

West Cork Sudbury School
CODE OF CONDUCT



WEST CORK SADBURY SCHOOL

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2021/2022

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INTRODUCTION

The following is a guide to help create a safe and protective culture for students, staff members and volunteers.

For full guidance in relation to child protection procedures please refer to WCSS's Child Protection Policy. If you have any doubts whether you witnessed a Child Protection Incident, please report immediately to WCSS's Child Protection Officer or Deputy.

PRACTICE TO BE ENCOURAGED

- Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity.
- Involve students in the decisions that affect them.
- Always work in an open environment, avoiding private or unobserved situations.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with students (e.g. not sharing sleeping accommodation, shower facilities or having an inappropriate or intimate relationship).
- Use WCSS's incident books to keep a clear note of any incidents or concerns.
- If physical intimate contact is necessary (e.g. in an emergency), tell the young person clearly what you are doing and why, seek their permission and give choices where possible. If possible have another facilitator/adult present. Familiarize yourself with WCSS's Intimate Care Policy! (under development)
- Raise concerns and practise feedback culture: Name and point out behaviours of fellow staff members that bother you.

West Cork Sudbury School
CODE OF CONDUCT

- Transparency: If a student tells a facilitator “a secret”, it is important to remind them that the facilitator might have to share it with other members of the staff if this secret involves the safety and/or well-being of the student. Emphasise this by whenever possible using the word “we” instead of “I”.

PRACTICE TO BE AVOIDED

- Facilitators should not give lifts in their car to individual students or travel alone with students. Where not doing this would compromise the student’s well-being (e.g. leaving a young person alone at a venue or bus stop) you should make arrangements and/or attempt to phone the parent/guardian of the young person to confirm what you will be doing. You should also ask the student(s) to sit in the back seat.
- Facilitators should avoid situations where they are alone with students. Where a private meeting with a lone student is unavoidable/necessary it should be held in an open place in view of others or in a room visible to those outside and/or where a colleague has agreed to visually monitor the meeting/check in. If a student participates in a review of their involvement in a programme as a result of disruptive or unacceptable behaviour, it is advisable that this review is witnessed by a second staff member/volunteer.
- Facilitators using their own ‘personal’ electronic communications (e.g. mobile phones, social networking sites, messaging apps, games etc.) for contacting students, unless agreed by the Board of Management.
- Going on walks with students in a group smaller than three.

West Cork Sudbury School
CODE OF CONDUCT

UNACCEPTABLE PRACTICE

- Invading the privacy of children and young people when they are toileting or showering, changing or dressing. Make sure you are familiar with WCSS's Intimate Care Policy! (under development)
- Giving gifts, money, cigarettes etc. to students.
- Inappropriate physical or sexually provocative behaviour/games.
- Facilitators should not take students to their home or that of another facilitator. Activities outside of school hours must be linked to school activities and chaperoned by at least two staff members.
- Sharing sleeping accommodation with an individual child or young person.
- Making sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or young person even in fun.
- Inappropriate and intrusive touching of any form, including students sitting on facilitators laps, kissing, cuddling etc.
- Scape-goating or ridiculing a child or young person.
- Allowing inappropriate, foul, sexualised or discriminatory language to remain unchallenged.
- Any form of physical punishment.
- Illegal use of drugs.
- Use of alcohol during an event.
- Bullying of any form, including name calling or constant criticism.
- 'Picking on' a young person because of their family background, manner of dress or physical characteristic. Make sure you are familiar with WCSS's Diversity & Inclusion Policy!

West Cork Sudbury School
CODE OF CONDUCT

- Imparting your personal views on students which contravene WCSS's ethos of equality and its Inclusion & Diversity Policy (i.e. sexist, racist, homophobic, anti-faith...) or making jokes or comments which could be considered derogatory or offensive to others.
- Favouritism and exclusion - all students should be equally supported and encouraged.
- Abusive language or gestures.

If any of the following occurs you must report it to the Child Protection Officer or Deputy:

- You have suspicions about a possible Child Protection incident.
- A student seems distressed in any manner you find worrying.
- A student appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- A student misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.
- An allegation is made about you or a colleague.

This policy is due for review at the end of the Academic Year:
2021/2022

Ratified by the Board of Management on 10/01/2022.

- Chairperson -

- Secretary -

West Cork Sudbury School
CODE OF CONDUCT

APPENDIX

EXCERPT OF WCSS'S JOB DESCRIPTION

ROLE OF STAFF

Staff members at WCSS must have an understanding of the Sudbury, democratic, self-directed education model. They act as dependable stewards of the school; facilitate students access to resources; exemplify mature practises of personal fulfilment and societal engagement; and anchor school culture to values of interpersonal respect and trust in the impulses to self-actualize.

EXCERPT OF WCSS'S RECORD OF AGREEMENTS

NON-NEGOTIABLES

- Everyone has the right to be free from harm, harassment and discrimination.
- Everyone is free and equal, with their own thoughts and ideas and will be treated the same.
- Everyone has the right to self determination and to follow their own path, so long as this does not harm anyone or keep others from doing the same.
- Everyone is asked to respect and accept other people's boundaries, and has the right to respect and accept their own.