

BEDFORD COLLEGE

Code of Ethics

A. General

1. In all college activities, the college develops and promotes practices relevant to its mission to provide high quality learning opportunities for students.
2. As an institution within the public sector, the college accepts that those practices are in conformity with the principles laid down by the Nolan Committee for those holding public office, namely: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
3. The college recognizes its obligations to all those with whom it has dealings - students, employees, employers, suppliers, other educational institutions and the wider community - and also to the taxpayer.
4. The reputation of the college and the trust and confidence of those with whom it deals is one of its most vital resources, the protection of which is of fundamental importance.
5. The college demands and maintains the highest ethical standards in carrying out its activities.
6. In its dealings with individuals, the college adheres to the principles of natural justice.
7. The college encourages a culture of openness aimed at ensuring that matters connected with the operation of the college can be discussed frankly with staff and students. It has adopted procedures which will enable concerns to be raised (sometimes known as 'whistleblowing') on a confidential basis, where that is appropriate, both inside, and if necessary outside, the organization.
8. The college is committed to securing equality of opportunity for staff and students alike.

B. Students

1. The college believes that respect, openness and honesty in dealing with its students or prospective students are a prerequisite for success, and an important statement of the values it offers.
2. The college does not deliberately give inadequate or misleading information on its learning programmes or other services.
3. In all advertising and public communications, the college avoids untruths, concealment and overstatement about its programmes and achievements.

4. The college avoids recruitment practices which involve the offer of improper financial or other inducements to students.
5. The college makes all reasonable attempts to deliver learning programmes and support services to meet the individual needs of students, efficiently and effectively to accepted quality standards, and takes steps to rectify any shortcomings in the service delivered.
6. Learning support, information, advice and guidance offered to students is impartial and guided by the best interests of the student.
7. The college publishes a charter setting out what students and others can expect of the college and details of its complaints and appeals procedures. It deals with all students with equal care and respect.
8. The college ensures that complaints are dealt with fairly, openly and efficiently.
9. The college publishes a student involvement strategy which sets out how it encourages students to participate in college life and to express their views openly and honestly.
10. Within the requirements of the law and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, the college maintains the confidentiality of information on individual students.

C. Educational Partners

1. The college competes and collaborates honestly with other educational institutions offering similar learning opportunities.
2. The college does not seek to damage the reputation of competitors either directly or by innuendo.
3. The college provides information on individual students to the Connexions Careers Service and other institutions engaged in providing for the learning needs of the student in accordance with agreed procedures, within the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and any other legal requirements.
4. The college does not seek to acquire information regarding competitors by unfair or disreputable means.
5. The college does not engage in unfair or restrictive practices in regard to the recruitment or retention of students.
6. The college consults with partners who might be affected on any significant proposals for change in the learning programmes or services it offers.

D. Corporation

1. The Corporation has adopted a Code of Conduct for itself consistent with the principles laid down by the Nolan Committee and the requirements of its Instrument and Articles of Government.
2. The Corporation requires the maintenance of a register of members' interests which is open to inspection by the public. Corporation members are required to register those interests which are of relevance to the work of the college, in sufficient detail to allow the nature of those interests to be understood by enquirers.
3. The Corporation seeks to ensure that its members are appointed on merit and are drawn widely from the community it serves, having regard to the need for continuity and freshness, and for a range of skills and interests.
4. The Corporation is responsible for determining the educational character and mission of the college and for oversight of its activities; for the effective and efficient use of resources, the solvency of the corporation, and the safeguarding of its assets; for the approving of annual estimates of income and expenditure; and for the appointment, discipline, pay and conditions of service of staff, in accordance with the Articles of Government.
5. The Corporation has adopted procedures which ensure sound financial decision-making, control and monitoring to meet the requirements of the funding body and public audit.
6. The Corporation ensures that information on its decisions and the work of the college is made widely available, having regard to proper confidentiality.

E. Management and Staff

1. The college has adopted a Code of Conduct for its employees, based on similar principles to that for the Corporation.
2. The staff Code of Conduct forbids employees from soliciting or accepting inducements in respect of any matter connected with the operation of the college.
3. The college respects the freedom within the law of staff to question and test received wisdom, and to put forward new ideas or controversial or unpopular opinions, without placing their employment in jeopardy. Communication in the college allows for staff involvement, and open and honest expression of views.
4. As Accounting Officer for the college under the Financial Memorandum, the Chief Executive is responsible for the propriety of financial decision making, and advises the Corporation of any requirements in respect of matters before it.

F. External Relationships

1. The college recognizes that it has a responsibility to the community it serves and takes steps to ensure that information on its activities is made widely available.
2. The college is responsive to its community and within the framework of its own mission statement seeks to provide programmes and services relevant to the needs of individuals and employers.
3. The college provides timely and accurate information on individual students to employers or other providing sponsorship, within the confines of the Data Protection Act 1998 and any other relevant legal requirements.

G. Compliance and Verification

1. The college requires all its employees to adhere to its Code of Conduct for staff.
2. The college has created mechanisms by which employees and students can express genuinely held concerns about behaviour or decisions they perceive to involve serious impropriety, and have them investigated, with every reasonable assurance of confidentiality as appropriate.
3. The Clerk is responsible for monitoring adherence to the Corporation Code of Conduct by members of the Corporation, investigating alleged breaches and reporting them in accordance with agreed policy.
4. The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that breaches of the Code of Conduct by members of staff are investigated and appropriate action is taken.
5. The college auditors may be asked to report on any practice which appears to breach the code.
6. The Code of Ethics is available both on the college intranet and the college website.

[Reference is made to the college Code of Ethics in the Code of Conduct for Corporation Members]

*[Approved by the Corporation, 9.2.99, Resolution 4;
reviewed by Corporate Governance Committee, 29.04.03;
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