to account via the College's disciplinary procedure.
- Employees will always observe high standards of professional language. Employees should challenge inappropriate language and highlight to any individual including colleagues and students that such forms of language are not permitted. Employees should not use 'over-friendly' or familiar language with students; this will avoid creating the wrong impression.
- Employees who are members of professional bodies are expected to comply with the requirements of those (e.g. Institute for Learning).
- Employees should politely decline gifts, hospitality or benefits of any kind from a student or third party which might be seen to compromise that individual's integrity. The only exception to this would be for low value gifts from individuals where refusal would cause offence or from suppliers where the same gifts are provided to other organisations. Any gift, favour or hospitality must always be declared to the relevant Department Director.
- The making or accepting of bribes or any other inducements, financial or non-financial, in respect of any transactions carried out on behalf of the College by any employee is forbidden and will lead to disciplinary action.

### 4.2 Dress and Appearance

The College recognises that dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, all employees are expected to dress appropriately and present a professional image at all times. Standards of dress applies at all times, including non-term time. If an individual's appearance is inappropriate then their Line Manager should deal with this in a sensitive manner as soon as possible.

For further information please refer to the College Dress Code Policy.

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### 4.3 Student Relationships

- Employees should conduct themselves in a manner that acknowledges their professional and ethical responsibilities to protect the interests of students at all times.
- Employees must not encourage or start any personal relationship of a sexual/romantic nature or other potentially incompatible relationships with students of any age who they have direct professional contact with. This includes both inside and outside of College time and via social networking sites.
- Under the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000, it is an offence for a professional in a position of trust to have a sexual relationship with a learner or colleague under 18 even if the relationship is consensual.
- Employees must not to enter into an relationship with a student of any age for whom they have a responsibility in respect of teaching, learning and assessment, pastoral care or other service, as such relationships can lead to perceived or actual conflicts of interest.
- Employees should not behave in a manner which could lead to questions about their suitability to work with young people or vulnerable adults. This includes making sexual remarks to a student (including email, text messages, phone), discussing their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of students and discussing a student's sexual relationships in inappropriate settings or contexts.
- The College would discourage employees from socialising outside of working time with students and under no circumstances should students be invited to their home or a private setting, including arrangements to meet socially, either individually or in small groups. Employees must always consider the potential interpretation of their actions and their responsibility to the Colleges' expectations of professional behaviour and conduct.
- Contact with students should be through the College's authorised mechanisms, such as College email, College mobile phones (please refer to College Mobile Phone policy), Moodle. If employees are contacted via an inappropriate route they must inform their Line Manager immediately.
- Employees must not provide students with their personal details which include personal mobile phone numbers, home addresses or personal social networking sites. Social networking sites or blogs can be categorised as public or private but it is not unusual for content on private sites to be made public so employees should be aware that content which may be considered as bringing the College into disrepute could lead to disciplinary action.
- Employees must not accept friend invitations or become friends with any student on any social media platform. Employees should also refrain from following students or students' family members on Twitter or other similar social media accounts.
- Social network relationships are not acceptable until 12 months from no longer being a student.

For the purposes of this policy, contact is prohibited with a student for 12 months following receipt of their results. Employees should consider that students could return to the College for further studies.

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#### 4.4 **Employee Relationships**

- Employees must exercise care to ensure that integrity is operated at all times in their dealings with other employees including agency staff and contractors, or learners who are related to them either by birth, marriage or circumstance.
- The College will not consider it appropriate, particularly in a supervisory or line manager capacity, for family members or those with close personal relationships to work together. However, where these relationships exist or develop they should be drawn to the attention of the employee's line manager and the HR immediately.
- Employees have a duty not to undertake any action which might be interpreted as harassment or bullying of any employee, learner or client organisation of the College. The College will not tolerate bullying or harassment of any form.

#### 4.5 **Employees with Students who are Family Members**

Employees may find that members of their family may come to the College as students. This may cause a problem where the student is enrolled on a course in the same area as the employee. If this occurs, the employee must inform their Line Manager immediately. Alternative arrangements will be made wherever possible to ensure that neither the student nor employee is left in a vulnerable situation.

For any new enrolments of students where an employee has an existing relationship then they should advise their Line Manager immediately so that the situation can be assessed and viable solution considered.

#### 4.6 **Social Situations**

If employees are out on personal social events and they 'bump' into students they should adhere to the behaviours expected and conduct themselves in a professional manner. If an incident occurs, the employee must inform their Line Manager as soon as possible after the event.

#### 4.7 **Employees giving lifts to students**

It is not recommended for employees to give a personal lift, on their own, in a car, to any student. Employees should not put themselves in a vulnerable situation, and therefore should arrange transport for the student, or ask another employee to accompany them in the car. If students are waiting for transport at night, it is advisable that at least two employees should wait with the students. Neither the students, nor the employees should be left on their own.

In the event of an emergency, employees should seek to take every precaution to ensure that they do not put themselves in a vulnerable situation. For example, they may decide to arrange for a taxi or family member to collect the student.

#### 4.8 **Student Tutorials**

Employees should ensure that when conducting tutorials with students on a one to one basis that they do not put themselves in a vulnerable situation. All one to one tutorials

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should take place in an appropriate room with viewing panels. Where a room with a door with no viewing panel has to be used then the door must be left open.

#### 4.9 **Alcohol and Drugs**

It is not permitted for employees to be at work in any capacity whilst under the influence of alcohol or non-prescribed drugs. If an employee finds themselves in a situation where they need help, they must inform their Line Manager or HR and support will be provided through the most appropriate services. However, employees that are found to be drinking alcohol, or taking recreational or any other drugs which have an adverse effect on their work performance, will be subject to gross misconduct disciplinary action.

Part of our safeguarding procedures will include regular, yet random, drug searches of all College buildings, grounds, employees and students. Such checks will be undertaken in conjunction with professional organisations using trained sniffer dogs.

#### 5.0 **Compliance**

All employees must complete the form in appendix 1 to confirm they have read, understood and agree to comply with this policy. This form should be completed and a copy returned to Human Resources to be retained on their personnel file.

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## Appendix 1

### Confirmation of Compliance

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with Easton and Otley College's Code of Conduct policy.

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Position:</b>	
<b>Department:</b>	
<b>Signed:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Human Resources.

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