



Preamble

The Code of Conduct guides staff on ethical issues and expected standards of behaviour at Bethania Lutheran School.

It provides examples of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and allows staff to test whether a course of action is consistent with the Code. It is underpinned by the School's values of courtesy, responsibility, respect and care, and by the Virtues in the Community Values Framework.

Each staff member is responsible for their own behaviour and needs to take accountability for the behaviour choices made and the impact on colleagues, children and school community. This Code is designed to help staff make informed choices about their behaviour and to exemplify the School's standards of behaviour.

Staff should act as one with Christ Jesus who loves all equally and without favour and strive to be "like minded having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose." Staff have a common purpose to uphold and fulfil the mission and vision of Bethania Lutheran School.

Staff should "do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than (them)selves" as Christ himself did when "being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant" (Philippians 2: 5-7). Staff should uphold each other, avoid malice, gossip and slander, be accountable to one another to encourage and to strengthen each other even to the inconvenience of themselves. Staff should not lord themselves over others, even those in authority who serve in all things. When disagreements arise, seek mediation and reconciliation through a humble and forgiving heart. If things cannot be reasonably reconciled, uphold the command to love one another through capitulating rather than attempting to dominate.

Staff should "look not only to (their) own interest, but also to the interest of others" (Philippians 2: 4) and serve as Christ himself did, who "humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross" (Philippians 2: 8). Staff serve the families who seek the School's assistance in providing Christ-centred education for their children and others who participate in this common task, including the wider community.

Staff Should Act With Honesty and Integrity.

The reputation of Bethania Lutheran School is dependent upon each staff member acting with honesty and integrity. Dishonest behaviour in staff members will not be accepted. Every stakeholder, whether it be a child, a staff member, a family or the wider community has the right to be confident that the staff of the School are honest and that their dealings are beyond reproach.

Staff are to abide by laws and regulations of Bethania Lutheran School and Lutheran Education Queensland. These laws and regulations are designed to ensure high ethical standards, it is essential that all staff abide by and apply them.

As a place of care, staff members of the School accept a high level of Duty of Care for the children under their authority. As part of this, compliance with the spirit and letter of all Child Protection laws and regulations are to be accepted as especially important.

Staff are to accurately represent information to other staff, children and their families. Facts are to be presented in an honest and complete manner. Information should not be presented in a more favourable light than it warrants, and it must be ensured that relevant but less favourable information is not omitted.

Staff are to respect confidentiality and the proper handling of information in relation to students, school matters and other staff members. Staff are to adhere to Privacy Policies and Procedures when asking for and storing confidential information.

In the School, personal information regarding children and their families is an important asset. Staff are to treat the School's affairs and those of the children and their families with absolute confidentiality.

Staff are not to use information regarding the affairs of the School for personal gain, or for the benefit of others such as friends, relatives or associates. Staff undertake to ensure that the same level of confidentiality accepted in their letter of employment, remains their commitment even after they have left the School.

Staff members will not use or convert to their own benefit, funds, information or property of the School, or assist others in such behaviour.

Staff members will not offer, solicit, or accept gifts, money favours or concessions which might affect their judgment in relation to their work, or which might be seen to compromise their judgment.

Confidential or market sensitive information is not to be disclosed, and staff are not to pressure others to disclose confidential, sensitive or privileged information. This includes information concerning individual remuneration details. Staff with the authority and responsibility for signing on behalf of Bethania Lutheran School are to accept this responsibility to mean that they have received, understood and support what they are signing.

Staff of the School are to Maintain the Highest Standards of Professional Behaviour.

Bethania Lutheran School values a positive working environment that encourages open, effective communication with others. At all times staff are to conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner. They are to provide a Christian-role model of behaviour. Staff are to work together as a team to ensure a safe and harmonious workplace free of harassment and discrimination. Harassment in any form, including the use of offensive and/or threatening language or behaviour, is not acceptable.

The principal is to use a performance appraisal system to formally discuss with other staff the scope, standards, accountability authority, priorities and goals of their position and to review their performance in achieving specified objectives and competency development. Staff are to undertake appropriate performance counselling to improve performance which may be unsatisfactory.

Staff are not to carry out their duties or represent that they act on behalf of Bethania Lutheran School if under the influence of alcohol, drugs or medication which impairs their judgment.

Staff are to be alert for unusual activity which may suggest inappropriate behaviour and ensure that the activity is reported to the Principal.

Staff are not to operate outside of their delegated authority levels and only enter into matters within their authority levels or where they are authorized to do so.

Staff are to Avoid Conflict of Interest.

A staff member's first business loyalty is to the School. Whilst employees and carers are encouraged to be involved in the community, they are not to participate in activities or decisions which conflict or appear to conflict with their duties and responsibilities at Bethania Lutheran School.

Staff have a unique position at Bethania Lutheran School in having intimate knowledge of the circumstances of children and their families. Staff should therefore seek approval from the School before accepting or seeking a role in which this knowledge is beneficial.

Staff Should Strive to be a Good Citizen and Achieve Community Respect.

Staff should be committed to being good citizens in pursuing their role. In their professional conduct, staff should always consider the impact of their behaviour on staff, children and their families, and the school's reputation.

Staff Should Consider the Social implications, Not Just the Educational Implications of their Decisions.

Bethania Lutheran School is aware of its duty of care and responsibility for the welfare and wellbeing of all children in its care as well as for staff, and recognizes the need to protect children and staff from inappropriate behaviour by members of the School and the wider community.

Inappropriate behaviour includes, but is not limited to: physical abuse and excessive punishment, emotional abuse and sexual abuse/harassment and exploitation.

Staff of Bethania Lutheran School are expected to reflect the highest standards of care in their behaviour towards children in their care and towards other staff.

Where a staff member, or parent believes the behaviour of another person associated with the School is inappropriate, they should report such behaviour to the Principal.

The Lutheran Church of Australia has a Policy and Action Plan for Responding to Complaints of Sexual Abuse / Harassment by Church Employees. Staff of Bethania Lutheran School are required to ensure that persons involved with the School are aware of the Policy and Action Plan and receive the appropriate support should they need to access this confidential service.

Consequences of Breaching the Code of Conduct

As staff strive to meet the code of conduct, at times some may stumble. This is acknowledged. However, ultimately staff must be accountable and responsible for their own actions.

If staff breach this code of conduct, corrective and/or disciplinary action will result. In some instances, such as issues relating to child protection, criminal proceedings could also be instigated.

In the first instance, the process is designed to genuinely help the staff member to improve their behaviour, conduct, capacity or performance. In cases of serious breaches, where the conduct of the staff member is of such a kind that it would be unreasonable to require the employer to continue the employment or continue as a staff member with the School, the School may decide to instigate summary dismissal or to cease the staff member's position with the School in line with the Education Act and Regulations and the Non-Government Schools Accreditation Act. Serious misconduct which may warrant such action could include: the commission of a crime in the course of employment, drunkenness or drug abuse, any conduct at the workplace which endangers the safety of the children, co-workers or the public, or sexual or physical abuse.