

# Harare International School – Code of Conduct

## Strategic Policies

[To be composed by Board in 2019-20]

### HIS Code of Conduct

Harare International School is committed to the safety and protection of children. This Code of Conduct applies to all employees and volunteers who represent the school and who interact with students in both a direct and/or unsupervised capacity.

The public and private conduct of employees, students, and volunteers acting on behalf of Harare International School can inspire and motivate those with whom they interact, or can cause great harm if inappropriate. We must, at all times, be aware of the responsibilities that accompany our work.

We should be aware of our own and other persons' vulnerability, especially when working alone with students, and be particularly aware that we are responsible for maintaining physical, emotional, and sexual boundaries in such interactions. We must avoid any covert or overt sexual behaviours with those for whom we have responsibility. This includes seductive speech or gestures as well as physical contact that exploits, abuses, or harasses. We are to provide safe environments for students at HIS.

We must show prudent discretion before touching another person, especially students, and be aware of how physical touch will be perceived or received, and whether it would be an appropriate expression of greeting, care, concern, or celebration. HIS employees and volunteers are prohibited at all times from physically disciplining a child.

Physical contact with students can be misconstrued both by the recipient and by those who observe it, and should occur only when completely nonsexual and otherwise appropriate, and never in private. One-on-one meetings with a student are best held in a public area; in a room where the interaction can be (or is being) observed; or in a room with the door left open, and another member or supervisor is notified about the meeting.

We must intervene when there is evidence of, or there is reasonable cause to suspect, that students are being abused in any way. Suspected abuse or neglect must be reported to the appropriate school authorities as described in the relevant procedures of the school.

Employees and volunteers should refrain from the illegal possession and/or illegal use of drugs and/or alcohol at all times, and from the use of tobacco products, alcohol and/or drugs when working with students. Adults should never buy alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, videos, or reading material that is inappropriate and give it to students. Employees and volunteers should not give gifts to students without the knowledge of their parents or guardians. Staff should check that any small gifts are given with the knowledge of the parent or guardian.

Communication with students is governed by the key safety concept of transparency. The following steps will reduce the risk of private or otherwise inappropriate communication between HIS parents, employees, volunteers, and students:

- Communication between HIS (including volunteers) and students that is outside the role of the professional or volunteer relationship (teacher, coach, host, etc.) needs to be communicated to parents.
- Where possible, email exchanges between a student and a person acting on behalf of the school are to be made using a school email address.
- Electronic communication that takes place over a school network or platform may be subject to monitoring.

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- Employees and volunteers who use any form of online communications including social media (Whatsapp, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and text messaging to communicate with students may only do so for activities involving school business.

### **Statement of Acknowledgement of Code of Conduct for Signature**

I promise to follow the rules and guidelines in this Code of Conduct as a condition of providing services to the students participating in HIS programs.

#### **I will:**

- Treat everyone with respect, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- Never be alone with students at school activities without another adult being notified or behind closed doors.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than negative criticism, detrimental competition or comparison when working with students.
- Maintain appropriate physical boundaries at all times and touch students - when necessary - only in ways that are appropriate, public, and non-sexual.
- Comply with the reporting procedures of HIS to report suspected child abuse.
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of students.

#### **I will not:**

- Touch or speak to a student in sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Inflict any physical or emotional abuse such as striking, spanking, shaking, slapping, humiliating, ridiculing, threatening, or degrading students.
- Smoke or use tobacco products, or possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at any time while working with students.
- Give a student who is not my own child a ride home alone without the knowledge and permission of their parents or guardians.
- Accept gifts from or give gifts to students without the knowledge of their parents or guardians.
- Engage in private communications with students via text messaging, WhatsApp, email, Facebook, Twitter or similar forms of electronic or social media except for activities strictly involving school business, without informing parents.
- Use profanity in the presence of students at any time.

I understand that as a person working with and/or providing services to students under the auspices of HIS, I am subject to a criminal history background check. My signature confirms that I have read this Code of Conduct and that as a person working with students I agree to follow these standards. I understand that any action inconsistent with this Code of Conduct or failure to take action mandated by this Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal from Harare International School.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature/Date: \_\_\_\_\_