



## Staff and Student Professional Boundaries

Please refer to [Protective Practices for Staff in their interactions with children and young people: Guidance for staff in managing professional boundaries.](#)

Good Shepherd Lutheran School uses these Guidelines as its Staff and Students Professional Boundaries Policy. They have been developed through collaboration between the Department for Education, Catholic Education SA and the Association of Independent Schools SA. They provide clear advice on how to build positive, caring and respectful relationships with children and young people in education and care settings. Staff who do not follow these Guidelines may be subject to disciplinary action and/or an adverse finding about their suitability and fitness to work in an education setting.

In addition to the Guidelines the following are included in Good Shepherd Lutheran School's policy.

### Fair Learning Opportunities

The main focus of teaching is effective student learning and as such teachers are expected to support their students with their professional expertise so as to offer them the best education in their individual circumstances. The quality of teaching and learning between teachers and students characterises their relationship.

Teachers should demonstrate their commitment to student learning by:

- maintaining a safe and challenging learning environment that promotes mutual respect
- recognising and developing each student's abilities, skills and talents by catering to their individual abilities and respecting their individual differences
- encouraging students to develop and reflect on their own values
- interacting with students without bias
- not engaging in preferential treatment
- not discriminating against any student on the basis of race, sex, sexuality, disability or religious or political conviction
- always making decisions in students' best interests.

### Off-Campus Excursions and Camps

During off-campus excursions or camps, the same physical contact guidelines apply as well as the following:

- checking of sleeping arrangements or supervising of students changing should be done, where possible, with another staff member present and always in a manner that respects students' privacy and personal space
- always knock and advise of presence prior to entering a bedroom or dormitory
- ensure that while in a bedroom or dormitory a strict staff/student relationship is upheld and that inappropriate behaviour, such as sitting on a student's bed, is not undertaken.

### Managing Conflicts of Interest

Where personal relationships with students such as family relationships and close friendship networks exist, questions of conflicts of interest may arise.

This may be more prevalent in close or rural communities where professional boundaries may be tested due to the nature and size of the community. In these circumstances, staff need to be far more diligent in developing and maintaining these boundaries.

Where a staff member feels that a conflict of interest may exist, they should notify the Principal, or the Chair of the Council if the conflict involves the Principal, and arrangements should be implemented to avoid the conflict situation if possible. For example, the teaching of students by a staff member with a conflict should be avoided.



Any significant decisions relating to these students in the Learning Community (such as the appointment of classes or selection in sports teams) should be referred to another staff member and endorsed by a supervisor.

## **Disclosure of Staff/Student Interactions**

It is Good Shepherd Lutheran School's policy that all staff are encouraged to declare any interactions with students outside school hours. These interactions may include instances where the staff member is:

- related to the student
- friends with the student's parents or family
- given parental consent to interact with the student for academic purposes outside school hours and has notified the Learning Community.

## **Staff Responsibilities**

All staff are to:

- follow the guidelines as set out in this Policy
- immediately report any conflicts of interest
- remove themselves from decision making where a conflict has been identified.

Where a staff member breaches this policy Good Shepherd Lutheran School may take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, dismissal (where appropriate).

## **Implementation**

These guidelines are implemented through a combination of:

- staff training and development in relation to professional conduct
- student and parent/guardian education and information
- effective management of teachers engaging in inappropriate relationships with students
- effective management of conflicts of interest
- effective communication and incident notification procedures
- effective record keeping procedures
- initiation of corrective actions where necessary.