جيمس مدرستنا الثانوية الإنجليزية، دبي
GEMS Our Own English High School, Dubai

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

Purpose:

The purpose of the Employee Code of Conduct is to define the minimum standards of professional conduct and behaviour expected of an employee of GEMS Education and GEMS Our Own English High School, Dubai. This reflects the basic requirement of professionalism, integrity and courtesy needed to ensure we provide a quality education.

Scope:

This policy applies to all employees, including temporary and contract workers. The Code forms part of your employment with GEMS Our Own English High School, Dubai (OOD).

Code of Conduct:

The Code of Conduct establishes four principles of conduct which employees should follow / promote at all times:

1. Integrity and honesty
2. Promoting the public good
3. Compliance with laws and regulations
4. Accountability and transparency

Stewardship

Employees should take all possible care when using OOD's property, goods, intellectual property and services and ensure they are used efficiently, carefully and honestly. Unless permission has been granted by the employee's line manager, OOD's resources are not to be used for private purposes.

Records & Documents

All OOD / GEMS documents must be stored in appropriate files. Documents may only be removed if required for legitimate purposes – with permission from the relevant document owner - and must be promptly returned.

Employees must not access (or allow another person to access) information which they are not authorized to use for any reason.

Employees must maintain the security and confidentiality of the information systems over which they have responsibility or to which they have access.

Confidential Information

Confidential information is information that you create, develop, receive, use or learn in the course of your employment with OOD that is not public. It includes information that is about GEMS, our affiliates, our employees, our clients or other parties with whom we and our affiliates have a relationship and that have an expectation of confidentiality.

Unauthorized access, use or distribution of confidential information violates our policies and may be illegal. Your obligation to protect confidential information will continue even after you leave OOD and you must return all information in your possession, or control, upon your departure.

Employees have an obligation to ensure that confidential information is secured against loss, misuse, unauthorized access, modification or disclosure.

Intellectual Property

All products, literature, computer programs, material in written or other format, inventions and improvements in relation to such matters, together with all copyright and intellectual property created, authored, developed or produced by the employee for the purpose of, or in the course of, the employee's employment will remain the property of OOD and must not be used by the employee in his personal capacity. Upon termination of employment the employee will return all correspondence, documents, data, information, equipment and things, including copies thereof, belonging to the employer that may be in the employee's possession, custody or control.

Communication with Children (including the use of technology)

Teachers must ensure that they establish safe and responsible online behaviours. This means working to local and national guidelines on acceptable use policies which detail how new and emerging technologies may be used. Clear agreement by all parties about acceptable and responsible use is essential and all staff should sign their acceptance and understanding of the school Acceptable Use Policy. This means that staff must:

- ensure that their use of technologies could not bring GEMS into disrepute,
- ensure that personal social networking sites are set at private, and students are never listed as approved contacts.
- avoid contacting a student directly but rather do so through the parent.
- immediately inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead if a student attempts to contact or correspond with them through personal channels, and do not respond directly to the student.

This also means Teachers should not:

- create and use WhatsApp groups to contact students for whatever purpose including sports teams / organizations, study groups etc. Instead use an alternative which is approved by the Principal/SLT e.g. closed Twitter group to keep parents informed on residential visits etc.

- discuss or share data relating to students / parents / carers in staff social media groups.
- seek to contact or respond to contact from students outside of the purposes of their work.
- use or access social networking sites of students.
- give their personal contact details to students, including their mobile telephone number.
- use internet or web-based communication channels to send personal messages to a student.

Standards of Behaviour

All Teachers working with students have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of all students. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of the country authorities, general public, parents, students and those with whom they work. Staff should be aware that their behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, could compromise their position in their workplace, bring OOD and GEMS into disrepute or indicate an unsuitability to work with students.

This means that adults should not:

- behave in a manner which would lead to questions about their suitability to work with students.
- use inappropriate language to or in the presence of students.
- make, or encourage others to make, unprofessional personal comments which degrade or humiliate, including sexual comments or which might be interpreted as such.
- engage in the misuse of drugs, alcohol, acts of violence or any other illegal act including sexual acts relevant to the country in which they work.

Dress & Appearance

Teachers should dress appropriately for their role, considering any cultural/ religious customs, the work they undertake and conforming to OOD as well as the GEMS dress code and Code of Conduct. Those who dress in a manner which could be viewed as offensive or inappropriate will render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations. This means:

- wear clothing appropriate to their role and conform to the GEMS Dress Code, promoting a positive and professional image.
- wear clothing which is culturally sensitive and absent of any political, religious or otherwise contentious slogans.
- wear clothing which is appropriate for the tasks undertaken and to the setting e.g., PE, Early Years, Lab coats.

Leave

- Teachers are entitled to annual leave of sixty (60) calendar days per year as per the rules of the Ministry of Education in force during the employment period.
- The leave for each year will be calculated from September to June.

- Teachers can avail 6 days of Emergency Leave per year.
- From date of joining, employees will be eligible for sick leave to facilitate their recovery and recuperation from illness or injury. Sick leave eligibility per service year is as follows:
  - The first fifteen (15) calendar days with full pay
  - The next thirty (30) calendar days with half pay
  - Any subsequent period beyond forty-five (45) calendar days without pay.
- Where an employee falls sick during the probation period a medical certificate from the doctor is required for day one (1), For 2 or more days, a DHA certificate is required. to enable the employee to avail any paid sick leave entitlement.
- All medical certificates must be from a registered medical practitioner or hospital.
- A female employee is entitled to a maternity leave of 60 days, out of which:
  - 45 days will be fully-paid leave
  - 15 days will be half-paid leave. (optional)

  Feeding hours:
  - After resuming work from maternity leave, an employee is entitled to two breaks each day for nursing her child for 6 months following the date of delivery. All staff who need to take nursing breaks will be allowed ***two (2) half an hour breaks, once in the morning and once in the afternoon.*** This break will be decided by the Supervisor in consultation with Head of Section so that classes are not affected.
  - These breaks are to be considered as part of the working hours and do not yield any reduction in the salary. Employees availing these breaks must be considerate of the school's needs, agree with the line manager and stick to the plan as far as possible throughout the period. The period includes all public holidays, weekends and summer/ winter breaks. This needs approval from the line manager in advance.
- The maternity leave of forty-five (45) calendar days is to be taken at one time and includes the period preceding or succeeding the birth. Maternity leave will commence from the first working day the employee is absent from work, as agreed with her line manager.
- **Parental Leave-** In addition to maternity leave, employees (male and female) are eligible for parental leave. The employee will be granted five (5) working days of paid parental leave with the following conditions:
  - Must be the biological or legal mother or father of the child
  - The leave application will have prior authorization by the HOD/Line Manager or Principal/CEO.
  - Leave must be taken within six (6) months of the date of the child's birth or legal adoption date.

- For more details regarding the leave policy, please visit the GEMS SharePoint home page link: https://gemsedu.sharepoint.com/Policies/SitePages/Default.aspx

Child Protection

Employees should ensure that the welfare of the child is paramount because all children have the right to protection from abuse. All adults who come into contact with students have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare.

Employees are required to disclose to their employer any instances of charges or convictions they may have received for offences associated with children, or any offences of a sexual or violent nature either before or during their employment with GEMS.

Please refer to the **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy** for further information.

Theft and Fraud

OOD is committed to taking all reasonable and appropriate steps to prevent acts of theft and fraud. Misappropriating, or embezzling funds, property or data belonging or entrusted to OOD or others, is strictly prohibited. We must not knowingly be party to such activity and must promptly report suspected fraud in accordance with the Whistleblowing Policy.

Bribery and Improper Payments

Bribery and other forms of corruption are strictly forbidden and put OOD as well as GEMS at risk. An employee must not offer anything of value to obtain an improper advantage in providing or receiving OOD or GEMS services. A bribe doesn't have to be cash, it can be anything of value that is offered in exchange for business favours, information, favourable treatment or similar matters.

OOD prohibits improper payments in all of our activities. We require proper accounting for all financial transactions, including proper record-keeping.

Media Protocols

Employees may not disclose information related to OOD's performance or activities that have not yet been made public.

All requests for interviews and/ or questions/ emails from the media should be forwarded to the Executive Principal.

Bullying and Harassment

Bullying is unacceptable conduct within OOD and GEMS and all reported incidents will be investigated. Bullying is any form of unreasonable behaviour that is directed against an individual or group by another individual or group and is derived from the misuse of power over the target of the behaviour, which may include: verbal abuse, shouting, excluding or isolating behaviour, deliberately withholding information for effective work performance, physical abuse, giving employees impossible assignments, etc. Whilst it is the responsibility of

all employees within OOD to ensure that the premises and facilities are free from harassment, line managers have a particular and clear responsibility to meet this requirement.

Harassment is unacceptable conduct within OOD and GEMS. Harassment is behaviour that can include sexual assault, stalking and harassing phone calls, or online comment, some of which are also crimes. Fair discipline, performance counselling or workplace control practices based only on performance issues do not, in themselves, constitute harassment. It is unacceptable, and in most jurisdiction, it is illegal, to discriminate against someone (applicant or employee) because of that person's race, colour, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability or genetic information. It is also unacceptable and, in most cases, illegal to retaliate against a person because he or she complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit.

OOD and GEMS Education are committed to maintaining a positive working environment for all that is free from bullying and harassment which will not be tolerated. Individuals who believe they have been subjected to bullying or harassment should refer to the policies on harassment and bullying on GEMS Intranet and report the behavior to the appropriate person. Employees who observe bullying or harassment within GEMS have a duty to report this to the designated person as per GEMS policy.

Working with Students

The welfare of the student is paramount.

- ✓ It is the responsibility of all adults to safeguard and promote the welfare of students. This includes those adults employed, commissioned or contracted to work with students whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- ✓ Adults who work with students are responsible for their own actions and behaviours and should avoid any conduct which could lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- ✓ Adults should work in an open and transparent way.
- ✓ The same professional standards should always be applied regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity.
- ✓ All adults have a responsibility to continually monitor and review their practice and to ensure that they follow the guidance contained in this document.

Physical Contact

Be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misunderstood by a student, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described.

- ✓ Never touch a student in a way which may be considered indecent.
- ✓ Always be prepared to report and explain actions and accept that all physical contact is open to scrutiny.
- ✓ Not indulge in rough and tumble play e.g. rolling, sliding, climbing, and laying on students or other adults.

- ✓ Always encourage students, where possible, to undertake self-care tasks independently e.g. dressing/undressing, using the faucet etc.
- ✓ Ensure if comfort needs to be offered it is provided in a developmentally/age-appropriate manner.
- ✓ Be transparent in any actions and always report to the DSL when and how comfort was offered to a distressed student.
- ✓ Be aware of cultural or religious views about touching and be sensitive to issues of gender.

Corporal Punishment

The use of corporal punishment is unacceptable to OOD and GEMS in any circumstance and it is unlawful in schools in the UAE. All students must be treated with respect and dignity even in circumstances where they display difficult or challenging behaviour.

Teachers should not use any form of negative verbal, physical or emotional communication to punish a student, correct a behaviour or achieve desired behaviour. Any sanctions or rewards used should be part of a behaviour management policy which is publicized and regularly reviewed.

This means that the teacher should not:

- ✓ use physical force as a form of punishment, this includes tugging, banging the table, pulling clothing or body etc.
- ✓ shout at students except as a warning in an emergency/safety situation e.g., running in front of a car.
- ✓ use verbal cues or physical gestures that could be interpreted as threatening, this includes swearing, cursing, screaming and shouting.

Online Conduct

Employees are prohibited from uploading, downloading, transferring or distributing any content (including text, images, sound, video, data, information or software) or otherwise use the service in a way that:

- ✓ depicts nudity of any sort;
- ✓ pornography expresses or advocates, incites pornography;
- ✓ misrepresents the source or anything you post or upload;
- ✓ provides or creates links to external sites that violate the Code of Conduct;
- ✓ is intended to harm or exploit minors;
- ✓ infringes copyright or includes content that is protected by intellectual property laws;
- ✓ threatens, stalks, defames an employee or group of employees for any reason; and/or
- ✓ attempts to impersonate an OOD employee.

Employees may use e-mail and web browsing for work-related purposes. All e-mail and web access logs may be monitored for compliance with this Code of Conduct. As OOD has the responsibility for its computer systems and networks, it has the right to make directions as to its use.

Employees must fully comply with the GEMS policies published on GEMS Intranet Portal or otherwise disseminated to the employees from time to time. All such policies are incorporated by reference into this Code of Conduct.

Any breach of this Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to termination of employment.

Employees are encouraged to report breaches of this Code of Conduct in accordance with the GEMS Whistleblowing Policy.

Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which adults can voice their concerns, made in good faith without fear of repercussion. GEMS has a Speak Out programme centrally available where adults who use the whistleblowing procedure are reassured that their rights are protected. Report any behaviour by adults or students that raises concern regardless of the source to the DSL/Principal. If the concern relates to the Principal, then report to GEMS Vice President of Safeguarding and Child Protection.

Follow the whistleblowing procedures including the use of Speak Out/complaints procedures where appropriate.

To support employees with navigating through decisions a list of questions is outlined below:

- ✓ Are my actions legal?
- ✓ Are my actions ethical?
- ✓ Would my actions harm the reputation of GEMS if they were revealed to the public?
- ✓ Am I comfortable with this action?
- ✓ Do my actions somehow harm the health, safety or reputation of others?
- ✓ Could my action be perceived as incorrect by others?
- ✓ Do I need to consult others before I undertake the actions?

All staff are responsible and accountable for their compliance with this Code of Conduct.

All Line Managers are responsible and accountable for ensuring their teams comply with this Code of Conduct at all times.

Dr. Sheeba Jojo
Principal