

# Staff Code of Conduct

ROTTERDAM INTERNATIONAL SECONDARY SCHOOL  
RISS

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## ~~RISS~~ Guiding statements

This Staff Code of Conduct is the result of a joint effort amongst RISS staff in response to Child Protection needs and the school strategic plan 2023 - 2027. The key three foundations are:

- a) **Our Vision**  
Educating for self-awareness, curiosity, and integrity in a changing world.
- b) **Our Mission:**  
For every student to enjoy their youth
  - a. “We will do this by providing innovative approaches to learning, by encouraging achievement, by fostering international mindedness with local and global engagement, by modelling ethical behaviour and by acting respectfully and with honesty.”
- c) **Our Core values:**  
Relationships, Courage, Respect and Responsibility.

## Purpose

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance of behaviour that all RISS staff are expected to observe.

The school is responsible for notifying staff of this code and the expectations contained within.

All staff new to the school will be required to read this policy as part of their induction programme delivered by the school at the beginning of the year.

School staff (old and new) are in a unique position of influence, impact, and action on students' lives. Therefore, staff members must adhere to behaviours which model the highest possible standards for all the students within the school.

As a member of RISS Community, each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside working hours.

## Core Principles

1. The welfare of students is paramount.
2. Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and must avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their intentions.
3. Staff should work and be seen to work in an open and transparent way.
4. Staff should discuss and take advice promptly from their line manager or other senior member of staff over any incident which may give rise to concern. Records should be made of any such incident and of decisions made, plus further actions agreed.
5. All staff should know the name of their Child Protection and Safeguarding Lead – **Dr Gilbert-Sáez** – and this information can be found in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy published on the school website.
6. All staff should be familiar with child protection arrangements and understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect students.
7. All staff should have done the International Child Protection online training via Educare.

8. Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and of other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.

### **Who does the Code of Conduct apply to?**

This policy applies to all members at Rotterdam International Secondary School (RISS), including volunteers, external cover staff or invigilators and any other staff that will come in contact directly with our students for more than two weeks. If a member of staff does not follow this code of conduct this may lead to disciplinary procedures as stated in the CAO (Dutch Labour Agreement).

### **What is the responsibility of an employee of RISS school?**

School employees should:

- read this policy every year at the start of the academic year. Time is allocated for this purpose.
- ensure they understand it.
- ask if there are any points which are unclear.
- use this code of conduct, alongside other school policies, to guide them in their role.

### **Teaching Standards**

Teachers make the education of their students their first concern and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. Teachers must act with honesty and integrity; have strong subject knowledge; keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up to date; forge positive professional relationships and work with parents in the best interests of their students.

Our teachers should:

- set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge students
- promote good progress and outcomes by students
- demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge
- plan, prepare and teach lessons that aim at being innovative and of the highest standards.
- adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all students
- make accurate and productive use of assessment
- submit students' assessments and activities timely and with appropriate feedback
- manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment
- fulfil wider professional responsibilities as established within the Labour Agreement and per their Job Scale.
- work in line with Student Charter document available on the website
- read the Staff Handbook.
- make a positive contribution to our school values, mission, and vision
- develop effective professional relationships with colleagues, knowing how and when to draw on specialist advice and direction
- take responsibility for improving teaching and pastoral care through appropriate professional development and behaviours in the school
- communicate effectively with parents and seek advice when questions need further direction from tutors, teachers and/or leadership team.
- not demean or undermine students, their parents or carers or colleagues.

### **Dealing Effectively with students**

To ensure the best level of care for all the students at RISS, all staff should be mindful of the level of individual care needed for each student to make the very best of their time at school. Staff must also protect themselves and their students from any situations which could be misconstrued.

In general:

- staff must comply with school policies and procedures which support the well-being and development of students
- staff must cooperate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of students
- staff must follow reasonable instructions that support the development of students.

### **Safeguarding students**

Staff must take the care of students under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety, welfare, and emotional well-being.

Staff have a duty of care to safeguard students from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect. Staff suspecting any of these instances will communicate this to the Child Protection and Safeguarding Lead and/or leadership team.

Please for an in-depth understanding, read our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy available on our school website.

### **Communication with students (Including the use of technology)**

Communication between students and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit boundaries. This includes wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, emails, websites, social networking sites, online gaming, and blogs. **Adults should be extremely careful when sharing any personal information with students.** Staff should not request, or respond to, any personal information from the student other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. Adults should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.

Communication with ex-students who are over 18 is left to staff discretion but the school highlights to staff those ex-students may be in contact with current students and communication may be passed on. The school advises that it is best practise to not communicate with ex- students, over the age of 18, via social networking sites, until the ex-student has left the school for a minimum of two years.

The school strongly advises RISS staff to monitor and control the use of social networking sites for personal use. Profiles and photos of the member of staff should be “locked down” as private so that students or parents do not have access to your personal data or images.

All in all, staff should

- only give their personal contact details to students, including mobile telephone number, for professional reasons and with the knowledge of their line manager.
- only contact students for professional reasons and via emails.
- only communicate within the RISS Google Domain (Email, Classroom, Hangouts, Meet) when representing the school.
- only hold visual images of students for a period of two weeks in your photographic device, then save them into your Wolfert Google Drive account. Delete all visual images afterwards from your camera
- lock down their profile to ensure that data and images are not freely available and do not permit students to have access to their profile
- ensure all passwords are kept strong and secure (staff are advised to change their passwords regularly).

## **Social Contact**

Staff should ensure that any friendships that arise between them and student families retain a clear distinction between personal and professional lives so that no gain or favour can be inferred or misconstrued.

This means that staff should:

- always approve any planned social contact with students with senior colleagues, for example when it is part of a reward scheme, associated with a tutorial meeting or pastoral care programme
- advise the Leadership Team of any regular social contact they have with a student or parent which could give rise to concern.

## **Physical Contact**

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with a student, but it is crucial they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role.

A 'no touch' approach is impractical and in certain circumstances inappropriate for most staff particularly with young children. When physical contact is made with students this should be in response to their needs at that time, of limited duration and appropriate to the child.

This means staff should:

- never touch a student in a way which may be considered indecent.
- always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny.
- in terms of physical intervention, always seek to defuse situations and always use minimum force for the shortest period necessary.

## **Care, Control and Physical Intervention**

Staff may legitimately intervene to prevent a student from committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others or causing damage to property. Staff may also intervene to maintain good order and discipline. Staff should have regard to the health and safety of themselves and others.

Under no circumstances should physical force be used as a form of punishment, in accordance with The

Human Rights Act 1998 and the European Convention of Human Rights, particularly Article Three on protection against torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Where reasonable force is needed to quickly remove a younger child e.g., from harm to him/herself or to others, this should be reported to a member of the LT and in all cases where physical intervention is deemed necessary, the incident and subsequent actions should be documented and reported.

This means staff should:

- always seek to defuse situations.
- always use the minimum force for the shortest period necessary.

### ***Students in Distress***

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

This means staff should:

- consider the way in which they offer comfort to a distressed student.
- always tell a colleague when and how they offered comfort to a distressed student.
- record situations which may give rise to concern.

### ***One-to-One situations***

Staff working in one-to-one situations with students should recognise the possibility of allegations and plan and conduct meetings safely. Every attempt should be made to ensure the safety and security both of staff and students are met.

This means staff should:

- never conduct meetings with students in remote or secluded areas of the school.
- 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.
- do not use “Engaged” or similar signs such as ‘Do Not Disturb’ when meeting with students (‘Meeting’ or ‘Exam in Progress’ signs are appropriate).
- always report any situation where a student becomes distressed or angry to a colleague. The process is always to gather evidence and support in the form of a written statement with date and time of the incident.

## ***Sexual Contact with students***

Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a student is both **inappropriate and illegal**.

This means staff will:

- not pursue sexual relationships with children and young people either in or out of school.
- 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, email, phone calls, texts, physical contact etc.

## ***Transporting students***

When transporting children wherever possible and practicable do not use your own vehicle and it is advisable that at least one adult as well as the driver is present to act as an escort. Ensure that you notify the tutor or line manager of the situation explaining the need.

This means staff should:

- plan and agree arrangements with all parties in advance.
- ensure that they are alone with a child for the minimum time possible.
- be aware that the safety of the student is their responsibility until they pass the child over to a parent/carer.

## ***Intimate Care***

All students have a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of an intimate nature is required (for example assisting with toileting or removing wet or soiled clothing). For all children who present needs in this respect, the appropriate care plan should be drawn up and agreed with parents.

Students should be encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their own personal care as is practicable. When assistance is required, staff should ensure that another adult is in the vicinity and is aware of the task to be undertaken.

This means staff should:

- make other staff aware of the task being undertaken.
- explain to the student what is happening.
- consult with colleagues if there is to be any variation from any previously agreed actions.
- record the justification for any variations from the above and share this information with parents.

## **Propriety and Behaviour**

All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of students. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct.

## ***Honesty and Integrity***

Staff must maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.

All staff must comply with the Dutch Bribery Act 2011. A person may be guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they offer, promise, or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or if

they request, agree, or accept, or receive a bribe from another person.

There are occasions when students or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff, for example at Christmas or as a Thank you, this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value. Any member of staff concerned that they may be at risk of giving or receiving a bribe should contact the principal. Any member of staff receiving a single gift or entertainment valued at more than €100 from one family must disclose this to the principal.

Members of staff may not give personal gifts to students. It is acceptable for staff to offer prizes or rewards of small value for tasks or competitions.

### ***Dress and Appearance***

Staff should consider the manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role. We always expect professional appearance for staff.

Staff should ensure their appearance and clothing:

- promote a positive and professional image.
- are not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative.
- do not distract, cause embarrassment, or give rise to misunderstanding.
- are absent of any provocative religious, moral, ethical, or politically contentious slogan or words against the school's or accepted community values.

### ***Socialising***

Staff must consider both the safety of the students and the image that alcohol consumption portrays. At RISS we have a responsibility to educate our students on sensible issues such as drugs.

This means staff should:

- not behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with students or act as a role model.
- not purchase alcohol for students.
- not drink alcohol when supervising students during trips or acting *in loco parentis*.

### ***Photography***

Many school activities involve recording images; these may be undertaken as part of the curriculum, extra-curricular activities, for publicity or to celebrate achievement. Careful consideration should be given as to how these activities are organised and undertaken.

Using images of students for publicity purposes has already been agreed individually with parents and the wishes of each parent are recorded as part of GDPR compliance. Images must not be displayed on other websites, in publications or in a public place without additional consent.

This means staff should:

- ensure all images are acceptable and in line with school values
- be able to justify images of children in their possession
- avoid making images in one-to-one situations.

This means staff should not:

- have images of students stored on personal cameras, devices or home computers beyond two weeks from when they were taken.

- make images of students available on the internet, other than the school network, without permission from parents and line managers.

### ***Conduct Outside the Workplace***

Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community. Any such conduct could lead to dismissal.

### ***Crime and Violence***

Criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct will be regarded as unacceptable and could lead to dismissal.

### ***Information Technology***

Staff should

- exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others e.g., Snapchat and Twitter
- not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites with students or former students, which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute. Careless comments, even of a harmless nature on social websites, could be misconstrued and must be avoided
- exercise caution when using social media and be aware that 'liking' items may associate themselves or the school with other users or attach their profile to other threads or feeds
- only use a school email account when communicating electronically with students, parents, and colleagues on school matters. Staff must communicate with students using their school account
- hold a separate email account for any other private business.
- be reminded that school data, including emails, is open to Subject Access Requests under the Freedom of Information Act.

### ***Social Situations***

As a school community, social contact with parents outside school is both inevitable and at times unavoidable. Staff who are also parents of students may find themselves in situations where school business and possibly other students are being discussed. In these situations, staff must be extremely cautious and:

- remove themselves from the conversation or situation
- take great care that no comment or action, however minor, could be taken as a sign of agreement or other kind of affiliation to the conversation.

Staff must understand the damaging effect on RISS and its reputation that careless comments may cause. The inability to adhere to this advice may result in an official warning from the Leadership Team. Should such an event be repeated then this could lead to disciplinary action.

### ***Employment and Business Interests***

Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school and is not to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance.

All members of staff must declare any business interests outside of school that may be connected either to the supply of goods/services to the school or be rewarded through association with the school.

### ***Staff as Parents/Parents as Staff***

Once you become a professional teacher, your standing as a member of the wider community is open to scrutiny and criticism by members of RISS, other parents and the public who you may meet. This makes it very difficult to engage in some social activities as a Parent and Teacher. Colleagues who fall into this category should consider the below:

- Evaluate each social situation sensibly and with caution. Never put themselves in a position where their actions could be misconstrued by others.
- Staff whose children attend RISS need to follow the same procedures for all parents when issues are raised related to the care, wellbeing, and progress of their children.
- members of staff with children in our school must exercise caution when discussing their children with colleagues. This is to ensure that everyone's professionalism is upheld.
- Where there are issues in progress that concern the children of staff members, no staff member will disclose information in any informal settings to others.
- staff as parents have access to information that other parents do not. High levels of self-awareness and respect need to be exercised to protect the reputation and privacy of our school community and all its members.

Any colleagues in doubt should speak to their line manager or a member of the Leadership Team for advice.

### **Confidentiality**

Where staff have access to confidential information about students or their parents or carers, staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the student and have the authority to know that information.

All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a student is bullied by another student (or by a member of staff), this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate school procedure. It must not be discussed outside the school, including with the student's parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the school except with a senior member of staff with the appropriate role and authority to deal with the matter.

However, staff have an obligation to share with their line manager (Curriculum Leader or Heads) any information which gives rise to concerns about the safety or welfare of a student. Given these circumstances, staff must never promise a student that they will not act on information, especially if it is related to child protection issues and actions. If staff are unsure, they must speak to the school child protection and safeguarding lead, so concerns can be addressed and documented.

When discussing sensitive issues relating to a student or other member of staff, colleagues should be aware of their surroundings. Conversations of this nature should not be held in public areas of the school premises, the wider community or where there is a risk of being overheard.

### ***Sharing Concerns and Recording Incidents***

All staff should be aware of the school's child protection and safeguarding policy procedures and do the online training via Educare and Optimus.

In the event of an incident occurring which may result in an action being misinterpreted and an allegation being made against a member of staff, the relevant information should be clearly and promptly recorded and reported to a member of the Leadership Team.

### ***Admitting to Convictions***

All staff have a duty to inform a member of the Leadership Team should they receive a caution or charge from the Police (national or international) during their time of employment at the school. All members of staff must renew their VOG, or Police check every two years at RISS. This is in line with Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures.

## Appendix 1 – Aide memoire for all staff

### *When we speak to others we will:*

- Use a positive statement rather than a negative one so that students can learn what we expect of them in any situation.
- Always use a respectful tone of voice, to explain something to or instruct the children, so that they can follow our words without feeling threatened or uncomfortable.
- Be careful when using a sarcastic tone or phrases as these may demean students (especially if they are EAL) and prevent them from developing high self-esteem.
- Always speak respectfully to other adults, even if we disagree with them.

### *As professionals we will:*

- Avoid workplace malicious gossip and negativity, as this breeds resentment, cynicism and becomes a roadblock to effective communication and collaboration.
- Remember our duty of care to take active steps to divert conversations away from this if we come across it.
- Maintain confidentiality about anything that we see or hear in the school, so that parents and students can trust us, and as a way of showing respect to our fellow professionals.
- Work as part of a team, contributing to as well as learning from others and helping to build up a strong workforce so that we can provide the best possible learning opportunities for the students.
- Work within the school's policies and practices, so that what we do is consistent with what has been agreed between all members of the staff.
- Treat everyone with respect.
- Dress appropriately, so that we set a good example for the children and to show that we are here to work.
- Behave in a positive way despite any personal problems that we may have, especially in front of the children.
- Make every effort to carry-out difficult conversations or disputes in a private setting.
- Always inform the Leadership Team of any new charges or cautions which have been committed since our last police check on our files.
- Always inform the school of any medication we are taking which might affect our duty of care towards children. The School, Counsellor and Child Protection Lead will advise the Leadership Team about the best way forward whilst respecting confidentiality.
- In all cases where physical intervention is deemed necessary the incident and subsequent actions should be documented and reported. This means staff should:
  - Always seek to defuse situations.
  - Always use the minimum force for the shortest period necessary and seek the support of other members of staff.
- In the event of an incident occurring which may result in an action being misinterpreted and an allegation being made against a member of staff, the relevant information should be clearly and promptly recorded and reported to a member of LT.
- Any issues of misconduct by staff should first be reported to the Leadership Team.
- Any member of staff needing personal support in any way can seek help from the Leadership Team or the school Staff confidant, who is **Ms van Adrichem-Smits** .

## Appendix 2 - PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

A teacher is expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct throughout a teacher's career.

1. Treating students with dignity, building relationships always rooted in mutual respect and observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position.
2. Having regard for the need to safeguard students' well-being, in accordance with the law.
3. Showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others.
4. Not undermining fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths, beliefs, sexual orientation, and diversity needs.
5. Ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit students' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
6. Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the values, vision, mission, policies, and practices of the school and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.

Teachers must always act within the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities established within the Dutch Law, especially the CAO or Labour Agreement. This document can be found on our website.

### Appendix 3 – Job descriptions

They are available upon request via our Leadership Assistant, Ms Sarah Beecham.

### Appendix 4 – ICT School Activity for Staff

**Internet access** - You must not access or attempt to access any sites that contain any of the following: child abuse; pornography; promoting discrimination of any kind; promoting racial or religious hatred; promoting illegal acts; any other information which may be illegal or offensive to colleagues. Inadvertent access must be treated as an incident and reported to the Leadership Team.

**Social networking** – is allowed in school in accordance with this policy. Staff using social networking for personal use should never undermine the school, its staff, parents, or children. Staff should not become “friends” with students on personal social networks and take care when accepting parents as “friends”.

**Use of Email** – staff should not use school email addresses for personal business. All email should be kept professional. Staff are reminded that school data, including emails, is open to Subject Access Requests under the Freedom of Information Act.

**Passwords** - Staff should keep passwords private. There is no occasion when a password needs to be shared with another member of staff or student or with IT support. It is good practice to change your passwords regularly.

**GDPR** – If it is necessary for you to take work home, or off site, you should ensure that your device (laptop, USB pen drive etc.) is safe and not accessible to anyone. On no occasion should data concerning personal information be taken off site on an unencrypted device.

**Personal Use of School ICT** - School ICT equipment for personal use is possible, but staff need to ensure that access to all accounts is protected by strong passwords and two-factor authentication, and that careful attention is provided to logging in and out of devices. Staff is warned that personal use does not mean that the equipment is used for inappropriate content that could lead to risks, misunderstandings, and use of time for unprofessional purposes.

**Images and Videos** - You should not upload onto any internet site or service images or video of staff or students without consent. This is applicable professionally (in school) and personally (i.e., staff outings).

**Use of Personal ICT** - use of personal ICT equipment is at the discretion of the Leadership Team. Permission must be sought stating the reason for using personal equipment; a risk assessment will be carried out by IT support.

**Viruses and other malware** - any virus outbreaks are to be reported to the IT support desk as soon as it is practical to do so, along with the name of the virus (if known).

**e-Safety** – like health and safety, e-safety is the responsibility of everyone to everyone. As such you will promote positive e-safety messages in all use of IT whether you are with other members of staff or with students.