
Code of Professional Conduct

Classification

Policy Number: HR201408-1.1 • **Version/Last Updated:** 1.1 December 2015 • **Audience:** SCS • **Commencement:** January 2015

This Code of Professional Conduct incorporates the Catholic Systemic Schools Code of Conduct for Professional Conduct in the Protection of Children and Young People. It was first published by the Department of Human Resources in 2014 and is updated on an annual basis.

The purpose of this Code of Conduct document is to promote a common understanding and consistency in expected standards of behaviour for employees. It may be applied to all people engaged to work in or provide services for Sydney Catholic Schools (SCS).

The Code of Conduct is not intended to be exhaustive but it does outline standards of conduct and behaviour that are expected of all staff within SCS.

Statement of Catholic Values and Ethos

The mission of the Catholic Church unequivocally commits SCS workplaces and every school community to foster the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of their employees and of every person to whom it provides a service.

Employees in Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Sydney uphold this mission by modelling positive relationships and acting in a manner that creates a safe and productive educational and pastoral environment. Those working in education are engaged in child-related employment, and are therefore subject to the obligations and duties imposed through applicable legislation, policies, procedures and standards.

Sydney Catholic systemic schools and SCS workplaces seek to create a caring, life-giving and faith-filled environment where Gospel teachings inspire and affirm the highest standard of ethical conduct. Employees have a privileged role of service that requires prudent judgment and positive workplace relationships. Catholic school communities actively support the development of a culture that does not condone improper conduct, violation of relationships through practices such as intimidation, bullying, harassment, breach of professional boundaries or abuse of power.

This document is grounded in the following principles for staff employed by SCS:

- acting with integrity and professionally in all relationships and situations;
- maintaining relationships that develop within the context of Gospel values;
- honouring the equality of women, men and children;
- promoting Catholic education, whether in the classroom, the office or the community, through the delivery of professional services;
- being consistently honest, trustworthy and accountable.

Purpose

The Code of Conduct is intended to

- clarify the parameters of appropriate and inappropriate conduct for employees of SCS;
- achieve a safe and supportive school environment for students, employees and the school's broader community;
- promote behaviours that are consistent with Catholic values and ethos.

Application

The Code of Conduct applies to all people engaged to work in or provide services to SCS. This includes:

- all paid employees of SCS, whether employed on a permanent, temporary or casual basis; and
- contractors, consultants and students on tertiary practicum placements.

By working in or with Sydney Catholic school or office, employees are required to be aware of and comply with this Code of Conduct.

There are similar expectations required of volunteers, and these are available in the separate Volunteer Code.

Obligations and Requirements of the Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct requires

- employees to take responsibility for their own conduct;
- employees to conduct themselves in a manner that is professional, co-operative and consistent with the Code of Conduct;
- principals/supervisors/managers and leaders to make employees well aware regarding the expectations contained within this Code of Conduct as part of their induction and ongoing employment.

There may be consequences for a breach of the Code of Conduct.

While contractors, students on tertiary practicum placements and volunteers are not usually subject to disciplinary action, conduct that would be assessed as being a breach of the Code of Conduct may result in their employment being terminated.

Expectations of Employees

An employee is expected to

- act in accordance with the Positive Workplace Relationships Policy and Guidelines;
- perform duties to the best of his/her ability and be accountable for his/her performance;
- follow reasonable instructions provided by their supervisor;
- comply with a lawful direction from relevant personnel, including direct managers (coordinators), executive, principal and SCS personnel;
- carry out duties in a professional and competent manner;
- participate in relevant personal and professional growth opportunities in order to continuously improve knowledge and skills;
- act in an honest and impartial manner at all times (including in situations where his/her personal view may be different);
- work collaboratively to ensure his/her safety as well as the safety of others;
- maintain his/her professional reputation, including in his/her personal/private life;

- be familiar with the legislation under which he/she is employed, as this may specify requirements with which he/she needs to comply;
- act in good faith by not making unfounded complaints, with malicious, frivolous or vexatious intent, against another person.

Expectations of Principals/Managers/Supervisors

A principal, manager or supervisor, in addition to the above responsibilities, is also expected to

- promote collaborative and collegial workplaces;
- exercise leadership by working with staff to implement performance and development processes that are consistent with the employee's conditions of employment;
- provide ongoing support and feedback to staff;
- establish systems within the employee's area of responsibility that support effective communication;
- consult with and involve staff in appropriate decision-making;
- inform employees of the Code of Conduct and all relevant policies, and make the documents accessible to them;
- take appropriate action if a breach of the Code of Conduct is found to have occurred.

Whilst different arrangements for engagement may apply for contractors, students on tertiary practicum placements and volunteers, these persons are still expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the principles underpinning the Code of Conduct.

Consequences of a Breach of the Code of Conduct

An employee holds a position of trust and is accountable for his/her actions. Consequences of inappropriate behaviour and breaches of the Code are described in various legislation, policies, procedures and standards applicable to the organisation. Relevant SCS policies, procedures and standards are available on the SCS intranet.

If an employee's actions are found to be inappropriate, unethical or appear to breach the standards of the Code of Conduct, his/her supervisor has a responsibility to address any possible breach as soon as he/she becomes aware of it. This includes behaviour that is

- dishonest;
- fraudulent;
- corrupt;
- illegal (including but not limited to drug offences, any use of violence or threat of violence or criminal damage against property);
- a breach of other legislation;
- unsafe;
- a gross mismanagement or a repeated breach of administrative procedures;
- conduct that may cause financial or non-financial loss, or be detrimental to the school or broader SCS interest.

An alleged breach of the Code of Conduct may require a report to be made by either a principal or employee internally. The alleged breach may also need to be referred to external authorities under relevant legislation.

If any employee becomes aware of a breach of the Code of Conduct by a colleague, he/she should report this to the principal/supervisor/manager. If an employee is unsure about whether

something needs to be reported, he/she may contact the union organiser or SCS Human Resources.

If an employee is concerned about an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct by his/her principal/supervisor/manager, this should be reported to the next level of management or as directed by the school authority or to the Director: Human Resources.

All reasonable steps will be taken to maintain the confidentiality of the person making the report.

No adverse action will be taken by SCS against a complainant who makes a report in good faith.

Persons making a report will be protected against reprisal, dismissal or discriminatory treatment as a result of making a report; making a false complaint may be regarded as serious misconduct and may result in disciplinary action.

Every alleged breach of the Code of Conduct will be investigated as appropriate and proportionate to the alleged conduct. In investigating an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct, objective and impartial processes will be followed. Generally, where the report concerns the actions of another person, that person would be informed of the complaint in writing, where appropriate. This is subject to considerations such as maintaining the anonymity of the person making the report, or advice from external parties such as Police or Community Services.

The appropriate action to be taken in each case will be determined by the facts and circumstances. The seriousness of the alleged breach will usually determine the level of investigation.

Appropriate action is determined by considering

- the nature and seriousness of the breach;
- prior breaches;
- when the prior breaches occurred;
- mitigating circumstances;
- assessment of risk; and
- whether the breach would be serious enough to warrant formal disciplinary action.

Outcomes may include one or more of the following:

- counselling;
- performance management;
- professional learning/development;
- increased supervision or monitoring;
- coaching or mentoring;
- specialist assessment;
- informal or formal disciplinary action;
- demotion;
- redeployment; and/or
- termination.

Reporting Concerns about Child Protection Matters

Working in education is child-related employment and is therefore subject to the relevant child protection legislation. Under this legislation, there are specific requirements for employees in reporting matters of concern, including the obligation to

- inform the employer if you are charged or convicted of an offence relevant to working in child-related employment, or have had any reportable allegation made against you;
- report to the employer any allegations or convictions of reportable conduct involving an employee, as required by the Head of Agency pursuant to Part 3A of the Ombudsman Act 1974 (NSW);
- report any information or concerns to the principal/manager/supervisor about inappropriate behaviour by another employee which involves a student or any other child or young person under the age of 18 years;
- fulfil their legal obligations to report to the principal/manager/supervisor about the risk of significant harm to a child, or to report possible criminal activity in accordance with the relevant legislation and SCS policy and practices;
- maintain the confidentiality of all parties concerned. In any matters where there is doubt as to the requirements of confidentiality, the employee should seek the advice of their principal/manager/supervisor or SCS Human Resources. The employee may also choose to seek appropriate advice from the union regarding the requirements of confidentiality.

Duty of Care

SCS has a duty of care to all staff, volunteers and contractors to provide a safe place of work. Employees have a legal and moral obligation to take reasonable care for their own safety and the safety of others, including colleagues, students and others who they come into contact with as part of their employment. Duty of care cannot be universally defined for all possible situations but requires a consideration of the context, the risks to students and others, and the assessment of reasonable steps that would be required in the circumstances.

These obligations will arise from the specific role and responsibilities of the employee and may include the following:

- providing supervision;
- ensuring that grounds, premises and equipment are safe;
- implementing strategies to prevent bullying and harassment;
- following procedures relating to safety, welfare and wellbeing;
- providing medical assistance (if competent to do so), or seeking assistance from a medically trained person to aid a person who is injured or becomes sick at school*;
- complying with legislative and other prescribed obligations under the Work Health & Safety legislation and regulations, including compliance with induction, emergency procedures and fire safety requirements; and/or
- complying with relevant child protection legislation, policies, procedures and standards, including reporting risk of significant harm to a child or young person.

**Note that the WHS Act extends the definition of workplace to include not just the school, but other locations and sites where staff and students attend for example, excursions, churches and TAFE.*

Professional Relationships between Employees and Students

Employees are expected to behave in ways that promote the health, safety and wellbeing of the students. All staff must understand and observe child protection legislation, policies, procedures and standards, including the maintenance of appropriate boundaries with children and young people. Employees must be aware of the policies around allegations of reportable conduct against employees.

Employees must be aware that their interactions with students are based on a trusting relationship arising from the nature of their role in the workplace, and that those relationships are open to scrutiny. This includes interactions with children and young people which occur outside of the workplace. Employees must not develop or allow to develop a relationship with any student which could be interpreted as being personal rather than professional.

Under no circumstances will a sexual relationship between an employee and a student be tolerated. Such relationships may be subject to the Crimes Act 1900 (NSW). This could include relationships developed with students during the course of their schooling and pursued after the students have left the school.

Where there are existing personal relationships such as family relationships or close friendships that involve an employee and a student, the employee needs to be transparent, prudent and mindful of any perceived conflict of interest. The employee must ensure that he/she does not breach the Code or any other relevant policy.

Employees are required to inform the principal/manager/supervisor in situations where such personal relationships with students exist. Employees must be mindful of any perceived conflict of interest if they are involved in educational decisions involving family members or close friends.

While not all employees are required to manage and supervise students, it is essential for all employees to understand and observe child protection policies.

Unacceptable behaviour includes but is not limited to

- communication without an appropriate professional reason authorised by the principal. Expectations for all staff are set out in the relevant SCS policies available on through the SCS Intranet;
- inviting students to join an employee's social networking site/page/group;
- accepting an invitation to join a student's social networking site/page/group;
- attending parties with or socialising with students;
- inviting students to the employee's home;
- attending the home of a student without an appropriate professional reason and the consent of the parent or guardian and principal;
- transporting a student in a vehicle except in the case of a prior existing personal relationship (i.e. the student and teacher are family members) where permission has been granted by the parents and the principal. However, an employee may transport a student in their own vehicle in an emergency situation, and if parent/guardian permission cannot be obtained, a second adult should accompany the staff member. In these circumstances, the principal must be informed as soon as possible before or after the student has been in the teacher's car;
- using sexual innuendo or inappropriate language or material with students;
- engaging students in conversations of an intimate personal nature including disclosing private information; and
- giving students gifts which may encourage them to think they have a special relationship with the employee.

An employee is obliged to be aware of the relevant legislation which prohibits

- sexual relations with a person under the age of legal consent;
- sexual relations between a teacher and a student;
- possession, production, displaying or transmission of child pornography.

Employees need to recognise the special position of trust and influence that a teacher or other school employee has with a student. This position of trust may continue after a student has left the school. It may also continue after the student has turned 18 years of age. Extreme care must be taken in any relationship between a teacher (or other school employee) and a former student, even one over 18 years of age.

Before entering into a personal, intimate or sexual relationship with a former student, a teacher or other school employee should consider many factors including

- the special relationship of trust and influence which is created between a teacher (or other school employee) and student, arising from the nature of the employee's role;
- the age and maturity of the former student;
- the time that has passed since the student had left the school;
- the expectation that teachers will not act contrary to Catholic values and ethos;
- the perceptions of the community of such a relationship;
- the potential impact on the reputation of the school, Catholic education and the teaching profession, because of the relationship.

A personal or sexual relationship with a former student entered into by a teacher or other SCS employee may be found to be sexual misconduct if it is established that the employee used his or her position to develop and maintain a personal or intimate relationship with the student before the student left the school.

Professional Relationships between Colleagues

Schools, Regional and Central Offices are professional workplaces which require professional relationships between employees, and between employees and the principal/manager/supervisor. Employees are expected to conduct themselves in ways which are conducive to positive workplace relationships.

Employees should refer to the Positive Working Relationships policy and guidelines for further information around professional relationships between colleagues (See Positive Workplace Relationships: Prevention of Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace - [Policy](#) and [Guidelines](#))

Conduct which is not consistent with professional relationships may include:

- gossip;
- inappropriate personal remarks to a colleague or other persons about a colleague;
- forming alliances/cliques which exclude other colleagues;
- offensive, hostile or discriminatory conduct and behaviour which may cause offence or isolation of a colleague;
- intentionally withholding information.

It is important to note that in the area of discrimination law at State and Federal level, the focus is on the impact on the person rather than the intention of the individual/s involved. Care must be taken to take into account sensitivities regarding race, gender, age etc.

Appropriate use of Electronic Information Communication Technology (ICT)

SCS provides ICT facilities for its students and employees for educational and/or administrative purposes.

The employer has the right to monitor and view any data used, stored or transmitted using the employer's facilities or devices. It is critical to remember that, by its nature, electronic communication is a fast and often informal way of communicating; however, once a document or image has been created, sent or saved, it exists forever.

Employees must comply with all relevant policies or procedures relating to the use of ICT including the Staff use of Social Media policy.

It is recommended that personal email accounts be kept separate from work email accounts.

When using SCS ICT, it is expected that each employee will

- exercise good judgment;
- use appropriate language and images;
- communicate in a manner consistent with his/her role and responsibilities;
- avoid being personal in electronic mail, blogs, wikis or social networking sites;
- not upload, download, send, circulate, display or respond to any of the following materials:
- sexually related or pornographic messages or material containing thoughts and feelings with overfamiliar or sexual connotations
- child pornography
- violent or hate-related messages or material
- threatening, defamatory, obscene or harassing messages or material
- racist or other offensive messages or material
- subversive or other messages or material related to illegal activities
- avoid using CAPITALISATION, **Bold**, Underline or **Coloured Text** in emailing as they may be perceived with negative meaning;
- report any situations where he/she becomes aware of the inappropriate use of ICT by another employee.

In certain circumstances, electronic files or communication can be accessed by the employer/police or other agencies for viewing or production in court.

If there are reasons for an employee to communicate with students or their families using ICT for reasons other than educational/school purposes, it is important to discuss this with his/her principal/supervisor/manager.

Appropriate use of Social Media

Employees must be familiar with the Staff use of Social Media Policy.

Certain social media sites are not appropriate for professional use.

Private use of social media should be managed by each employee in a way which protects his/her professional reputation as an employee of SCS.

Employees must not use social media in a manner which would bring their employer into disrepute. Identifying the employer or place of work in personal social media may increase the risk of bringing their employer into disrepute.

If an employee feels that they have become an online target of inappropriate communication from students or any member of the school community, he/she should alert the principal/manager/supervisor.

Please refer to the Positive Working Relationships [Policy](#) and [Guidelines](#) for further information about professional relationships between colleagues.

Managing Records and Data

All employees have an obligation to maintain appropriate records and data in relation to their professional practice. All records and data that are produced in the course of work are the intellectual property of SCS. Student and staff records are to be maintained in a manner that is consistent with obligations under the relevant privacy laws. This does not preclude the appropriate sharing of information that is pertinent to the appropriate care and education of students.

A record serves an essential administrative, legal and historical purpose. A record includes, but is not restricted to, class rolls, student assessment records, emails, electronic documents, digital images and audio recordings, correspondence, statements, records of interviews, files, forms, plans, drawings, notes, photographs and films.

Each employee has a responsibility to create and maintain full, accurate and honest records of their professional activities and decisions. He/she should create and maintain contemporaneous records of any disclosure, observations and discussions in relation to a breach of the Code of Conduct.

Employees should be mindful of the need to retain records securely and confidentially.

Employees should seek appropriate advice regarding the destruction of records.

Principals/supervisor/managers have a responsibility to ensure that the employees reporting to them comply with their records management obligations.

Intellectual Property

Work that is developed in the course of employment remains the intellectual property of SCS. Intellectual property includes, but is not limited to, music, written works, symbols, designs and programs. Work and programs developed within one school context remain the property of that school and SCS. Copies may be retained and used by the originating school even though the employee may re-use the materials at a new location.

SCS encourages staff to share freely the material that they develop in the course of work. Materials should include the National Education Access Licence for Schools (NEALS) logo as this supports the sharing of such materials. The NEALS logo allows staff in schools to copy any material that is normally available to them and marked with a NEALS logo without incurring the usual copyright fees that would apply. There is no restriction on the volume (number of copies), provided it is for an educational purpose only. The NEALS logo is available [here](#). Materials that are shared and appropriated should always have the original creator of the document acknowledged.

Managing Professional Reputation

Each employee has a right to participate in political and community activities, and pursue individual interests, provided they do not publicly conflict with their role as an employee of SCS.

Employees must not make disparaging comments about others or the organisation in any public forum, including social media.

Employees must advise their employer of any criminal charge against them relevant to their employment in child-related work to enable the employer to manage possible reputational and other risks to the organisation and individuals involved. Disclosures must also be made if an employee is the subject of any investigation which may ultimately lead to serious criminal charges.

Use of Medications, Alcohol, Tobacco and Illicit Substances

Employees are responsible for ensuring that their capacity to perform their duties is not impaired by the use of medications, tobacco, alcohol or drugs, and that the use of these substances does not put them, a student or any other person's health and safety at risk. An employee who is concerned about any colleague who may be affected by medication, alcohol or other drugs should consult his/her principal/manager/supervisor.

Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while an employee is 'on duty' can affect his/her ability to work safely and efficiently, especially when he/she has a responsibility to supervise or work in close proximity to students and the principal/manager/supervisor may seek the assistance of the Legal, Staff Wellbeing and Professional Services team at SCS if there are concerns in relation to employee substance abuse.

Prescribed Medications

If an employee is required to take medication (including prescription medication) which may impair his/her work performance, conduct or ability to exercise duty of care, he/she must notify their principal/manager/supervisor.

Alcohol, Tobacco and Illicit Substances

Employees must not take to school or consume at school, or at school-related activities or workplaces, any illegal drugs or restricted substances.

Employees must not consume tobacco on school premises.

Employees must not consume tobacco at any school-related activity where students are visibly present.

Employees must not present at work under the influence of alcohol. Employees must not consume alcohol during work hours or at school activities such as school retreats, excursions and other school activities when students are present. In the absence of a policy that totally prohibits the consumption of alcohol, schools should be mindful of the following when deciding if alcohol is appropriate at events:

- professional boundaries and safety of students and colleagues;
- modelling appropriate behaviour for students;
- work, health and safety;
- not driving under the influence of alcohol;
- reputation of the school;
- professional reputation;

If an employee is concerned about any person at work who may be affected by alcohol or drugs or may have engaged in the behaviours outlined above, he/she should consult the relevant principal/manager/supervisor.

Provision of medications, alcohol, drugs and tobacco to students

Employees must not purchase for, offer, supply, give or administer to students (including those over the age of 18) the following:

- illegal drugs;
- restricted substances;
- prescribed or non-prescribed medication (unless dealing with or administering medication in accordance with relevant policy);
- alcohol;
- tobacco.

Employees must not encourage or condone the use by students of

- illegal drugs;
- restricted substances;
- alcohol;
- tobacco.

Identifying and Managing Competing Interests

All employees have an obligation to SCS to ensure that their role as an employee is not impacted by any competing, conflicting or outside interest, be it personal, financial, relational, filial, or otherwise.

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest is a situation or set of circumstances that has the potential to influence the impartiality of a person because of the possibility of a real or perceived link between the person's self-interest and their professional interest. The private interest can include, but is not limited to, financial gain, desire for professional advancement, of the desire to assist family and friends.

Employees must not accept gifts that are excessive or that may give rise to an expectation or perception of bias, inducement or advancement for the gift-giver. Gifts that are received under such circumstances must be returned and the principal/manager/supervisor informed.

As an organisation which provides education services to children, it is expected that each employee will always

- inform the employer or supervisor of any conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, that arises in his/her workplace; and
- conduct himself/herself in the work practice in an objective and impartial manner, and be seen to do so.

Examples of competing interests include:

- a teacher referring their students to attend private tutoring sessions in which he/she or a relative or friend has a financial/business interest;
- an employee tutoring or coaching students from their school or workplace in return for payment;
- an employee running a local dance school with students from the school.

Secondary Employment

Full-time employees shall not engage in any other employment without the express written permission of the Executive Director of Catholic Schools or delegate. The Executive Director of Catholic Schools has delegated this function to the Director of Human Resources and to each principal. Approval must be obtained annually. For HSC Marking, seeking the approval of the principal is part of the application process and a separate approval need not be obtained.

Part-time employees who work in another Sydney Catholic school or with another employer on the days on which they are not working within the school must advise their principal/manager/supervisor of any such other employment.

Engaging in other employment may compromise the duties of an employee owed to SCS as the primary employer. For this reason, employees who engage in secondary employment must ensure that their duties to SCS are not adversely affected by their secondary employment, and that no conflict of interest arises.

Employees as Parents/Carers of School Students

From time to time, employees will interact with a school in their capacity as a parent or carer. It is expected that such interactions will be in the capacity of a parent only, and will be consistent with the professional standards and expectations of SCS employees. Please refer to clause *Managing Professional Reputation*.

Care must be taken to not interfere with the teaching and learning that is occurring. Any concerns need to be taken forward using the appropriate formal channels which have been put in place at the school and system level.

Discussions with other parents about matters other than those concerning their own children should not occur.

Employment of Family Members

For the purpose of this clause, "family member" includes all parties related by blood or marriage or in a personal or sexual relationship with an existing member of staff of SCS.

SCS permits the employment of more than one member of a family (including parents, siblings, spouse and children), whether or not the person concerned is employed in the same region, office or school. This approach does, however, require particular policy restrictions to ensure an equitable and fair recruitment process in all circumstances.

As in all appointments, the primary concern with the appointment of members of family of existing staff is that the applicants are the best candidates for the particular role in regard to work experiences, academic or administrative qualifications.

SCS staff and schools are welcome to refer relatives who are interested in working to available advertised positions in SCS; however, employment decisions cannot be made on the basis of personal relationships.

Any individual who makes an offer of employment to a family member without advertising the position or makes a significant change in conditions of employment for a family member assumes responsibility for any penalties, liabilities and expenses which may arise out of that action. This applies equally to casual, part time, full time, temporary and permanent roles.

SCS recognises that the appointment of two or more family members, especially within the same school, can generate pressures and prejudice among colleagues. For this reason SCS recognises that in most cases it will not be appropriate for two family members to be employed within one department or school.

To guard against such conflicts, the following practices should be observed:

- family members of existing SCS staff cannot be appointed or employed in any position, casual, contract, temporary or permanent, unless the position has been advertised and is open to internal and external applicants;
- no employee may be directly involved in the recruitment, selection or employment of a family member. Where a family member of an existing employee is an applicant for a position, a panel will be composed consisting of a chair and panelists who are not related to any applicant to ensure transparency and guard against perceptions of bias;
- a family member of an existing staff member cannot be employed in the same school, central or regional Office of SCS without the express written permission of the Director of Human Resources;
- to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest, no employee may participate directly or indirectly in any decisions involving a direct benefit to a member of their family including initial employment, promotion, salary/stipend/allowance/payment/ or any other financial reimbursement, classification, performance appraisals or other employment working conditions;
- where such a conflict may arise any decision to be made will be made by a more senior colleague (for example a Regional Consultant or Director) or referred to the Director of Human Resources.

Recruitment

Recruitment at SCS is to be conducted in accordance with appropriate SCS Recruitment and Selection Policies and Guidelines. Employees involved in a selection process need to disclose any prior knowledge or interest in any of the applicants. This is to ensure that any conflict of interest, which might unduly influence that person in the selection process, is carefully managed. Prior knowledge of an applicant does not necessarily amount to a conflict of interest.

Professional Dress

Employees are obliged to dress in a manner which reflects positively on SCS, maintains the professional reputation of the employee and is appropriate to their role and responsibilities in a Catholic workplace.

Employees are strongly encouraged to wear professional attire. The principal/supervisor/manager may exercise some discretion in the context of the role and the workplace. Sunsafe practices are required when staff are engaged in outdoor activity.

The following outlines the minimum standards for all employees of SCS. Particular schools, offices and departments may set their own professional dress requirements for staff above this minimum standard at their discretion.

All SCS Employees must dress in a manner at all times which is:

- neat, modest, and tidy;
- appropriate for an employee in a Catholic workplace;
- appropriate for an employee in child-related employment;
- professional;
- appropriate to their role and responsibilities;
- fulfilling of work, health and safety obligations particularly in relation to low-heeled appropriate footwear;

- inoffensive to other staff, students or the community and does not constitute any form of harassment or bullying;
- not casual attire including but not limited to tracksuits, singlets or t-shirts unless it forms part of school staff sports attire.

Note: *It is the expectation of SCS that body piercings (other than ear piercings) or tattoos would not be visible while in the presence of students.*

References

SCS only provides written Statements of Service. Any written reference that is provided must be on behalf of as an individual and not written on SCS or school letterhead.

Care should be taken by employees in providing accurate references for employment or other purposes, particularly when the only knowledge of the individual is in a workplace setting.

Verbal references will often be sought. It is important for each employee to provide accurate, truthful and professional information, using specific examples where possible, to illustrate their opinion.

Employees must be mindful of confidentiality and privacy when providing verbal information.

Confidentiality and Privacy

SCS collect and store confidential and personal information about students, their families and employees. Any misuse of confidential or personal information, whether intentional or reckless, is inconsistent with the school and SCS mission and ethos. It may harm individuals and the reputation and credibility of Sydney Catholic systemic schools. It may also be unlawful.

Therefore, employees must

- treat confidential and personal information about students, their families or other staff with respect;
- exercise caution and sound judgment in discussing other people's confidential and personal information;
- comply with relevant legislation and regulations regarding the collection, dissemination, use and security of all such information;
- use such information only for work-related purposes;
- communicate such information only to those who need the information in order to perform their role;
- sharing of confidential and personal information with external persons or agencies may only occur within the established guidelines for such communication;
- in accordance with any relevant legislation relating to the provision of such information.