



Cranbury College Professional Boundaries Protocol 2011

Overview

This document is based on national Guidance for safe working practice for the protection of children and staff in education settings.

At Cranbury College we seek to provide a safe and supportive environment, which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for children and young people in our care. It is recognized that achieving these aims is not always straightforward. Much relies on pupil and staff interactions where tensions and misunderstandings can occur. It is here that staff behaviors can give rise to allegations being made against them. Allegations may be genuine, malicious or misplaced. They may arise from differing perceptions of the same event, but when they occur, they are inevitably distressing and difficult for all concerned. In meeting our duty of care towards pupils and staff we must raise awareness of illegal, unsafe and unwise behavior. Illegal and unsafe behaviour will not be tolerated and where appropriate, legal or disciplinary action is likely to follow.

Principles that guide the protocol

All adults working in Cranbury College should know the name of the College's Designated teacher for child protection, and know and follow the child protection policy and procedures. All staff have a duty to report any child protection concerns to the designated person for child protection. Staff must also work in good faith with Team-Teach training at all times.

This document provides practical guidance about which behaviours constitute safe practice and which behaviours should be avoided to help staff establish the safest possible learning and working environments. The aims are to safeguard young people and reduce the risk of staff being falsely accused of Improper or unprofessional conduct.

Areas of Guidance

- Exercise of Professional Judgement
- Power and positions of trust
- Information sharing
- Propriety and behaviour
- Dress and appearance
- Gifts
- Infatuations
- Social contact
- Pupils in distress
- Physical intervention
- Sexual contact with children
- One to one situation and lone teaching
- Transporting students
- Curriculum

Exercise of Professional Judgement

This guidance cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for staff. It does highlight however, behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate or Inadvisable. There will be occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or take action in the best interests of the child or young person which could Contravene this guidance or where no guidance exists Individuals are expected to make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare

Of the children in their charge and in so doing, will be seen to be acting reasonably.

This means that where no specific guidance exists staff should:

- Act in a way where the welfare of the child is paramount (Children Act 1989).
- Be responsible for your own actions and behaviour and avoid any conduct, which would lead any reasonable person to question your motivation and intentions.
- Be seen to work in an open and transparent way.
- Discuss and/or take advice promptly from your line manager or another senior member of staff over any incident, which may give rise to concern.
- Record any such incident and decisions made/further actions agreed, in writing and verbally with senior managers.
- Always discuss any misunderstanding, accidents or threats with a senior manager

Power and Positions of Trust

As a result of our knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in our roles, all adults working with children and young people in education settings are in positions of trust

in relation to the young people in their care. A relationship between a member of staff and a pupil cannot be a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people and staff have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification. Wherever possible, staff should avoid behaviour, which might be misinterpreted by others, and report and record any incident with this potential.

This means that staff should not:

- Use their position to gain access to information for their own advantage and/or a child's or family's detriment
- Use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine pupils
- Use their status and standing to form or promote relationships with children, which are of a sexual nature.
- Engage in activities with the child that are discouraged through Cranbury College policy e.g. Smoking with pupils.

Information Sharing

All staff must make themselves familiar with RBC's information sharing and data protection Policy and guidance

Members of Cranbury College staff may have access to confidential information about pupils in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities. In some circumstances staff may be given additional highly sensitive or private information. They should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil or her/his family for their own, or others' advantage. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the pupil. Confidential information about a child or young person should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need to know basis in line with information sharing policy.

There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a child, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such Cases, individuals have a duty to pass information on without delay, to the designated child protection officer.

This means that staff:

- Are expected to treat information they receive about children and young people in a discreet and confidential manner. This includes conversations between staff members
- In any doubt about sharing information they hold or which has been requested of them should seek advice from a senior member of staff
- Need to be cautious when passing information to others about a child/young person and closely follow RBC information sharing policy.

Propriety and Behaviour

All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children and young people. They should adopt high

Standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their peers, pupils and the public in general.

This means that staff should not:

- Behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their Suitability to work with children or act as a role model.
- Engage in behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, that would compromise her/his position within the work setting.
- Make social contact with a pupil (including email, social network, text messages, phone or letter)
- Give students personal telephone, mobile, social network, e-mail or address contact details. (Cranbury College mobile phones and the Cranbury College Virtual learning environment should be the only

- methods of communication where contact outside of work hours or offices is made IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES.)
- Discuss their own relationships and or sexual preferences with, or in the presence of, pupils
 - Discuss a pupil's sexual relationships in inappropriate settings or contexts
 - Make (or encourage others to make) unprofessional personal comments about others, which scapegoat, demean or humiliate, or might be interpreted as such.

Dress and Appearance

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However staff should consider the manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their Professional role which may be different to that adopted in their personal life. Staff should ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they Undertake. Those who dress or appear in a manner, which could be considered as inappropriate, could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegation.

This means that staff should wear clothing which:

- Promotes a positive and professional image
 - Is appropriate to their role
 - Is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative
 - Does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding
 - Is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans
 - Is not considered to be discriminatory.
- Cranbury College ask that Staff follow the dress code outlined in our staff handbook

Gifts

Cranbury College Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. There are occasions when children or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff e.g. at Christmas or as a thank-you and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of a personal or intimate nature. Similarly, gifts outside centre wide incentive schemes should not be given to pupils

This means that staff should:

- Ensure that gifts received or given in situations which may be misconstrued are declared
- Refuse gifts of an intimate or personal nature.
- Discourage students from producing items for staff personal use.
- Only give gifts to an individual young person as part of a centre/ service agreed reward system

Infatuations

Staff need to be aware that it is not uncommon for pupils to be strongly attracted to a member of staff and/or develop a heterosexual or homosexual infatuation. All situations should be responded to sensitively to maintain the dignity of all concerned, however, it is essential that senior staff are informed of the situation and that another member of staff is present if issues are discussed with the child. Staff should also be aware that such circumstances always carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against staff. A member of staff, who becomes aware that a pupil may be infatuated with himself or herself or a colleague, should discuss this at the earliest opportunity with a senior colleague so that appropriate action can be taken.

This means that staff should:

- Report any indications in writing (verbal, written or physical) that suggest a pupil may be infatuated with a member of staff.
- Confront any issues with the child with at least one other staff member present

Social Contact

Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. Even if a young person seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise her/his professional judgment in making a response and be aware that such social contact could be misconstrued.

This means that staff should:

- Always approve any planned social contact with senior colleagues, for example when it is part of a reward scheme or pastoral care programme
- Advise senior management of any regular social contact they have with a Pupil that is unavoidable which may give rise to concern
- Report and record any situation, which they feel, might compromise the College or their own professional standing.
- **Never reveal personal contact details to pupils and their families.**

Pupils in Distress

There may be occasions when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance. This may include age appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

Team-Teach guidelines should be followed and are outlined in the Team-Teach Policy

This means that staff should:

- Consider the way in which they offer comfort to a distressed pupil and act in accordance to the Team-Teach policy and training.
- Always tell a colleague when and how they offered comfort to a distressed child
- Record situations, which may give, rise to concern.

17. Care, Control and Physical Intervention

All Cranbury College staff should act in accordance with their Team-Teach Training and the Team-teach policy.

This means that Cranbury College management should:

- Regularly refresh staff knowledge of Team-Teach training and physical intervention methods
- Ensure that all staff are provided with appropriate training.

This means that staff should:

- Adhere to the College's physical intervention policy and act in good faith
- Always seek to de-escalate situations in line with Team-Teach principles
- In all cases where physical intervention is deemed necessary, the incident and subsequent actions should be documented and reported using forms in the staff handbook in line with Team-teach policy.

Sexual Contact with Young People

Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a child or young person is both inappropriate and illegal.

The sexual activity referred to does not just involve physical contact including penetrative and non-penetrative acts. It may also include non-contact activities, such as causing children to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of pornographic material. 'Working'. There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' where the sole purpose is to gain the trust of a child, and manipulate that relationship so sexual abuse can take place. Staff should be aware that conferring special attention and favour upon a child might be construed as being part of a 'grooming' process, which is an offence. Cranbury College will take disciplinary action against staff who engage in any of these activities and any illegal practice will be reported to the police

This means that staff should:

- Not pursue sexual relationships with children and young people either in or out of College
- Avoid any form of communication with a child or young person which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative i.e. verbal comments, letters, notes, electronic mail, phone calls, texts, physical contact.

One to One Situations

Staff working in one to one situations with children and young people may be more vulnerable to allegations. Staff should recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure the safety and security needs of both staff and pupils are met. **Staff working one to one must make themselves aware of the RBC lone worker policy**

Cranbury College managers will undertake a risk assessment in relation to the specific nature and implications of one to one work with each worker. Any arrangements will be reviewed with staff at Home tutor or other appropriate meetings.

This means that staff should:

- Avoid meetings with pupils in remote, secluded areas of College or in the home. Staff working in student's homes must only enter the premises when an appropriate adult is also in the building.
- Ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in one to one situations
- Inform other staff of the meeting beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by.
- Avoid use of 'engaged' or equivalent signs wherever possible. Such signs may create an opportunity for secrecy or the interpretation of secrecy
- Always report any situation where a child becomes distressed or angry to a senior colleague

Transporting Children

In certain situations e.g. out of College activities, sport, individual tuition or pupil sickness, staff may agree to transport children. Senior staff are appointed to plan and provide oversight of all transporting arrangements and respond to any difficulties that may arise. Wherever possible and practicable it is advisable that transport is undertaken other than in private vehicles, with at least one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort. Where this is not possible or practicable students should always sit in the back of the car preferable on the opposite side to the driver. Staff should ensure that their behaviour is safe and that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. Students causing a danger through their behaviour in cars, or students who have a history of making false allegations should not be transported by staff.

This means that staff should:

- Ensure that they are alone with a child for the minimum time possible and where possible have another member of staff to act as an escort.
- Be aware that the safety and welfare of the child is their responsibility until this is safely passed over to a parent/carer or other education professional
- Report the nature of the journey, the route and expected time of arrival to the transport co-coordinator in Cranbury College. In the case of Regular journeys for example to activities. The office should be contacted on arrival and departure in order for the service to log timescales.
- Ensure that their behaviour and all arrangements ensure vehicle, passenger and driver safety including not exceeding maximum capacity in the car, enforcing the wearing of seatbelts, not smoking and not talking on mobile phones while driving.

- All staff that transport children in their cars must provide insurance, Licence, MOT and Service history for their vehicle to the office.

Curriculum

Many areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit, or of an otherwise sensitive nature. Care should be taken to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the learning outcomes identified by the lesson plan. This plan should highlight particular areas of risk and sensitivity. The curriculum can sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussion about subject matter of a sexually explicit or otherwise sensitive nature. Responding to Pupils' questions can require careful judgement and staff may wish to take guidance in these circumstances from a senior member of staff. Care should also be taken to abide by the policy on sex, relationships, religious and drugs education

This means that staff should:

- Have clear written lesson plans and use resources that are appropriate for the age group being taught.

This means that staff should not:

- Enter into or encourage inappropriate or offensive discussion about sexual Activity.
- Be coerced into discussing their own views, experiences and beliefs where they may be misconstrued.