



Code of Conduct: Staff

Lambert School is committed to a workplace that provides dignity and respect. Our daily interaction with others affects their wellbeing and reflects on the school's reputation. Therefore, all employees and volunteers are expected to be approachable, courteous and prompt in dealing with other people, including students, other employees (irrespective of their position or seniority) and members of the community. In dealing with other people, they should be able to accommodate and tolerate different opinions and perspectives and sort out disagreements by rational discussion. All staff are to follow the [National Principles for Child -Safe Organisations](#) and the [Child Youth Safe Organisations Framework](#) and [Tasmanian State Legislation](#).

Rude or insulting behaviour, including verbal and non-verbal aggression, abusive, threatening or derogatory language and physical abuse or intimidation towards other employees is unacceptable. Information and communication technologies, such as email, mobile phones, text or instant messaging and websites to engage in behaviour that could reasonably be considered to have a negative impact on another person should not be used to cause harm, or make other employees feel unsafe.

For the purposes of this policy, the term 'staff' refers to all teaching and non-teaching employees and volunteers engaged at Lambert School.

Communication of this policy

The staff code of conduct is to be provided to staff before commencing work at Lambert School. It is also to be provided to staff at the beginning of each year to remind staff of school regulations and legal requirements. This policy is also to be provided to staff within 14 days of revision to this policy. The policy will be provided digitally, or in hard copy by request. The policy is also available through the [policy section](#) on the school's website.

Upon induction or the receipt of a revised code of conduct, staff are to sign that they have received and understand the document. This signed document is then to be returned to Lambert School.

Duty of Care

Duty of care is essentially a duty to do everything reasonably practicable to protect others from foreseeable harm. While this applies in all aspects of a staff member's work, it is particularly important for those staff members who

have interaction with and responsibility for students. Teachers have a particular duty of care towards students and to have a relationship based on trust. All students have a basic and expected right to a physical and emotional environment that is free from unreasonable risk of harm. Harm includes any significant detrimental effect to the student's physical, psychological or emotional well-being.

Amongst other things, harm can be caused by:

- physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect
- sexual abuse or exploitation
- domestic or family violence
- student bullying
- one's own actions.
- Psychological harm

Staff members must not behave in ways that a reasonable person would consider to be offensive, intimidating, humiliating or threatening. Such conduct might include, but not be restricted to, targeting students with unfair and continued criticism; making excessive or unreasonable demands of others; and making any form, either oral or written (including electronic communication), of derogatory comments to students, parents, work colleagues or the general public. Should such unacceptable behaviour occur, then all recipients of such behaviour have recourse to the processes contained within the school's Complaints Policy.

Physical conduct with students

Staff members must not engage in physical conduct with students. This includes conduct that could physically harm a student and this should be noted especially in cases involving disciplinary action. Corporal punishment is prohibited. There may be occasions, however, where physical intervention is appropriate in order to protect students, self, and others. In these circumstances this would be deemed reasonable action providing that the physical intervention is to prevent harm or further harm to students and that the staff member seeks to avoid inflicting physical harm where possible. The physical intervention would need to be proportionate to the circumstances.

Staff are prohibited to engage in physical conduct that could be construed as intimate or unduly affectionate. Such behaviours may be indicative of grooming or sexual abuse.

Staff are prohibited from beginning a sexual or inappropriate relationship with a student for at least two years after the student has left the school. This prohibition is to prevent grooming of students and is regardless of whether that former student is regarded in law as an adult or has reached the age of consent. If a staff member is found to be inappropriate in such a way, their employment at the school will be terminated and the behaviour will be

reported to the Police and the Teacher's Registration Board. Any concerning behaviours, included suspected grooming or inappropriate physical or social contact will also be reported.

Professional relationships between employees and students

Physical punishment must not be imposed on a student in the course of professional duties. A relationship with any student that is, or that can be misinterpreted as having a personal rather than a professional interest in a student should never be developed. A romantic or sexual relationship with any student (including any adult student) that you are responsible for teaching, tutoring, advising, assessing, or for whom you provide pastoral or welfare support is strictly forbidden and to do so raises serious questions of conflict of interests, trust, confidence, dependency, and of equality of treatment. Such relationships may also have a negative impact on the teaching and learning environment for other students and colleagues. Staff are not to enter any form of relationship with a past student for two years after they leave the school, and certainly not with any individual under the age of consent and to do so is a serious criminal offence.

All students have a right to a safe physical and emotional environment. A teacher is expected to always behave in ways that promote the safety, welfare and well-being of children and young people, actively seeking to prevent harm to children and young people, and to support those who have been harmed. While not all employees are required to manage and supervise students, it is important for all employees to understand and observe child protection policies.

To properly safeguard students, staff must be aware of personal and professional boundaries concerning them. Some boundaries may seem innocent and be crossed by a well-meaning individual, however these behaviours could be considered low-level grooming and should be avoided. These behaviours could include an over-sharing of personal information between a staff member and a student, physical affection, over-friendliness, after-hours contact with students, or being alone with a student.

Other behaviours that may be indicative of grooming include giving a student special attention or gifts, inappropriate touching, isolating the student from their family and friends, use of coercion and manipulation, encouraging of contact over private online platforms, the keeping of secrets with the student, provision of alcohol or tobacco products, providing the student with illicit substances, and discussion of sexual and adult topics. Staff members of Lambert school are strictly prohibited from such behaviours, and are to immediately report any such behaviours to the Principal and the appropriate authorities, including the Tasmanian Police, The Teacher's Registration Board, and Strong Families Safe Kids. More information on grooming can be found on the [Child Safety Website](#).

A staff member who displays behaviour that could be construed as well-meaning but crosses professional boundaries will be cautioned by school leadership before it becomes a significant problem. School leadership will

work with the staff member to understand the boundary and why it should not be crossed. School leadership may offer strategies to the staff member to avoid repeat situations, such as methods for shutting down conversations with students that are inappropriate. If a staff member repeatedly crosses professional boundaries, they may be subject to disciplinary action, or termination of contract. However, if a staff member is suspected of having formed an inappropriate relationship with a minor, including a suspected romantic or sexual relationship, or they are suspected of grooming a student, their employment at the school will be suspended while the matter is investigated, and the matter will be reported to the appropriate authorities. If the staff member is found to have acted inappropriately, their employment will be terminated and the behaviour will be reported to the Police and the Teacher's Registration Board.

Appropriate use of electronic communication and social networking sites

Lambert School provides electronic communication facilities for its students and employees for educational or administrative purposes. It reserves the right to monitor and view any data stored or transmitted using these facilities. By its nature, electronic communication is a fast and informal way of communicating. When sending a digital communication, including a document or an image, it must be considered as permanent and irrevocable, as even if the communication can be unsent there is no guarantee the communication has not been disseminated further.

You must, therefore, comply with the school's ICT policy and:

- Exercise good judgment when using electronic messaging, following the principles of ethical behaviour.
- Use appropriate language in electronic messaging
- Be aware that if an issue addressed in an email becomes the subject of a legal dispute, then those emails would be discoverable: that is, the court and all parties to the dispute would be entitled to see them
- Not send messages that are harassing, defamatory, threatening
- Not invite students into your personal social network site until they are 21 years old.
- Remember transmission, storage, promotion or display of offensive, defamatory, or harassing material is strictly forbidden
- Report any situations where you become aware of the inappropriate use of electronic communication and social networking sites.

- Staff members are not to take photos of students for their own use, and should not store photos of students on their personal devices.

Use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and vapes

Lambert School is committed to providing a productive, safe and healthy workplace. You are responsible for ensuring your capacity to perform your duties is not impaired by the use of alcohol or drugs, and that the use of such substances does not put at risk you or any other person's health and safety. Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol while you are at work could affect your ability to work safely and efficiently, especially when you have a responsibility to supervise students or work in close proximity to them. You must not take drugs or alcohol to a school or consume it during school hours or at any school function at any time school students are present, including those events conducted outside school premises.

As an employee, you must:

- Not attend work under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or non-prescribed and/or restricted substances
- Not endanger your own safety or the safety of any other person in the workplace by consuming alcohol, illegal drugs or non-prescribed and/or restricted substances
- Notify the principal if you are aware that your work performance or conduct could be adversely affected as a result of the effect of a prescribed drug
- Take action to resolve any alcohol or other drug-related problems that you have
- Consult with the principal if you are concerned about working with other employees who may be affected by drugs or alcohol.
- Give students or other employees illegal drugs or restricted substances, or encourage or condone their use
- Have illegal drugs in your possession while at work. Any illegal drugs found on school property or in the possession of any person on school property will be reported to the police.
- You must not purchase alcohol for, or give alcohol to, any school student or other person under the age of 18 years
- You must not encourage or condone the use of alcohol by students of any age during educational activities
- You must not smoke or permit smoking (including vapes) in any school buildings, enclosed area or within 10m of school grounds. This includes all buildings, gardens, sports fields, cars and car parks.
- You must not purchase tobacco, tobacco products, or vape products for any school student, or give them tobacco, tobacco products, or vape products.

Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest may exist when an employee's private interests have the potential to interfere with the proper performance of their work duties. A potential or actual conflict of interest must be identified, declared and avoided or resolved in favour of the public interest and should not be undertaken without the express permission of the

Principal. It is understood that situations may occur where employees are working with family members or with persons with whom they develop close personal relationships. Where such relationships exist between employees or with prospective employees, then the potential for conflict of interest should be noted.

As a general principle, all employees who participate in procedures for selection, granting of tenure, performance appraisal, termination or transfer of any person who is a family member or with whom they have, or have had, a close personal relationship should declare any potential conflict of interest. However, the existence of a close personal or family relationship should not constitute a bar to the employment, promotion, granting of tenure or transfer of any individual.

In many cases only individual employees themselves will be aware of the potential for conflict. The onus therefore is on the individual in these cases to notify the principal of this potential.

Privacy and confidentiality

As an employee of Lambert School you may be entrusted with access to information of a sensitive nature to enable you to carry out your duties. Employees must ensure that confidential, private and sensitive information is handled carefully, and that the integrity of such information is maintained at all times in compliance with relevant privacy legislation. An employee must not, after leaving employment with the school, use confidential information obtained during the course of his / her employment for other work or non-work-related purposes.

Procedure for dealing with allegations and apparent breaches of the code of conduct

Potential breaches of the Code of Conduct, including apparent breaches and allegations, will be dealt with in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice. Potential breaches may be addressed in the context of the established grievance policies. In cases of alleged serious misconduct, employees should be aware that the relevant governing body may apply sanctions if this Code of Conduct is breached. Depending on the nature of the breach, various sanctions such as the following may be applied:

- appropriate warnings
- counselling
- suspension
- dismissal
- laying of criminal charges or civil action

Complaints

When an incident occurs that a staff member feels the need to make an informal complaint, staff members are encouraged to settle disputes in a respectful manner with the individual concerned, or inform a member of senior staff. If this is not possible, their issue is with senior management, or if they would like to make a formal complaint, they can find the complaint register [here](#), on the school's website, or as a QR code in the office and kitchen. You are welcome to leave your complaint anonymously, however this may impact the effectiveness of the school's response. If your complaint is against the Principal, it will be forwarded to the Lambert School Board.

Unfounded complaints should not be made with malicious, frivolous or vexatious intent against another employee or students. Employees who work with students have a special responsibility in presenting themselves as appropriate role models for those students. Modelling effective leadership and respect in your interactions with students can have a profoundly positive influence on a student's personal and social development. Similarly, it is important to treat colleagues with respect.

Sources

[National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)

[Youth Safe Organisations Framework](#)

[Child Safety Website](#)