

# BHASVIC

## **STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT & MODEL OF PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR TRUST CULTURE STATEMENT SUPPORTING OUR COLLEAGUES**

**Last Updated: MAY 2024**

**Review Date: MAY 2027**

# Staff Code of Conduct and Model of Professional Behaviour

## 1 Purpose and Context

1.1 The purpose of this document is to provide a clear set of principles to guide staff in how they are expected to conduct themselves in their day to day work (the Code of Conduct) and how they should behave towards one another (the Model of Professional Behaviour).

1.2 Article 14 of the Articles of Government states that 'After consultation with staff, the Corporation shall make rules relating to the conduct of staff'.

1.3 Article 15 states that: 'In making rules under Article 14, the Corporation shall have regard to the need to ensure that academic staff at the institution have freedom within the law to question and test received wisdom, and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions, without placing themselves at risk of losing their jobs or any privileges which they may enjoy at the institution.'

1.4 The Corporation have delegated approval for any updates to this document to the Principal. All updates to this document go through SLT and JUMCoG.

## 2 Policy Statement

2.1 Even if it were desirable to do so, it would not be possible to write an exhaustive list of rules governing staff conduct. Staff should be trusted in the discharge of their responsibilities, which implies allowing room for initiative and judgement. In fairness to staff, however, it is important to set out guidance as to where the exercise of that initiative and judgement could potentially bring them into conflict with others.

2.2 There may be occasions when a member of staff wants to know how a particular aspect of conduct might be regarded, when measured against the Staff Code of Conduct. Staff should seek advice from the HR Manager in the first instance, or a member of SLT.

## 3 Scope

3.1 This Code of Conduct and Model of Professional Behaviour applies to all staff at the College, irrespective of anyone's position or role in the College, together with any agency/casual staff and any workers at the College who are here on a voluntary basis.

# Staff Code of Conduct

## 1. Working with Students

In their dealings with students the College expects that all staff will:

- Ensure their relationships with students are never of a kind that could compromise their professional responsibilities.
- Uphold their Safeguarding responsibilities in line with BHASVIC policy and procedures
- Promote College standards of student behaviour.

## 2. Working with Colleagues

Our Strategic Plan uses the phrase 'High Challenge, Low Threat' to describe our expectations around our working culture. We expect high standards of work and will treat staff as professionals who have relative autonomy to complete their duties in ways they best see fit. In turn, all staff at BHASVIC should treat one- another as professionals who collectively have the best interests of students at heart. We should assume the best from one-another but will deal with underperformance by exception on an individual basis.

Staff must adhere to the College's policies and procedures because their actions have consequences for others. If staff have any doubts or concerns about their own or a colleague's actions, they should seek advice from within their line management chain. All College Policies and Procedures are on the BHASVIC Intranet.

It is important to see BHASVIC's 'Trust culture' statement and 'Supporting our colleague's' documents in conjunction with this section of the code of conduct (See below).

## 3. Representing the College

In order to preserve the reputation of the College, staff must:

- Obtain approval from the Principal, or in the Principal's absence, the Deputy Principal, before contacting the press.
- Check with the relevant budget holder before committing College resources other than those for which they have responsibility.
- Take care over the use of College's name in association with all communication, in any format, whether virtual or otherwise, and in particular:
- Ensure that written communication conforms to the BHASVIC Organisational Visual Identity Manual.
- Check carefully, especially if they are uncertain, in regard to spelling, punctuation, grammar, content, factual accuracy and tone.
- Maintain professional standards of conduct towards others when acting in a College capacity including following the guidance on Alcohol at Work given in paragraph 7 of this document.
- Dress appropriately when acting in a professional capacity and with due regard for the conclusions others may draw from their attire (see below for further guidelines).
- Use appropriate language at all times.

## 4. Additional Professional Responsibilities

Whilst it is proper that staff should receive the rewards of their own professional and academic endeavours, it is also essential to the mutual interests of both staff and the College that these are not achieved at any cost to primary contractual commitments. To this end, staff should be clearly aware of the importance of ensuring that the Principal is kept informed as to their intentions in the following areas:

- Except in the case of employees with supply contracts, the proposed undertaking of additional paid employment that may lead to a conflict of interest.
- Any interest they may have regarding the appointment of staff, selection of students or contracts with which they may be involved on the College's behalf.
- Private tuition of BHASVIC students by BHASVIC staff for payment is not permitted. Private tutoring of non-BHASVIC students must be kept entirely separate from staff's College work and staff should not use College name, stationery, email, telephones or premises for this purpose.

In addition, staff are reminded that they are expected at all times to observe the following professional obligations:

- To preserve the confidentiality of information relating to the College's staff, students, finances, marketing and strategic planning, together with any further information rightly to be judged the property of the College (except as outlined in the Whistleblowing Policy)
- To preserve this same degree of confidentiality for twelve months after leaving the College's employment.
- In the event of their being offered hospitality or gifts of any kind to ensure that they comply with the College's Anti-Bribery Policy.
- To wear their College ID at all times so that it is visible to others.

## **5. College Property**

In order to preserve the quality of the College's environment and physical resources staff must ensure that:

- They, and students for whom they are responsible, look after College premises and property which they use
  - Procedures for borrowing College equipment are observed
  - Energy is conserved wherever possible
  - The security of College property is maintained as well as possible and not put at risk
- They pay the College for any significant costs incurred by the personal use of College equipment (e.g., photocopier).  
Staff should also assist with the security of the College by following the Strangers on Site procedures.

## **6. Staff Standard of Appearance**

Staff should be mindful that their clothing does not cause offence and that they dress appropriately for the occasion.

Staff professional discretion is key. If in doubt, ask. Managers may have supportive conversations with individuals on a needs basis about the appropriateness of clothing if and when necessary.

## **7. Alcohol consumed at BHASVIC related events**

The definition of 'at work' is wider in law than one might think. The College would, for example, be exposed to 'vicarious liability' if a member of staff behaved inappropriately while under the influence of alcohol during the course of their employment. In addition, an individual employee would also be personally liable for their actions. This applies even if the alcohol is consumed outside the College's timetabled day. 'Alcohol at work' should therefore be taken to mean 'alcohol consumed during, or directly following, a work-related activity'.

Within this definition, all staff have a duty to ensure their behaviour is not so affected by alcohol that they:

- infringe the College's Health and Safety, Dignity at Work or EDI policies;
- become a nuisance to other people;
- cause other people to feel they ought, or need to take responsibility for them;
- bring the reputation of the College into disrepute

All staff who are organising activities at which alcohol will be consumed must remind participating colleagues of the duty above. This can best be done by including the reminder in the invitation.

# The BHASVIC Model of Professional Behaviour

The BHASVIC Model of Professional Behaviour grew from discussions with all College staff. The following points should be noted:

- The Model is not a job description; nor does it attempt to describe a member of staff's sense of their vocation. Its purpose is to define how all staff should aspire to behave as they interact with one another. In essence, it helps clarify that what is needed from us at work is professional, rather than personal discretion: we have to ask 'What would best support the College Mission?' not, 'What would best suit me?'
- The Model is arguably open to the criticism that it is full of things that are obvious and with which no one could disagree. But the test of the Model is how far we live up to it. Like all College policy and strategy, the Model belongs to and applies to all staff equally, irrespective of anyone's position or role in the College.

## **A. Staff should support the College mission, Strategic Plan and processes All**

**staff should:**

- Demonstrate an awareness of the wider College context
- Demonstrate good time-management and personal organisation
- Act in accordance with College policy and procedures
- Manage collective decisions effectively even when they hold personal reservations

**In addition, all College managers should:**

- Demonstrate an understanding of the abilities, aptitudes, circumstances and roles of the staff they line- manage
- Enable the team they lead to understand the wider College context

## **B. We should all feel trusted and supported**

**All staff should:**

- In all their interactions with colleagues, assume the best of them
- Seek support when they need it, and offer it when appropriate
- Communicate with due consideration to time, place and manner
- Work collaboratively with all members of the College community
- Thank or praise colleagues when appropriate
- Be discreet whenever information needs to be treated confidentially

**In addition, all College managers should:**

- Delegate effectively and supportively
- Be visible, accessible and approachable
- Coach and mentor staff effectively where appropriate
- Seek or offer support, as appropriate, when difficult conversations are needed, ensuring that relevant College policy is understood
- Consult others when they are proposing changes, including seeking the views of other managers

### **C. Staff should be committed to continual improvement**

#### **All staff should:**

- Reflect on their own practice, and that of the College
- Propose, and welcome, new ideas and constructive feedback
- Be willing to modify their professional behaviour based on an understanding of how their colleagues perceive them

#### **In addition, all College managers should:**

- Create the conditions in which the team(s) they lead can perform to the best of their ability
- Respond to poor behaviour and performance (i.e. that detracts from or falls short of our mission and values or the model of professional behaviour) promptly and supportively
- Always take time to give staff the 'big picture'. This means (i) the fundamental whys and wherefores for doing something, (ii) everything that is involved and (iii) the timescales
- Involve all staff who are affected by a plan early enough for their views to shape it
- Be as clear as possible when planning, defining who will do what by when

## Trust-Culture Statement

Trust-culture is put to the test when things (are perceived to) have gone wrong. Preventing them going wrong in the first place is helped by all staff adhering to:

- Their job description
- The Staff Code of Conduct
- The BHASVIC Model of Professional Behaviour
- Supporting Our Colleagues
- The Protocol for Consultation with Staff

Trust, like blame, works in all directions in organisations: in the way managers think about those they manage – and vice versa; and between colleagues who don't share a line-management chain in common. All members of staff have a duty to promote trust in place of blame. It needs to be recognised, however, that from time to time, things will go wrong. When mistakes happen it normally helps to diffuse the situation if this can be acknowledged by the person who made the mistake.

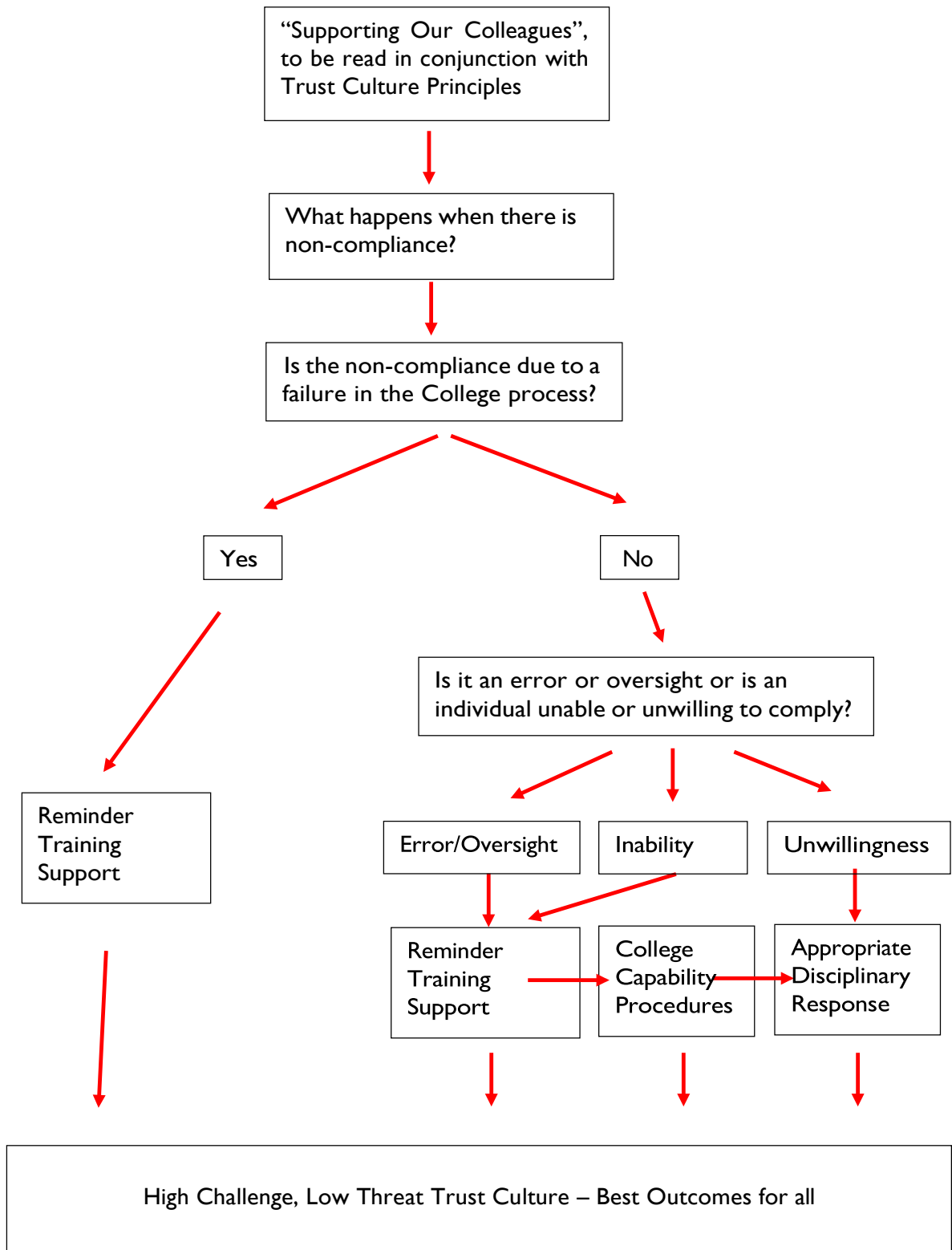
A culture of trust is created when all staff recognise their personal responsibility for acting with **integrity** – being open and honest and acting for the best possible reasons. When integrity is at the heart of staff interactions it is easy to recognise mistakes are made and the priority is to work cooperatively to resolve them irrespective of who originally made the mistake. This creates positive working partnerships with members of staff mutually supporting each other.

### Guidance when things are perceived to have gone wrong

1. **Think the best:** Whenever something seems to have gone wrong, begin by thinking the best rather than the worst of colleagues. Perhaps there is something that you don't yet know which makes perfect sense of things? Maybe there's been an honest, well-intentioned mistake? We are all human - so, we should always think the best of each other. Maybe this should become a College mantra.... Everyone should have a duty to say this to each other when they hear someone criticising someone else.
2. **Think before you act:** Are your initial assumptions about what's happened entirely correct or completely mistaken? How can you possibly know for certain if you don't find out? And as you find out, do it in a way that you would like it to be done to yourself.
3. **Do as you would be done by:** Imagine the person whom you might be tempted to blame was you. How would you want to be treated? How will this person be thinking about you? What emotions might they be feeling...guilt, anger, embarrassment, shame...? It may be best for you to say nothing to anybody until you genuinely can think about this person unemotionally and really as if they were you. This will:
  - Prevent taking up other colleagues' time with getting things off your chest
  - Prevent spreading bad feelings prematurely
  - Demonstrate respect – which is still owed – to a colleague who has annoyed or upset you
  - Enable you to make further, quicker progress in putting things right by being able to speak with the member of staff out of genuine concern for them.
4. **Expect accountability:** Because there is a framework of accountability at BHASVIC managers have to check on how things are going. This does not mean that managers distrust their colleagues; rather that they're keeping themselves informed as they are required to do.
5. **Contribute constructive feedback:** Trust culture means checking carefully before making a criticism. Informed feedback made constructively is absolutely essential for the health and progress of the College and is always to be welcomed. By the same token there is no place for cynicism at BHASVIC because automatically assuming the worst strikes at trust culture.



# 'SUPPORTING OUR COLLEAGUES' FLOW CHART



**Final Note**

The model is not intended to prevent or deter any member of staff from expressing concerns about their working environment or Colleagues, or making complaints of any other nature. Anyone wishing to do so should speak to their line manager or the HR department.

**Related documents:****Staff and general documents:**

- Absence and payments for Additional Work for External Organisations
- Absence Management Policy
- Acceptable Use of Computers (Staff) Policy
- Anti-Bribery Policy
- BHASVIC Staff Handbook
- Changing Staff Contracts Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Children of Staff on Site Policy
- College Mission Statement and Values Statement
- Complaints Policy
- Conditions of Service Handbooks
- Contracts of Employment
- Credit Card Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Directed Time Guidelines for teachers
- Disciplinary Policy
- Environment Policy
- EDI Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Probation Policy
- Professional Development Review (PDR) Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Development Policy
- Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Staff References Policy
- Visual Identity Manual
- Whistleblowing Policy

**Student documents:**

- Admissions Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- College Charter
- Educational Visits Policy
- Marketing Policy and Codes of Conduct
- Student Planner