



Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers and SNAs

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Revision History

Date	Revision No	Change	Reference Section
7/3/2024	New Policy	_____	

Reviewed by:

Signed by:

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The Code applies to

All Teachers and SNAs employed by St Paul's Special School.



Index	pg. 3
Glossary	pg. 4
Introduction	pg. 5
Standards of care, teaching, knowledge, skills, competence and conduct	pg. 7
Responsibilities	pg. 11
Disciplinary procedures for Teachers and SNAs	pg.12



Glossary

Pupil/Student

The term “pupil/student” denotes learners at E1, primary and post- primary levels.

Parent

The term “parent” denotes parents and legal guardians.

Teachers and SNAs

The term “Teachers and SNAs” denotes Teachers and SNAs employed in St Paul’s Special School.

Poor Professional Performance

A failure by the employed Teachers and SNAs to meet the standards of competence (whether in knowledge, skill or the application of knowledge and skill or both) that can be reasonably expected of Teachers and SNAs

Professional Misconduct

Disgraceful or dishonourable conduct either in the course of the Teacher’s/SNA’s profession as would bring the profession of teaching or the good name of St Paul’s Special school into disrepute.



Introduction

This Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers and SNAs reiterates and makes explicit the values and standards that have long been experienced by pupils/students during their educational experiences in St Paul's Special School.

Purpose of the Code

The Code of Conduct for Teachers and SNAs applies to all Teachers and SNAs. Its purpose is twofold:

1. It serves as a guiding compass as Teachers and SNAs seek to steer an ethical and respectful course through their career and to uphold the honour and dignity of the good name of St Paul's Special School.
2. It may be used by the parental body and the wider public to inform their understanding and expectations of the student's experience in St Paul's Special School.

It should be noted that it is the responsibility of each adult to ensure that his/ her behaviour is appropriate at all times.

Structure of the Code

Having regard to the two purposes set out above, the Code begins by setting out the ethical foundation for Teachers and SNAs. This is encapsulated in the values of **Respect, Care, Integrity and Trust** that are reflected throughout this Code. These core values underpin the work of the Teachers and SNAs in the practice of his or her profession.

The Code then sets out the standards which are central to the practice of teaching/caring and expected of Teachers and SNAs. The standards identify Teachers and SNAs' professional responsibilities are framed as statements under six separate headings: **values and relationships; integrity; conduct; practice; professional development; collegiality and collaboration.**



RESPECT

Teachers and SNAs uphold human dignity and promote equality and emotional and cognitive development. In their professional practice, Teachers and SNAs demonstrate respect for spiritual and cultural values, diversity, social justice, freedom, democracy and the environment.

CARE

Teachers and SNAs practice is motivated by the best interests of the pupils/students entrusted to their care. Teachers and SNAs show this through positive influence, professional judgement and empathy in practice.

INTEGRITY

Honesty, reliability and moral action are embodied in integrity. Teachers and SNAs exercise integrity through their professional commitments, responsibilities and actions.

TRUST

Teachers and SNAs' relationships with pupils/students, colleagues, parents, school management and the public are based on trust. Trust embodies fairness, openness and honesty.



Standards of teaching, knowledge, care skills, competence and conduct

This code sets out the following standards that apply to all Teachers/SNA employed in St Paul's Special School regardless of their position.

1. Professional Values and Relationships

Teachers and SNAs should:

- 1.1 be caring, fair and committed to the best interests of the pupils/students entrusted to their care, and seek to motivate, inspire and celebrate effort and success
- 1.2 acknowledge and respect the uniqueness, individuality and specific needs of pupils/students and promote their holistic development
- 1.3 be committed to equality and inclusion and to respecting and accommodating diversity including those differences arising from gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, ethnicity, membership of the Traveller community and socio-economic status, and any further grounds as may be referenced in equality legislation in the future
- 1.4 seek to develop positive relationships with pupils/students, colleagues, parents, school management and others in the school community, that are characterised by professional integrity and judgement
- 1.5 work to establish and maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect in their schools
- 1.6 speak/communicate in a socially acceptable manner with fellow staff members and students alike. Swearing and obscenity has no place in St Paul's Special School and must not be evident whilst Teachers and SNAs engage in their professional duties.



2. Professional Integrity

Teachers and SNAs should:

- 2.1 act with honesty and integrity in all aspects of their work
- 2.2 respect the privacy of others and the confidentiality of information gained in the course of professional practice, unless a legal imperative requires disclosure or there is a legitimate concern for the wellbeing of an individual
- 2.3 represent themselves, their professional status, qualifications and experience honestly
- 2.4 Teachers must use their name/names as set out in the Register of Teachers, in the course of their professional duties
- 2.5 avoid conflict between their professional work and private interests which could reasonably be deemed to impact negatively on pupils/students.

3. Professional Conduct

Teachers and SNAs should:

- 3.1 uphold the reputation and standing of St Paul's Special School
- 3.2 take all reasonable steps in relation to the care of pupils/students under their supervision, so as to ensure their safety and welfare
- 3.3 work within the framework of relevant legislation and regulations
- 3.4 comply with agreed national and school policies, procedures and guidelines which aim to promote pupil/student education and welfare and child protection
- 3.5 report, where appropriate, incidents or matters which impact on pupil/student welfare
- 3.6 communicate effectively with pupils/students, colleagues, parents, school management and others in the school community in a manner that is professional, collaborative and supportive, and based on trust and respect



- 3.7 ensure that any communication with pupils/ students, colleagues, parents, school management and others is appropriate, including communication via electronic media, such as e-mail, texting, seesaw and social networking sites
- 3.8 ensure that they do not knowingly access, download or otherwise have in their possession while engaged in school activities, inappropriate materials/images in electronic or other format
- 3.9 ensure that they do not knowingly access, download or otherwise have in their possession, illicit materials/images in electronic or other format
- 3.10 ensure that they do not practise while under the influence of any substance which impairs their fitness to work.

4. Professional Practice

Teachers and SNAs should:

- 4.1 maintain high standards of practice in relation to pupil/student care, learning, planning, monitoring, assessing, reporting and providing feedback, as appropriate
- 4.2 apply their knowledge and experience in facilitating pupils'/students' holistic development
- 4.3 plan and communicate clear, challenging and achievable expectations for pupils/students
- 4.4 create an environment where pupils/students can become active agents in the learning process and develop lifelong learning skills
- 4.5 develop teaching, learning and assessment strategies that support differentiated learning in a way that respects the dignity of all pupils/ students
- 4.6 inform their professional judgement and practice by engaging with, and reflecting on, pupil/student development, learning theory, pedagogy, curriculum development, ethical practice, educational policy and legislation
- 4.7 in a context of mutual respect, be open and responsive to constructive feedback regarding their practice and, if necessary, seek appropriate support, advice and guidance
- 4.8 act in the best interest of pupils/students.



5. Professional Development

Teachers and SNAs should:

- 5.1 take personal responsibility for sustaining and improving the quality of their professional practice by:
- actively maintaining their professional knowledge and understanding to ensure it is current
 - reflecting on and critically evaluating their professional practice, in light of their professional knowledge base
 - availing of opportunities for career-long professional development.

6. Professional Collegiality and Collaboration

Teachers and SNAs should:

- 6.1 work with teaching colleagues and student Teachers and SNAs in the interests of sharing, developing and supporting good practice and maintaining the highest quality of educational experiences for pupils/students
- 6.2 work in a collaborative manner with pupils/students, parents/guardians, school management, other members of staff, relevant professionals and the wider school community, as appropriate, in seeking to effectively meet the needs of pupils/students
- 6.3 cooperate with the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills and other statutory and public non-statutory educational and support services, as appropriate
- 6.4 engage with the planning, implementation and evaluation of curriculum at classroom and school level.



Responsibilities

Whilst Teachers and SNAs have differing roles and responsibilities, in an atmosphere of trust, everyone must carry out their duties with care, respect and integrity. Teachers must manage their classroom environment in such a manner that ensures that the core values of **Respect, Care, Integrity** and **Trust** are central to all activities. SNAs must ensure that whilst carrying out their duties they do so in a manner that reflects the core values of **Respect, Care, Integrity** and **Trust**.

Staff should be aware that a failure to adhere to the core values of this Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action including but not limited to dismissal. Staff should familiarize themselves with the appropriate complaint procedure for their role as detailed in the following section.



Disciplinary procedures for Teachers and SNAs

A) Teachers

Circular 0049/2018 - Teachers: Revised Procedures for Suspension and Dismissal of Teachers and Principals

<https://www.gov.ie/en/circular/dc613e28b1e846ee8a0229db45214b53/>

B) SNAs

Circular 0072/2011 - GRIEVANCE AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES RELATING TO SPECIAL NEEDS ASSISTANTS (SNAs)

<https://circulars.gov.ie/pdf/circular/education/2011/72.pdf>