



Staff Code of Conduct

Rangitikei College

Introduction

The Rangitikei College Board of Trustees has a statutory obligation to be a good employer and we personally recognise the importance of treating staff fairly and properly in all aspects of their employment.

In return, the board recognises the trusted position school employees have in the community. Therefore it expects a high standard of behaviour from all of its staff. All staff are expected to identify with, and have a commitment to, the philosophy and values of the school, and to demonstrate that commitment in the performance of their duties.

All staff and Board members are expected to be familiar with these expectations. This document is to clarify and develop a shared understanding of them.

Please note this should be read alongside the 'Staff Digital Responsible Use Agreement'.

Board Chair

Rangitikei College Board of Trustees

1. Purpose of the Code

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assist you to know and understand the minimum standards of conduct and behaviour expected of you as an employee of the Rangitikei College Board of Trustees.

This reflects the basic requirements of professionalism, integrity and courtesy needed to ensure that we provide a quality education to our students, and that a pleasant and safe working environment exists for all staff and students.

a. Coverage:

The Code applies to all employees of the Rangitikei College Board of Trustees including permanent, temporary, and casual employees. This Code forms part of your employment with the board.

b. Principles of Conduct:

The Code of Conduct establishes three principles of conduct which all staff are expected to observe. These are:

- i. You should fulfil your lawful obligations to the Rangitikei College Board of Trustees with professionalism and integrity.
- ii. You should perform your official duties honestly, faithfully and efficiently, respecting the rights of the students, the school community and your colleagues.
- iii. You should not bring your employer into disrepute through your activities, whether inside *or* outside school. Activities outside the school are not likely to be acceptable if they:
 - a. damage the standing or reputation of the school because of the position you hold in it;
 - b. interfere with the proper performance of your duties.

c. Shared expectations:

Rangitikei College Board of Trustees can operate effectively and provide a quality educational outcome when there is a shared expectation between the board (as the employer) and its employees. This is a two-way commitment that benefits both the employer and employee when expectations are met.

Set out below is a summary of the expectations that Rangitikei College Board of Trustees, as the employer, has of you, and the expectations that you, as an employee, may have of the board.

Rangitikei College Board of Trustees expectations of staff

Rangitikei College Board of Trustees expects you to:

- work within the law with honesty and integrity;
- comply with all lawful and reasonable instructions;
- comply with the policies of the Rangitikei College Board of Trustees
- work diligently and meet the requirements of your employment agreement;
- demonstrate the school values of Respect, Excellence and Participation;
- respect the rights of colleagues, students and the school community.

Obligations of Rangitikei College Board of Trustees to staff

As a good employer, we are committed to meeting the following staff expectations:

- a commitment to the spirit and principles of the Treaty of Waitangi;
- opportunities for equal employment, including recognition of:
 - the aims and aspirations of Māori and ethnic or minority groups;
 - the employment needs of Māori, Pacific Island, ethnic or minority groups, women, and people with disabilities;
- impartial and open selection and appointment procedures;
- fair rates of remuneration for skill, responsibilities and performance;
- an up-to-date job description that provides clear statements of your duties and your employer's expectations of you;
- adequate training and equipment to perform your duties;
- regular and appropriate feedback and communication on your work performance;
- effective communication of information;
- good and safe working conditions;
- opportunity for the enhancement of your abilities;
- freedom from harassment or discrimination in the workplace;
- a commitment to a supportive and confidential Employee Assistance Programme;
- appropriate disciplinary and dispute procedures, and the opportunity for redress against unfair or unreasonable treatment by the employer.

For the purposes of this code, the Board delegates to the Principal the responsibilities of employer unless deemed inappropriate or otherwise by the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

2. Codes of Behaviour

If you have any prior criminal convictions, you are required to inform Rangitikei College Board of Trustees about them before accepting employment with the school. If you do not disclose this information or are not truthful about it, disciplinary action could be taken against you which could lead to dismissal.

You are to avoid any activity, either work-related or private, which could reflect badly on Rangitikei College Board of Trustees in its relationships with the school community. This means that you are to inform the Principal in writing if:

- you apply for bankruptcy or become bankrupt;
- criminal charges or convictions that occur while you are employed by Rangitikei College Board of Trustees. This may include, for example, charges that involve loss of trust between you and the board, or charges that damage the reputation of the school;
- you undertake secondary employment in an activity that may be seen as interfering with your primary duties, that could be perceived as reflecting negatively on the school.

Note that non-teaching staff are required to undergo a satisfactory police vet on appointment and every three years subsequently. Teaching staff are required to maintain a current Practising Certificate, which includes a police vet.

a. Performance of Duties

Employees are expected to carry out their duties in an efficient and competent manner.

This means that you are expected to:

- comply with the law;
- comply with all lawful and reasonable instructions and work as directed by your employer or their duly delegated representative;
- perform your duties according to the legislation, policies and procedures of Rangitikei College Board of Trustees;
- comply with any other code of ethics or practice that may apply to your profession (e.g. Education Council of Aotearoa-New Zealand *Code of Professional Responsibility and Standards for the Teaching Profession*);
- perform your work to an agreed standard;
- show proper and reasonable care when using board property, resources or funds;
- contact your employer as soon as practicable if you are to be absent from work due to sickness or an emergency.

You are expected to obtain permission from your employer to:

- be absent from your workplace during work hours;
- enter into any contract or agreement on behalf of Rangitikei College Board of Trustees. The board will not accept responsibility for any unauthorised action.

Failure to observe these standards of conduct by a staff member may result in disciplinary action, which could include termination of employment.

Examples of behaviour that would be considered unacceptable by the board include:

- ignoring lawful and reasonable instructions from your employer;
- being under the influence of alcohol, drugs or solvents impeding your performance during working hours;
- giving false information (eg: stating you have a driver's licence when you don't; making a false claim for expenses, submitting a false timesheet);
- failing to declare information that is requested when you apply for employment with Rangitikei College Board of Trustees (eg: having a revoked driver's licence or a criminal conviction);
- anything that results in a clear lack of trust between the employer and yourself;
- misusing school equipment or property, including using it for personal use without permission;

b. Appropriate Relationships with Students

You should recognise the sensitivity of the situation of students under Rangitikei College Board of Trustees care and control and show respect for, and protect, their dignity.

- No employee is to have a romantic or sexual relationship with any person under the age of 16 or any student of the school.

- No employee is to have a sexual, familial or financial relationship with a student or young person with whom they have a professional relationship arising from their employment with the board.

You must inform your employer if a person to whom you are related, or with whom you are having or previously had any personal, sexual or financial relationship, comes within the ambit of your professional responsibilities.

c. **Respect for the Rights of Others**

While you are employed by Rangitikei College Board of Trustees you have a duty to treat your colleagues, students and the public with courtesy and respect. This means that you are expected to:

- Avoid behaviour that might distress other employees or disrupt the workplace.
- Ensure that any workplace relationships do not have a negative effect on your work performance.
- Respect the privacy of individuals when dealing with personal information.
- Be non-judgemental by not harassing or discriminating against your colleagues or students on the basis of their gender, age, disability, marital status, and ethnicity, religious or ethical beliefs or sexual orientation.
- You must not have or bring into the workplace any material that may be viewed as racist or sexist, that is pornographic, or that is otherwise offensive to the board or its staff.

Failure to observe these standards of conduct by a staff member may result in disciplinary action, which could include termination of employment.

Examples of behaviour that would be considered unacceptable by the board include:

- the use of abusive, obscene or threatening language or behaviour to your colleagues or the public;
- misuse, abuse or improper use of your position or of any statutory authorities or powers that may be delegated to you.

d. **Conflicts of Interest and Integrity**

You are expected to be honest, fair and impartial when you perform your duties. This means that:

- You should not show **bias** to an individual student. Everyone should be treated fairly.
- In general, you are not to approve anything that will result in **expenditure in respect of yourself** (eg: increased salary, travel expenses, a training course, your own overtime, unapproved time-in-lieu, reimbursement of expenses etc).
- You are not to lend money to, or borrow money, or otherwise enter into **financial relationships** with staff or students. The amount of money lent or borrowed could imply indebtedness that could lead to a conflict of interest in formal work relationships.
- You must inform the employer if you are involved in, or have a **personal or financial interest or commitment** to, any activity that may conflict, or could be seen by others to conflict, with the performance of your duties and the goals of the school.

This includes situations such as:

- having a close family member, relation or partner working with you;

- when a member of your family or a person that you know enters into a professional relationship with the school. Under no circumstances are you to become professionally involved, or in any way try to influence that relationship, or obstruct staff in performing their duties.
- When a student you have a close family relationship is enrolled at the school.

A financial interest or commitment includes:

- company directorships;
 - shareholdings;
 - offers of additional employment outside the school.
- You must inform the Rangitikei College Board of Trustees if you are a member of (or plan to become a member of) or have a family involvement in a trust or community organisation which is funded by or otherwise linked to the school.
 - Some employees, such as teachers, are required to abide by a **professional code of ethics**. These employees must inform Rangitikei College Board of Trustees if there are any conflicts between their professional codes of ethics and the duties they are directed to perform.
 - You should consult with your employer before taking up **other paid employment** where that other paid employment could interfere with the performance of your duties at Rangitikei College Board of Trustees.
 - You may not seek any form of **reward** (including gifts, favours or fees) for performing your duties as an employee. Gifts or rewards can be seen as bribes or inducements that put you under an obligation to someone other than the Rangitikei College Board of Trustees. While it is acceptable to receive a gift of a low value, if you are offered any form of reward or gift valued at \$100.00 or more, you should inform your employer who will decide the appropriate response.
 - **Participation in public bodies or voluntary associations.** You must inform your employer if you are participating in a public or voluntary organisation (or intend to) and there are actual or potential conflicts between your responsibilities and duties as a staff member of Rangitikei College Board of Trustees, and your responsibilities and duties to the other organisation. Where it is considered there is a potential conflict of interest, appropriate arrangements will need to be made to avoid or resolve the conflict.

For example:

- It could be interpreted as a conflict of interest if you are a member of (or plan to become a member of) or have a family involvement in a trust or community organisation which is funded by or otherwise linked to Rangitikei College Board of Trustees.
- If you intend to stand for Parliament you must discuss this with your employer, to arrange leave. (This will commence at an agreed date, as per the *Electoral Act 1993*.)
- You become a member of another school's Board of Trustees.

You should speak to your employer if you are unsure whether or not a particular situation is, or could be seen to be, a conflict of interest.

e. Security/Confidentiality

You are expected to maintain the highest standards of confidentiality and security in the workplace.

This means that you are not to:

- use the boards' computer systems in any way that may corrupt or disrupt their normal function;
- access, or attempt to access, machines or networks by unauthorised means – for example unauthorised use of dial-in modems;
- use information related to the boards' systems for anything other than authorised purposes;
- bring into the workplace via the email or Internet system, or by any other means, any material that is pornographic, or that may be viewed as racist or sexist;
- give your computer password/security card to any other person, including members of staff, without good and justifiable reason;
- leave a record of your password anywhere obvious so that someone else may see it.

Ownership of Information

Rangitikei College Board of Trustees owns all data stored on computer systems. Management has the right to access and view this information at any time.

The network is monitored and staff found using the system inappropriately may face disciplinary action.

Computer Software

Only software authorised by the board can be loaded onto the school's computer systems. Any software loaded onto any Rangitikei College Board of Trustees equipment must have a valid licence with proof of ownership. Copyright laws must be respected.

Use of the Internet and Email System

The internet and email system, including school email addresses, are for school purposes and must not be misused. While it is acceptable to send or receive business messages from outside the school, users should be aware that this information might not be secure outside the school.

School laptops

Staff using school laptops will be deemed to be using them as if on the school site during school hours. Therefore any use of them considered unacceptable at school during work hours (eg. accessing pornographic sites) will be considered equally unacceptable if accessed from home outside school hours.

Retention of Data

Rangitikei College Board of Trustees is required to retain information in accordance with the Archives Act 1957. This means that you cannot delete business-critical data from the computer system without permission.

f. Official Information

The disclosure or release of official information is subject to the *Official Information Act 1982*. Information related to Rangitikei College Board of Trustees, its suppliers or the users of its services, is to be treated at all times as confidential to the board and is to be used by employees for official purposes only.

Employees of Rangitikei College Board of Trustees are also subject to the provisions of the *Privacy Act 1993*. The main object of this Act is to promote and protect personal information and it seeks to give individuals some measure of control over personal information about themselves.

Release of Official Information

Official information must only be released by authorised employees, and only in accordance with the procedures as stated in the Official Information Act. Board instructions about the release of official information must also be followed.

It is not to be released to the media or the public without the proper authorisation. For example, staff may not remove or copy school documents or records for external use without approval from the principal.

It should never be used for personal motives.

Unacceptable Behaviour

Failure to observe these standards of conduct by a staff member may result in disciplinary action, which could include termination of employment.

Examples of behaviour that would be considered unacceptable by the Rangitikei College Board of Trustees include:

- providing information outside Rangitikei College without proper authority;
- using board information for unauthorised purposes;
- using school information to support personal motives;
- breaching the Privacy Act in respect of employees, suppliers or users of board services.

g. Public/media comment

Staff members should not respond to requests from the media for comment on matters relating to the school unless given specific authority to do so from the Principal or Board Chair. Only authorised staff members should respond to media requests for comment on such matters.

If the media makes an approach to you, inform your principal/board so they can respond to the media request.

Failure to observe these standards of conduct by a staff member may result in disciplinary action, which could include termination of employment.

Examples of behaviour that would be considered unacceptable by the board include:

- publicly commenting on matters relating to individual students;
- giving the impression that you are expressing the views of the Rangitikei College Board of Trustees when you are actually stating your own personal views;
- making a personal attack on a fellow staff or Board of Trustees member
- publically disparaging the school.

3. Breaches of the Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct describes the standards of behaviour expected of staff. As outlined in the Code, behaviour or actions that are considered unacceptable by Rangitikei College Board of Trustees may result in disciplinary action against the employee concerned, which could include termination of employment.

Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary action is about problem solving. Rangitikei College Board of Trustees is concerned to identify problems associated with performance or behaviour, and to make sure that the process for fixing those problems is prompt, consistent and fair. In general, disciplinary procedures include informal or formal disciplinary action along the following lines:

1. Informal Disciplinary Action:

- discussion of the problem;
- assistance to help overcome the problem;
- referral to the Employee Assistance Programme, if appropriate;
- temporary transfer to other duties.

2. Formal Disciplinary Action:

- oral warning;
- written warning;
- removal of discretionary conditions of employment (ie: delegations, flexible working hours, etc.);
- transfer to other duties at existing salary;
- transfer to another position with reduced pay (but not below the minimum rate for that position);
- suspension (with or without pay);
- dismissal with notice;
- dismissal without notice.

Other options may be considered, depending on the circumstances of the case.

Whether disciplinary action is informal or formal, the Rangitikei College Board of Trustees will make sure that the disciplinary procedures are fair. This means that:

- (a) You must be told of your right to request union, legal or other assistance and/or representation.
- (b) You must be told of the specific behaviour or performance that is causing concern, and given a reasonable opportunity to provide an explanation.
- (c) You must be told, where appropriate, of the action that is required to amend or improve your behaviour or performance, and be given a reasonable opportunity to do so.
- (d) The Board must undertake an appropriate investigation before any substantive disciplinary action is taken.
- (e) If the offence is sufficiently serious, an employee is to be placed on suspension pending investigation.
- (f) An oral warning would usually precede a written warning, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct.
- (g) It is a requirement that the process and result of any disciplinary action are recorded in writing, read and signed by you (the employee), and then placed on your personal file.

In general terms, no disciplinary papers will go on your file unless you have seen them or have been given a genuine opportunity to see them. If you are not satisfied with the disciplinary action taken, you have the right to pursue a personal grievance. This procedure is outlined in your employment agreement.

Nothing in this Code abrogates rights or responsibilities that form part of legislation or individual or collective employment agreements.

Furthermore, teachers employed at this school are required to meet the *Code of Professional Responsibility and Standards for the Teaching Profession. Our Code Our Standards*. The Code sets out the high standards for ethical behaviour that are expected of every teacher. The Standards describe the expectations of effective teaching practice. Together they set out what it is, and what it means, to be a teacher in Aotearoa-New Zealand.

Acknowledgement of Receipt of Code of Conduct

I (name)

acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Code of Conduct issued

I have also been advised outlining my obligations under the Code.

I undertake to uphold the Code of Conduct, and understand that a breach of the Code may lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal.

Signed *Date*

(remove this page from code and place original on employee's personal file)