



Swan Christian
EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Staff Code of Conduct Policy

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Preamble From the CEO

Whatever you do, work at it with all you heart, as something done for the Lord and not for men
Colossians 3:23

SCEA will only succeed in achieving our objectives where we have the respect of our stakeholders (including our students, parents and colleagues) and the communities in which we operate. Our reputation is dependent on a culture where every one of us acts with the highest level of integrity and honesty and takes responsibility for their actions. Our Board is committed to ensuring our Association operates with the highest level of integrity and expects all employees to do likewise. The Board is also committed to providing a child-safe environment which safeguards all students and is committed to promoting practices which provide for the safety, well-being, and welfare of our children and young people.

SCEA's Code of Conduct sets out the ethical behaviour expected of us. It will assist every employee in solving ethical dilemmas they may face in their working environment.

Commitment to an ethical culture within our Association involves us capturing opportunities to increase the awareness of SCEA's Code of Conduct and making it part of our daily business decisions and actions. It is up to all of us to ensure the Code of Conduct becomes part of the operational fabric of our Association. Successfully implemented, this Code of Conduct will result in:

- (a) More effective compliance with relevant laws;
- (b) More effective management;
- (c) Greater awareness of ensuring the safety of all children in our care, and
- (d) Maintenance of the integrity and reputation of SCEA.

The Association Code of Conduct outlines our key values and our expectations of staff in our workplace environment. We have an additional expectation of every person within our Association (including Board Directors, students, volunteers, contractors, parents and guardians) to uphold the key values and expectations of this Code of Conduct when acting on behalf of or representing SCEA.

Yours Sincerely,

Neil David
CEO

Background

SCEA exists to partner with families and communities to provide Christ-centred education to help shape and grow future generations. As Christians, we aim to model unity and glorify God in all we do. As educators, our focus is on delivering the best educational outcomes for our students and serving their welfare.

One of the strengths of SCEA is its employees' strong commitment to making a difference to the future wellbeing of children, to the moral and economic success of Western Australia, and to the future of our nation.

This Code of Conduct clarifies the standards of behaviour that are expected of SCEA staff. It gives guidance in areas where staff need to make personal and ethical decisions.

It makes clear that, in addition to their legal duties under various laws, employees are required at all times to demonstrate ethical conduct that is consistent with biblical Christian principles and the following SCEA values:

Strive to be Christlike

- We aspire to the values exhibited by Jesus: truth; grace; hope; faith; love; justice; joy; service and peace.

Pursue excellence

- All we do is to the Glory of God; we have a thirst for learning and growth that fuels continuous improvement.

Seek unity

- To further our mission, we converge on positions that strengthen the SCEA system.

Have the courage to shine

- We aspire to our highest potential, live by our biblical convictions and shine a light into others' lives.

This Code of Conduct provides guidance on the responsibilities of our Association, our employees and any third party acting on our behalf. It applies when employees act in their capacity as staff members of SCEA, including their attendance at School Committee's and Association Members' meetings, in the execution of their day-to-day duties and any other times when employees are representing the Association.

In addition, it sets out principles the Association expects its employees to follow and observe in everyday life.

Responsibility in this context means that each individual takes responsibility for their actions. High ethical standards flow from the concept of us being "responsible" for our actions. Each individual who is a part of our Association is expected to take responsibility for their own actions. This is a key part of our operational process.

There is no right way to do the wrong thing. Behaving in an ethical manner and in accordance with our key values is vital to the SCEA's success. Applying this Code of Conduct ensures our Association maintains a high ethical standard, which reinforces one of our key assets, our reputation.

Scope

This policy covers all sites owned and/or operated by Swan Christian Education Association Incorporated (SCEA). All members of SCEA staff, contractors and volunteers must comply with this policy.

Context

This policy is written in compliance with

- a) **Australian Standard 8002-2003** 'Organisational Code of Conduct'.
- b) ***Standards and Guide to the Registration Standards and Other Requirements for Non-Government Schools in Western Australia, effective 1 July 2018:***
- c) ***Teacher registration requirements, in particular*** regarding the suspension or dismissal of teachers.

The Association may, from time to time, review and update this policy to take account of changes to the Association's operations and practices and to make sure it remains appropriate to the changing legal and school environment.

Policy

SCEA Employees must

- Conduct themselves, both personally and professionally in a manner that upholds the association values and reputation of the association and schools
- Comply with Board and school policies and procedures
- Behave in a Christ-like manner; respectfully, ethically, responsibly, showing love, care and respect

Procedures

Our Working Environment

SCEA is committed to providing a safe and satisfying working environment in which everyone is treated fairly, with respect and where employment decisions are based on merit. The Association has established various workplace standards so that it can meet these commitments.

The Association's key commitments to our employees are to:

- Provide clear and fair terms of employment
- Provide clean, healthy and safe working conditions

- Remunerate fairly
- Abide by our Equal Opportunity Policy, which aims to ensure equality and diversity for all present and potential employees.
- Encourage employees to develop skills and progress in their careers
- Abide by our zero tolerance of any sexual, physical or mental harassment or any other bullying of our employees.

The Association expects all employees to:

- Respect the authority of the Principal, SCEA Executive, CEO and Board.
- Act with care and diligence in fulfilling the requirements of their job
- Act in a professional and respectful manner
- Act in accordance with our values
- Not engage in any behaviour which involves harassing, humiliating, intimidating, bullying or discriminating against another person
- Provide a role model for students
- Promote the safety, welfare and well-being of students, their families and other employees
- Deliver high-quality services to students, including being well-prepared, on time to classes and duties.
- Take responsibility for and support official decisions
- Maintain excellence in standards of personal appearance and hygiene
- Comply with the letter and spirit of the law
- Maintain strict observance of Association and Association policies, rules and procedures including the reporting of improper or unethical behaviours (including any breach of this Code)
- Declare conflicts of interest and not let business dealings on behalf of the Association be influenced, or appear to be influenced, by personal or family interests
- Respect school ownership of all Association equipment, supplies, books, records and proprietary information, including manuals and any other material
- Not accept outside employment unless approved by the Association
- Not use information or authority derived from employment with the Association for personal gain
- Not speak to media personnel concerning association and/or school business without the permission of the school principal or SCEA officers
- Preserve confidential Association information including personal information of students, parents and other key stakeholders, plans and decisions, information about employees and any other information that is not public knowledge. Confidential information must not be used for personal benefit and must only be used in the ordinary course of business
- Comply with copyright laws in the preparation of teaching materials and distribution of these to students
- Report to management any possible violation of any law or regulations.

Relationships with students

It is expected that teaching staff will

- Differentiate the delivered curriculum, catering to all students' needs, and provide challenging, quality lessons; that enable every child to succeed;
- get to know each child as an individual and appreciate and value who they are, what they know and what they can do using a 'strength-based' approach
- provide a safe learning environment: by ensuring all students are treated as individuals with particular needs, whilst having the same rights and equitable access to learning and well-being opportunities and outcomes;
- have high expectations of all students, verbalising these as well as demonstrating them through your teaching practices;
- not take risks without due consideration of possible consequences;
- maintain a professional distance between themselves and students,
- provide students with privacy in certain circumstances;
- Educate students about bullying, alerting them to consequences and expected punishments if proven to be involved in bullying behaviour, and do not humiliate or provoke students to anger.
- be fair in all student interactions, following school policy and procedures when giving consequences for misdemeanours.
- maintain an attitude to continuous improvement in striving to be the best teacher you can be in your service to the association; working cooperatively with colleagues, sharing ideas and experiences in a collegiate manner.
- Be careful, circumspect and show caution in using behaviours towards students which may be perceived (rightly or wrongly) by staff, parents or community members as potentially sexual abuse or grooming. These include excessive or over-familiar touching of a student, personal communication or relations that are over-familiar (e.g. use of pet names, visiting students at their home or inviting them to yours), maneuvering to have one-on-one time with a student, insisting on physical affection such as hugging or wrestling), being alone with a student in a confined, enclosed space, driving students alone without written parental and principal//supervisor permission, giving gifts or special favours to a student, recognising or filling a student's need for affection and attention.

Our Business Dealings

We are all responsible for the Association maintaining the highest standards of ethical business conduct.

The Association's key commitments to our students and their parents are to:

- Act honestly and fairly in our relationships with students and their parents/caregivers
- Provide services to the standards that have been agreed
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of services we provide
- Not engage in bribery or corruption in relation to our students or their parents

The Association's key commitments to our suppliers and contractors are to:

- Act honestly and fairly in our relationships

- Not engage in bribery or corruption
- Encourage suppliers and contractors to abide by the principles of our Code of Conduct
- Endeavour to procure goods and services from those organisations demonstrating good ethical practice.

The Association expects all employees to:

- Disclose in writing to the Principal, CEO and Executive Director of Finance any interest that conflicts or may conflict with the business of SCEA and will avoid giving or receiving any remuneration, gifts, hospitality, preferential treatment or benefits which may influence, or appear to influence, the ability or capacity of the employee to exercise independent judgment on the business of the Association.
- Full-time Teachers will not engage in private external tutoring without the prior written consent of the Principal. This includes engaging in any other employment, undertaking, consultancy or activity either paid or unpaid during or outside of your normal working hours which directly competes with the business of the College/School, or may cause a Teacher to fail to properly discharge their Duties and responsibilities to the Association.

The Community and Environment

The Association aspires to support our community and the environment. Our goal is to provide lasting social, environmental and economic benefits to society. We strive towards the implementation and maintenance of management systems for sustainable development that drive continual improvement.

The SCEA's key commitments to our community and the environment include:

- Contributing to making the communities, in which the Association operates, better places to live and do business
- Being sensitive to local communities' cultural, social and economic needs
- Endeavouring to support ethical trade in our purchasing practices
- Protecting the environment in terms of the Association's use of resources and minimisation of waste and pollution.

A Child-Safe Environment; Our Duty of Care to Students

SCEA schools are committed to providing child-safe environments which safe-guard all students and are committed to promoting practices which provide for the safety, well-being and welfare of our children and young people. SCEA schools expect all school community members, including staff, volunteers, students, visitors and contractors, to share this commitment.

The Association, the Principal, CEO, Board and each employee owes a duty of care to take reasonable steps to protect students from any injury or physical or emotional harm that may be reasonably foreseen or safe-guarded against. This requires everyone not just to react to situations as they arise but to engage in appropriate risk management to reduce the risk of injury or harm.

The Association is committed to:

- Establishing and effectively implementing a comprehensive range of student care and child protection policies and procedures (Refer to our Child-Safe Policies)
- Making these policies and procedures readily available to all staff
- Providing training to staff with respect to student safety and child protection issues
- Regularly reviewing student safety policies and procedures to ensure that they remain fit for purpose
- Capturing data with respect to student injuries as well as child protection and safety incidents
- Implementing student safety and child protection control measures as appropriate

The Association expects all employees to:

- Promote the safety, welfare and well-being of students
- Abide by our student safety and child protection policies and procedures
- Be vigilant as to student safety and child protection issues
- Report to management any concerns arising with respect to student safety issues
- Not engage in inappropriate relationships with students, including sexual misconduct and/or abuse, or grooming, directed to or involving a student¹
- Not engage in any form of bullying or harassment or physical conduct that may cause harm or injury to a student
- Not engage in any form of discriminatory conduct with respect to a student
- Not engage in any form of child abuse, corporal punishment or other degrading punishment or activity² in all situations, and in particular regard to managing students' behaviour

¹ **Sexual abuse** towards a child, includes sexual behavior in circumstances where the child is threatened, coerced, exploited, bribed or the subject of violence, and where the child has less power or is less maturity (physical or of developmental maturity) than the other person involved. **Grooming** may constitute sexual abuse but not always; *Grooming occurs when someone builds an emotional connection with a child (<18 years of age) to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation.* Examples of behaviours indicative of grooming behaviours include: • inappropriate personal communication (verbal or on-line) • inappropriate extending a relationship outside of school hours • testing professional boundaries (e.g.. talking about sex with students) • developing a 'special relationship' with a student using bribery, coercion and exploiting low-esteem of the student, and persuading the student to keep it a secret.

² **Corporal punishment**, as defined in the *Guide to the Registration Standards and Other Requirements for Non-Government Schools* is 'any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light; typically involving hitting the child with the hand or with an implement; can also include, for example, forcing the child to stay in an uncomfortable position. It does not include the use of reasonable physical restraint to protect the child or others from harm.

- Not supply, consume or be affected by alcohol, tobacco or illicit drugs in any circumstances during hours of duty or when in contact with students
- Show discretion in communicating in any way with students currently enrolled at a SCEA school outside of school hours or context.
- Not be alone with any one student at any time unless in public view.
- Not engage with current students as 'friends' on social media sites
- Not transport students in their vehicles without the express written permission by parents and permission of the Principal.³
- Show due diligence in selecting media clips or other digital content to show their class: they should consider target audience of the material and age appropriateness of content⁴
- Report breaches of these expectations to a member of the school leadership team.

Implementation

Schools need to take particular care in the manner in which they implement the Code. If a strong and enforced Code is brought in overnight, school staff may believe that they are suddenly being scrutinised because the school leadership is suspicious that staff are doing the wrong thing.

A strong, well adopted and embedded Code of Conduct will come about if the school culture is one of supporting the students and each other, in an environment that is seen as constructive not destructive. Developing that school culture is the challenge for school leadership.

All SCEA Governors and Managers are responsible for promoting compliance with this Code of Conduct and monitoring its applicability and effectiveness. The CEO will report to the Board, so they can review the effectiveness of the Code of Conduct on an annual basis.

Awareness and Training

This Code of Conduct is available on SCEA's intranet site. It is also available to the Association community through the Association's public website. All employees are required to read and understand this Code of Conduct as part of their induction process.

Degrading punishment, as defined in the *Guide to the Registration Standards and Other Requirements for Non-Government Schools* is 'any punishment which is incompatible with respect for human dignity, including corporal punishment and non-physical punishment which belittles, humiliates, denigrates, scapegoats, threatens, scares or ridicules the child. Please see SCEA Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedure for a definition of **child abuse**.

³ See SCEA's *Private Vehicle Use Policy*

⁴ See SCEA's *Resources Selection Policy*

Ethical awareness will be maintained by regular training sessions, and where necessary, workshops in which relevant issues will be discussed.

Compliance with the Law

All employees must be familiar with the basic legal requirements that apply to their duties and responsibilities. The Association will provide resources to assist employees to become familiar with their legal obligations.

Reporting Unethical Behaviour

It is important that we all take responsibility for ensuring that the standards contained in this Code of Conduct are translated into action. This means that if a violation comes to your attention you are required to take some action, since turning a blind eye is a way of contributing to an unethical situation. Therefore, we each have a responsibility to report unethical behaviour.

Employees must bring the matter to the attention of the appropriate Manager/Head of Department. There may be occasions where it may be inappropriate to make a report to a Manager/Head of Department or there may be concerns about reprisals if an allegation is made. In these circumstances the matter should be reported to the Principal or if the matter involves the Principal to the CEO.

School Staff Handbooks

Schools are expected to regularly update their Staff Handbook to align with this policy

School Staff Induction

Schools must ensure that their staff induction processes include the information contained in this policy and procedures.

Breach of Code of Conduct

All alleged breaches of the Staff Code of conduct will be subject to scrutiny and if substantiated, the Association may warn, suspend or have employment of the staff member terminated.

Factors considered in making this decision, include:

1. The seriousness of the breach
2. The likelihood of the breach occurring again
3. Whether the employee has committed the breach more than once
4. The risk the breach poses to employees, students or any others, and whether the breach would be serious enough to warrant formal disciplinary action.

The Registration Standards and Other Requirements for Non-Government Schools Standards (2018) require

“School staff to report objectively observable behaviour which is not permitted by the Code, other than those subject to mandatory reporting obligations, to the Principal, a designated senior staff member or the chair of the school’s governing body.” (Std. 4.3(c))

If the CEO or a Principal has issued a formal warning to a staff member or terminated the employment of a staff member for a breach of the Code of Conduct, suspected to be grooming behaviour, a Critical Incident notification must be made by the Principal to the Director General of the Department of Education.

Teaching staff are alerted to the fact that any incident or circumstance that requires a school making a report to the Teacher Registration Board of WA is now a reportable Critical Incident to the Director General of the Department of Education.

For breaches of the Code of Conduct relating to inappropriate staff behaviours towards children and young people, the school must ensure that the best interests of the child are of paramount concern. This may result in the involvement of Child Protection and Family Support.

The Board Chair and/or CEO and/or Principal is responsible for ensuring that victimisation of those reporting or making allegations of breaches to the Code of Conduct, does not occur. Whistle-blowers are protected under the law. (see SCEA Whistle-blower Policy)

Contact Person

Chief Education Officer