

Practice and Behaviour Guidelines

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Purpose

Yeshivah Beth-Rivkah College and Pre-Schools (the Organisation) aim to provide children and young people with a positive and enriching educational environment that promotes their academic, social, physical and emotional development.

We are committed to safeguarding children and young people in our care and ensuring that they feel and are safe. Accordingly, we wish to ensure that our personnel strive for the highest possible standards with respect to safeguarding children and young people from abuse. To that end we have developed these practice and behaviour guidelines to identify, and so prevent, behaviour that may be harmful to the children and young people in our care.

Application

All personnel, from our Committee of Management and senior managers to casual staff, volunteers, and sub-contractors are required to observe these practice and behaviour guidelines. Developed to protect children and young people engaged in our school, these guidelines have been formally approved and endorsed by our Committee of Management.

Wherever the Committee of Management is referenced in this document, the Committee of Management have delegated authority and responsibility to the College Principal.

Commitment

You should read these practice and behaviour guidelines in conjunction with:

- the specific requirements of your role as defined in your Roles and Responsibilities statement
- our relevant policy and procedure documents, including our:
 - Organisational Commitment Statement
 - Child Abuse Reporting and Allegations Policy
- all applicable laws
- general community expectations in relation to appropriate behaviour between adults and children.

As part of your individual commitment to observing these practice and behaviour guidelines you will be required to sign a Yeshivah-Beth Rivkah College and Pre-Schools formal statement of commitment to the Organisation's Practice and Behaviour guidelines.

We consider a failure to observe these guidelines as misconduct, and will take appropriate disciplinary action. Such disciplinary action may, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct, include suspension while matters are investigated and/or dismissal. In addition to any internal disciplinary proceedings, we will report to the police all instances in which a breach of the law has or may have occurred.

Exceptions

There may be exceptional situations where these guidelines do not apply, for example, in an emergency situation. However, it is crucial that, where possible, you seek management authorisation prior to taking action that contravenes these guidelines or that you advise management as soon possible after any incident in which these guidelines are breached.

The guidelines

Our practice and behaviour guidelines address the major areas where you interact with the children and young people who take part in our school system. We have developed these practice and behaviour guidelines to help you to safeguard those children and young people from abuse or neglect.

Supervision

Personnel are responsible for supervising the children and young people to which our Organisation provides a service to ensure those participants:

- engage positively with our educational programs
- behave appropriately toward one another
- are in a safe environment and are protected from external threats

Our personnel are required to avoid one-to-one situations with children and young people to whom we provide services, and (where possible) to conduct all activities and/or discussions with service recipients in view of other personnel.

Positive guidance (Discipline)

We strive to ensure that children and young people participating in our school programs are aware of the acceptable limits of their behaviour so that we can provide a positive experience for all participants. However, there are times when personnel may be required to use appropriate techniques and behaviour management strategies to ensure:

- an effective and positive environment
- the safety and/or wellbeing of children, young people or personnel participating in our school programs.

We require our personnel to use strategies that are fair, respectful and appropriate to the developmental stage of the children or young people involved. The child or young person needs to be provided with clear directions and given an opportunity to redirect their behaviour in a positive manner.

Under no circumstances are our personnel to take disciplinary action involving physical punishment or any form of treatment that could reasonably be considered as degrading, cruel, frightening, obviously humiliating or contrary to the Victorian Institute Teaching Code of Conduct.

Sexual misconduct

Under no circumstances is any form of 'sexual behaviour' to occur between, with, or in the presence of, children or young people participating in any of our school's program. Engaging in sexual behaviour while participating in our service is prohibited even if the young persons involved may be above the legal age of consent.

'Sexual behaviour' needs to be interpreted widely, to encompass the entire range of actions that would reasonably be considered to be sexual in nature, including but not limited to:

- 'contact behaviour', such as sexual intercourse, kissing, fondling, sexual penetration or exploiting a child through prostitution
- 'non-contact behaviour', such as flirting, sexual innuendo, inappropriate text messaging, inappropriate photography or exposure to pornography or nudity.

Physical contact with children and young people

Any physical contact with children and young people must be appropriate to the delivery of our school programs such as when fitting sporting equipment and based on the needs of the child or young person (such as to assist or comfort a distressed young person) rather than on the needs of our personnel.

Under no circumstances should any of our personnel have contact with children or young people participating in our school programs that:

- involves touching:
 - of genitals
 - of buttocks
 - of the breast area (female children)that is other than as part of delivering medical or allied health services
- would appear to a reasonable observer to have a sexual connotation
- is intended to cause pain or distress to the child or young person – for example corporal punishment
- is overly physical – as is, for example, wrestling, horseplay, tickling or other roughhousing
- is unnecessary – as is, for example, assisting with toileting when a child does not require assistance
- is initiated against the wishes of the child or young person, except if such contact may be necessary to prevent injury to the child/young person or to others, in which case:
 - physical restraint should be a last resort
 - the level of force used must be appropriate to the specific circumstances, and aimed solely at restraining the child or young person to prevent harm to themselves or others
 - the incident must be reported to management as soon as possible.

Our personnel are required to report to management any physical contact initiated by a child or young person that is sexual and/or inappropriate, for example, acts of physical aggression, as soon as possible, to enable the situation to be managed in the interests of the safety of the child or young person, our personnel and any other participants.

Adhering to role boundaries

Our personnel should not, of their own volition or at the request of a service user, act outside the confines of their duties (as specified in their position description) when helping to deliver our educational programs.

- all personnel must not provide unauthorised transportation as per the transportation guidelines outlined later in this document
- when a child or young person has a pre-existing relationship with an employee or volunteer from the Organisation. The employee/volunteer is required to notify their line manager if they intend to provide services such as babysitting, transport or tutoring to the child or young person, outside of their role within the Organisation
- personnel are discouraged from providing such services to children outside their role within the Organisation. Personnel must not use their position to solicit or initiate work with children outside their role within the Organisation i.e. staff or volunteers should not approach children or parents to offer services
- if they are approached to provide services they may provide such services where they are a direct family member or have a pre-existing relationship
- they must inform the family (or alternate employer) that the arrangement is completely independent of their work from the organisation
- they must inform their manager of any such arrangements, although this will not constitute approval or endorsement
- staff should not tutor students in their class for material benefit, as this is a direct conflict of interest.

In the event that parent/guardian engage a member of the Organisation for private teaching or tutoring, those activities will be considered separate and distinct from the Organisation. In particular, the relevant parent/guardian must not rely on the Working with Children and Police checks conducted by the organisation. The Organisation recommends the relevant parent/guardian conduct their own individual assessments as to an individual's fitness to work with children.

If any of our personnel become aware of a situation in which a child or young person requires assistance that is beyond the confines of that person's role, or beyond the scope of our Organisation's usual service, they should at the earliest opportunity:

- seek advice from management
- refer the matter to an appropriate support agency or
- refer the child or young person to an appropriate support agency or
- contact the child or young person's parent or guardian

Transporting children

Directly related to the delivery of school programs

Children and young people are to be transported only in circumstances that are directly related to the delivery of our school programs – for example, for excursion purposes not as casual lifts.

Children are to be transported only with prior authorisation from the employee/volunteers line manager and from the child's parent/guardian. Gaining approval involves providing information about the proposed journey, including:

- the form of transport proposed, such as private car, taxi, self-drive bus, bus with driver, train, plane or boat
- the reason for the journey
- the route to be followed, including any stops or side trips
- details of anyone who will be present during the journey other than our personnel who are involved in delivering our school program
- transportation of students in staff cars should be avoided.

Private transport arrangements

The Organisation discourages private transport arrangements between personnel and students.

In the event that parent/guardian engage a member of the Organisation for a private transport arrangement, it will be considered separate and distinct from the Organisation. In particular, the relevant parent/guardian must not rely on the Working with Children and Police checks conducted by the Organisation. The Organisation recommends the relevant parent/s or guardian/s conduct their own individual assessments as to an individual's fitness to work with children.

When parents make arrangements for personnel to transport children to and from school related activities. It is the sole responsibility of the parent/guardian and the individual staff member to follow the common-sense guidelines outlined.

- the staff member must inform the family (or alternate employer) that the arrangement is completely independent of their work from the Organisation
- the staff member must inform their line manager of any such arrangements, although this will not constitute approval or endorsement
- explicit written permission (SMS/email) should be given by the parent/guardian to the staff member
- the staff member should provide the parent/guardian with details of the journey e.g. departure/arrival times, route details, driver contact information, who else is being transported
- an individual student should never travel alone with one member of staff.

Overnight stays and sleeping arrangements

Overnight stays are to occur only with the authorisation of the Heads of School and of the parents/guardians of the children or young people involved.

Practices and behaviour by our personnel during an overnight stay must be consistent with the practices and behaviour expected during delivery of our school programs at other times.

Standards of conduct that must be observed by our personnel during an overnight stay include:

- providing children and young people with privacy when bathing and dressing
- observing appropriate dress standards when children and young people are present – such as no exposure to adult nudity
- not allowing children or young people to be exposed to pornographic material, for example, through movies, television, the Internet or magazines
- not leaving children under the supervision or protection of unauthorised persons such as hotel staff or friends
- not involving sleeping arrangements that may compromise the safety of children and young people such as unsupervised sleeping arrangements, or an adult sleeping in the same bed as a child or young person.
- the right of children to contact their parents, or others, if they feel unsafe, uncomfortable or distressed during the stay
- parents expecting that their children can, if they wish, make contact.

Toilet and change room arrangements

Personnel are required to supervise children and young people in toilet and change rooms while balancing that requirement with a child or young person's right to privacy. In addition:

- personnel should avoid one-to-one situations with a child or young person in a change room/toilet area
- personnel are not permitted to use the change room area to, for example, undress, while children and young people are present
- personnel need to ensure adequate supervision in 'public' change rooms and toilets when they are used
- personnel need to provide the level of supervision required for preventing abuse by members of the public, adult service users, peer service users, or general misbehaviour, while also respecting a child's privacy
- female personnel are not to enter male change rooms unless the students are Year 2 and under. Male personnel are not to enter female change rooms for all year levels.

Photographs of children and young people

The Organisation recognises that families would like to have a photographic and or video record of their children's activities through their schooling. We also recognise the need to protect children from inadvertent or unwanted publication of photos online or hard copy which may cause embarrassment or harm to the children and their families.

The Organisation recognises the educational value of the use of video and photos in the school's teaching and learning while similarly wishing to protect students from unwanted or embarrassing publication.

Online Image Use Policy

The Organisation has a clear policy on the posting of student images on line which applies to all members of staff or community members acting on behalf of the school. The online policy directs:

- Parent permission is required for the use of students' images provided via the Student Records Form
- No names are to be used with the images
- Images that do not comply with Tzniut (Jewish Modesty) including students in bathers are not permitted
- Uploading videos and photos to social media where facial recognition and tagging is possible should not be used.

Local School Image Use Policy

At the local level the Organisation differentiates between images used within the school community, and those used to promote the school to the wider world. Some publications- e.g. the school newsletter and yearbooks, MPs' offices etc. are used for both local purposes so the use of images needs to ensure appropriateness, however, specific parent permission is not required.

- Any marketing material, such as newspapers, prospectus, billboard advertising etc. requires parent permission. Parents can give 3 levels of permissions including – Yes (always approve), No (never approve) and Call each time (where the parents can decide depending on the use)
- Any picture where there are 6 or more students, permission will not be sought – however, best effort will be used to ensure that as many students as possible have been given permission
- At school events an official photographer will be identified for school purposes who has the consent of parents and caregivers to photograph all students (except those listed as without parent consent)
- At swimming events students should be photographed in groups and either with just heads and shoulders images or active in the water.

Use of language and tone of voice

Language and tone of voice used in the presence of children and young people should:

- provide clear direction, boost their confidence, encourage or affirm them
- not be harmful to children – in this respect, avoid language that is:
 - discriminatory, racist or sexist
 - derogatory, belittling or negative, for example, by calling a child a 'loser' or telling them they are 'too fat'
 - intended to threaten or frighten
 - profane or sexual.

Use of electronic communications

Wherever possible, email and text messages sent to a child or young person should be copied to their parent or guardian.

Where a parent is not included in the communication:

- Restrict such communication to issues directly associated with delivering our school programs, such as advising that a scheduled event is cancelled
- Limit the personal or social content in such communications to what is required to convey the service-related message in a polite, friendly manner. In particular, do not communicate anything that a reasonable observer could view as being of a sexual nature
- Do not use such communication to promote unauthorised 'social' activity or to arrange unauthorised contact
- Do not request a child or young person to keep a communication a secret from their parents
- Do not communicate with children or young people using Internet chat rooms or similar forums such as social networking sites, game sites or instant messaging.

Personnel are not to communicate with children outside our services, such as siblings or friends who are known to personnel via a child participating in the service.

All our personnel, and the children and young people to whom we deliver our school programs, are required to follow our 'acceptable use' policy in relation to browsing websites on our organisation's computers.

Our personnel are required to ensure appropriate monitoring of children and young people when they use our organisation's electronic communication equipment to ensure that they do not inadvertently place themselves at risk of abuse or exploitation via social networking sites, gaming sites or web searches, or through inappropriate email communication.

Use, possession or supply of alcohol or drugs

While on duty, personnel must not:

- use, possess or be under the influence of an illegal drug
- use or be under the influence of alcohol
- be incapacitated by any other legal drug such as prescription or over-the-counter drugs
- supply alcohol or drugs (including tobacco) to children and young people participating in our school programs.

Use of legal drugs other than alcohol is permitted, provided such use does not interfere with your ability to care for children involved in our service.

Identity card

Our personnel should wear their identity card only while involved in delivering service or as required by our Organisation, such as when representing our Organisation at designated functions, to and from work, or at during excursions and camps.

Staff should ONLY use their identification card in delivery of school programs and activities outlined in their Role Description.

Giving gifts

Head of School/Head of Faculty is to authorise any gifts to children or young people involved in our school programs, including rewards, prizes, treats, or second-hand equipment.