

ENTHEOS STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

At Entheos Academy, we recognize that:

- A. All students are entitled to receive an education in a safe, secure environment.
- B. All teachers have the right to practice in an environment of professionalism and mutual respect.
- C. All parents have the right to expect professional and appropriate behavior from all those involved with the public education of their child.

The following policies are designed to protect the rights of students, parents and teachers. They are also designed to ensure student safety and safeguard teachers from the unfortunate occurrences of misinterpretation of conduct, or false allegations of wrong-doing.

A reminder is given that honest, appropriate behavior is usually not misinterpreted. When people have honest and helpful intentions concerning communication and touching most people are not bothered or suspicious. The best protection for faculty is to not have ill intent.

Even then the following guidelines are necessary for your protection.

1) Teacher- Student relationships:

a) Physical Contact

- i) Physical contact may be misconstrued by a student, parent or observer. Touching students, including well-intentioned informal and formal gestures such as putting a hand on the shoulder or arm, can, if repeated regularly, lead to questions being raised. Staff must not make gratuitous physical contact with students and should avoid attributing “touching” to their teaching style as a way of relating to students.
- ii) There will be occasions when physical contact will be acceptable. In general these will fall into one of three categories:
 - (1) Action to prevent harm or injury to the student or to others. If it is necessary to prevent a student causing injury to him/her or to others the use of minimum force and contact necessary to prevent harm or injury is acceptable and defensible. Such incidents must always be reported (see 2.10 below).
 - (2) Comforting a student in distress. There is no easy definition of what is acceptable since much will depend on the circumstances, the age of the student, the extent and cause of the distress and the alternative means of providing comfort. Employees will need to use their professional judgment and discretion in relation to these factors. Employees should consider how others might perceive the action, even if no one else is present, and ensure that it does not develop into unnecessary contact. Particular care must be taken in instances which involve the same student over a period of time.
 - (3) Unavoidable contact. This is a particularly sensitive issue in subjects such as Physical Education and Drama and in some forms of “skills coaching.” All teachers must be alert to the possibilities of misinterpreting any contact. To avoid such misunderstanding all planned contact must be demonstrably avoidable. It may be, for example, that alternative methods involving demonstrations of particular techniques by the teacher or a particularly competent student may be more appropriate than modifying a student’s technique by physical content. There are other occasions when physical contact may be

questioned even if innocent in intention. Employees should therefore ensure that their actions recognize the possibility of misinterpretation and are open to the scrutiny of colleagues. Individual professional judgments will be required about the level of physical contact with individual children, which will take account of their age, circumstances and background.

- (4) Corporal Punishment. Any form of physical punishment is prohibited under disciplinary procedures and potentially actionable in law. This also applies to any form of physical response to misbehavior, with the exception noted in A1 above.
- b) Private Meetings
- i) Private meetings, by their very nature, increase the risk for possible abuse of students, as well as the opportunity for false allegations against teachers. Teachers and others must therefore recognize this possibility and plan such meetings accordingly.
 - ii) Employees shall avoid meeting privately with a student in remote areas of the school, and ensure that whenever possible the door is left open or visual contact with other is maintained. Steps to prevent others entering a room by the use of “Meeting in Progress” are especially likely to be open to misinterpretation. In many cases it will be advisable for another student or adult to be present or in a position to minimize risk during the meeting.
 - iii) Under no circumstances should meetings with individual students be arranged off the school premises. This includes the transporting of individual children in private cars.
 - iv) Teachers shall not transport students in their private vehicles except on official school trips and in these cases only with multiple students at a time. When transportation of students is necessary and no bus is available, students may be transported by parent volunteers.
 - v) In conjunction with the above policies, all teachers participating in adventure, fieldwork, and/or discovery activities must adhere to all safety and student contact rules as outlined in the adventure policy. These rules will be strictly enforced. We have a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to unsafe behavior on adventure, fieldwork and/or discovery activities, and failure to comply with all policies will result in loss of employment.
- c) Personal Letters and Communication
- i) The following forms of contact/communication between teachers and students are not appropriate, and shall be avoided by all members of Entheos staff:
 - (1) Text messaging
 - (2) Instant messaging
 - (3) Phone contact between teacher and student’s private cell phone
 - (4) Any form of online communication via social networks (i.e. Facebook, MySpace, etc.), chat rooms, private emails, etc.
 - (5) This policy is not intended to curtail the use of email to communicate with parents, and whole families regarding class-wide or school wide programs, projects and assignments. Nor it is intended to prohibit use of email communication between parents and teachers

regarding student performance/evaluation.

d) Teaching Materials

- i) The use of books, videos and films of an explicit or sensitive nature, particularly in relation to language or sexual behavior are prohibited. Films should carry a rating no higher than “G” for general audiences and should make clear curriculum connections. However it still must be a film for general audiences. If there is a compelling reason to show an educational clip, video or film with higher than a “G” rating then permission of the students’ parents and the director is required.
- ii) Teachers will submit to the Director a list of books if they are to be read in class by everyone. This also pertains to any books read by a small group of students together as part of a class assignment.

e) Reporting Incidents

- i) Teachers should report any concerns they may have following any incident where s/he feels that his/her actions may have been misinterpreted. This report should be made to the Director as soon as possible after the incident and should include as an immediate follow-up the preparation of a written note of the incident, a copy of which should be given to the Director. While reporting of incidents is always advisable, it is particularly important to ensure that a written record is made if any form of restraint has been used against a student or whenever a student, parent or third party has complained about an action or expressed an intention to complain.
- ii) Likewise, it is the responsibility of all employees to report to the director immediately any conduct witnessed that gives cause for concern, or may be deemed inappropriate between any teacher and student.

All employees are expected to follow the communications policy approved by the Board.

FOOTNOTE: Many teachers express regret at the need for a code such as this. However, its purpose is to promote the highest standards of care for young people and to protect teachers and others from potentially devastating consequences of false allegations. It is an unfortunate fact that society is less trusting and that causes have come to light which have justified the increased level of mistrust. All teachers are urged to consider how they can safeguard their own positive in the light of this advice without giving up important personal principles of care and trust. Whenever doubt exists any teacher should seek the advice of the director.