



Cabella International
Sahaja School

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

10 June 2024

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Appendix 1:

CISS Code of Conduct for Staff Agreement

Executive summary

It is part of the mission of CISS to create the security of a family-like environment for students to live and learn, based on caring, respectful and trusting relationships between all staff and students.

School staff are key in developing such a culture: they are role models and reference points for the children. They must at all times adhere to behaviour that models the highest possible standards. Staff directly involved in the education and care of the children are expected to be practicing Sahaja Yogis, imbibing the high moral values of Sahaja Yoga according to the teachings of H.H. Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi.

While we promote a culture of trust, we are aware that staff members coming from different backgrounds may have different views on what is reasonable professional behaviour in a school, and that it is possible that people may enter the school with less than positive intentions.

Therefore, this Code of Conduct sets out clear common guidelines for the creation and maintenance of a healthy, caring and safe school environment. It applies to all staff and volunteers working for the school.

The following are the core elements of this code:

1. The safety and welfare of students is paramount.
2. Staff demonstrate self-awareness and responsibility for their own actions and behaviour and must avoid any conduct which would lead to reasonable questioning of their intentions.
3. Staff should work and be seen to work in an open and transparent way. As a general rule, one-to-one meetings between staff and students behind closed doors are to be avoided.
4. Physical contact with students (e.g. cuddles, taking a student on the lap) is always initiated by the need of the child and must be appropriate to the age, understanding and gender of the student.
5. All staff should be familiar with the Child Protection Policy and understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect students, including the duty to report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The Code of Conduct is designed to give a detailed reference for various situations and to provide guidance in case of doubts or concerns.

Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including dismissal, and where necessary, referral to the relevant authorities.

A. Introduction

1. Background

Cabella International Sahaja School (CISS) is a small international boarding school of approximately 50 children of primary school age from all over the world. Our approach to education is inspired by the teachings of Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi and the practice of Sahaja Yoga meditation. We believe that children will thrive if they are provided with a safe, loving learning environment in which their dignity, innocence and sense of self are respected and allowed to flourish.

Our vision

To empower tomorrow's generation to be the catalyst of inspired change

Our mission

We support our pupils to fulfil their spiritual, social and academic potential, by providing

- the security of a loving family environment,
 - stimulating learning experiences,
 - artistic and creative activities,
- and through the practice of Sahaja Yoga meditation.

Our values

Innocence and Wisdom
Compassion and Joy
Humility and Respect
Introspection and Resilience
Courage and Virtue
Balance and Dynamism
Generosity and Collaboration

2. Purpose

Relationships between staff, employees, governors, contractors, visitors, volunteers, pupils and their parents, guardians or carers should be based on care and mutual respect. This Code has been formulated in order to maintain this balance.

The purpose of the Code is to:

- a) set out the expectations of standards and behaviour to be maintained within the School;
- b) confirm and reinforce the professional responsibilities of Staff (both teaching and non-teaching);
- c) clarify the legal position in relation to sensitive aspects of Staff / pupil relationships;
- d) help adults establish safe practices and reduce the risk of false accusations or improper conduct.

3. Application

The Code of Conduct (**Code**) applies to all Staff working in the School (**School**), whether paid or unpaid, whatever their position, role or responsibilities. Staff (**Staff**) includes employees, governors, contractors, and volunteers.

It is the duty of every member of Staff to observe the rules and obligations in this Code. The guidance must be followed unless there is a good reason not to follow it in an exceptional situation.

The School also has a duty of care to its staff, parents, guardians or carers and pupils and the implementation of the practices in this Code will help to discharge that duty.

B. Guiding Principles

Principles for all Staff

1. All Staff directly involved in the education and care of the children should be practising Sahaja Yogis (**Sahaja Yogi**), dedicated to deepening their meditation on a daily basis and imbibing the values of Sahaja Yoga (**Sahaja Yoga**), according to the teachings of H.H. Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi.
2. All Staff should know and embrace the School's ethos (**Ethos**), as enshrined in its vision, mission and values.
3. All Staff should strive to establish a feeling of family where people care for each other and provide an emotional setting that gives a strong sense of belonging and security to the children, by:
 - a) showing care, compassion and benevolence in all interaction with pupils;
 - b) being role models and reference points for the children in the way they interact with each other and with pupils;
 - c) listening to pupils, taking them seriously and respecting their dignity as individuals;
 - d) being aware that they are in a position of trust (i.e. the adult is in a position of power or influence over the pupil due to his or her work); that the relationship is not a relationship between equals and that this position must never be used to intimidate, bully, humiliate, coerce or threaten pupils.
4. All Staff should work as part of a unified Staff team by:
 - a) developing productive and supportive relationships with colleagues;
 - b) avoiding workplace gossip and negativity as it breeds resentment and becomes a barrier to effective communication and collaboration – all members of staff have a duty to take active steps to divert conversations away from this if they come across it;
 - c) exercising any management responsibilities in a respectful, inclusive and fair manner;
 - d) complying with all School policies and procedures;
 - e) participating in the School's development and improvement activities;
 - f) recognising the role of the School in the life of the Sahaja Yoga community and of the World Foundation;
 - g) recognising the role of the School in the life of the local community;
 - h) upholding the School's reputation and standing within the local community and building trust and confidence in it.

5. All Staff should maintain public trust and confidence in the School by:
 - a) demonstrating honesty and integrity;
 - b) understanding and upholding their duty to safeguard the welfare of children and young people;
 - c) maintaining reasonable standards of behaviour whether inside or outside of normal School hours and whether on or off the School's site;
 - d) maintaining an effective learning environment.

Additional principles for teachers and boarding staff

6. Teachers and boarding staff make the education of students their first concern, by:
 - a) helping pupils to become confident and successful learners;
 - b) managing behaviour effectively to ensure a safe and friendly environment;
 - c) meeting the professional standards for teaching and pastoral care applicable to their role and position within the School;
 - e) reflecting on their current practice and seeking out opportunities to develop knowledge, understanding and skills.
7. Teacher and boarding staff should establish productive relationships with parents, guardians or carers by:
 - a) providing accessible and accurate information about their child's progress;
 - b) involving them in important decisions about their child's education and care.

Additional principles for Sahaja Yogi members of staff

8. Sahaja Yogi members of staff should look after their subtle body and strive to maintain their state of yoga by:
 - a) practicing Sahaja Yoga meditation and techniques as part of their daily routine;
 - b) attending the collective meditations, havans and pujas which are part of the school routine and/or scheduled by the principal;
 - c) developing their knowledge and understanding of Sahaja Yoga by listening to Shri Mataji's speeches;
 - d) respecting Sahaja Yoga dharma.

C. General Conduct

1. **General:** Staff should take on the responsibilities of their role with enthusiasm and be accountable for the work they do. They should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity and commit to staying up-to-date with and following the school policies and work procedures.
2. **School property:** Staff must take proper care when using School property and must not use School property for any unauthorised use or for private gain.
3. **Use of premises:** Staff must not carry out on School premises any work or activity other than pursuant to their terms and conditions of employment without the prior permission of the Principal.

4. **Behaviour of others:** Staff should be aware that the behaviour of their partner or other family members may raise concerns. Such concerns will be given careful consideration as to whether they constitute a potential risk to children at the School.

D. Safeguarding

1. **Safeguarding practice:** All Staff should put the wellbeing, development and progress of pupils first by:
 - a) taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils under their supervision;
 - b) using professional expertise and judgement for the best interests of pupils in their care;
 - c) demonstrating self-awareness and taking responsibility for their own actions and for providing help and support to pupils;
 - d) being familiar with the School's Child Protection procedures;
 - e) raising concerns about the practices of teachers or other professionals where these may have a negative impact on pupils' learning or progress, or may put pupils at risk;
 - f) knowing the identity of the current Designated Safeguarding Lead and, if relevant, their Deputy(s).
2. **Diversity:** All Staff should demonstrate respect for diversity and take steps to promote equality by:
 - a) helping to create a fair and inclusive School environment;
 - b) complying with the School's Anti-bullying, Equal Opportunities policies and this Code of Conduct;
 - c) addressing issues of discrimination and bullying whenever they arise.

E. Guidance on Staff/Pupil Relationships

1. **Application:** This guidance applies to all adults working in this School. Allegations of unprofessional conduct or improper contact or language can arise at any time. Professionalism and vigilance are required to ensure the safety of children in our care, and to reduce the risk of an allegation of impropriety against a member of Staff.

The code also applies to conduct outside the school. All staff have the responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of students. Inappropriate behaviour towards children or young people, also if they are not pupils at our school, will be regarded as gross misconduct.

2. **General guidance:** Staff should be aware of the general guidance that will apply in all cases. In particular they:
 - a) need to exercise professional judgement but always act within the spirit of these guidelines. If they are involved in a situation where no specific guidance exists, they should discuss the circumstances with the School Principal;
 - b) must seek guidance from the Designated Safeguarding Lead if they are in any doubt about appropriate conduct;
 - c) must report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead any actions which could be misinterpreted, any misunderstandings, accidents or threats involving themselves and a pupil or a group of pupils.

3. **Good order and discipline:** Staff in charge or control of pupils must maintain good order and discipline at all times when pupils are present on School premises and whenever pupils are engaged in authorised school activities, whether on School premises or elsewhere.
4. **Curriculum:** Staff should be aware that some parts of the curriculum may raise sexually explicit subject matters. Care should be taken in subjects where rules / boundaries are relaxed (e.g. drama or art). Staff should have clear lesson plans and should take care to avoid overstepping personal and professional boundaries.
5. **Student's behaviour giving particular cause for concern:** Staff should take particular care when dealing with a pupil who:
 - a) appears to be emotionally distressed, or generally vulnerable and/or who is seeking to form special or exclusive attachments;
 - b) appears to hold a grudge against them;
 - c) acts in a sexually provocative way, or who is inclined to make exaggerated claims about themselves and others, or to fantasise, or one whose manner with adults is over-familiar;
 - d) may have reason to make up an allegation to cover the fact that he or she has not worked hard enough for examinations.

Some of these behaviours may be indications that a child has been, or is currently being, abused and should therefore be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead under the School's Child Protection procedures.

6. **Dealing with "crushes":** Crushes, fixations or infatuations with adults are quite common and are considered an inconsequential phase in adolescent development. However, they need sensitive handling to avoid allegations of exploitation. Such crushes carry a high risk of words, actions and expressions being misinterpreted. Therefore, the highest levels of professionalism are required. If a member of staff suspects that a pupil has a crush on them or on a colleague, they should bring it to the attention of the Principal at the earliest opportunity. Suggestions that a pupil may have developed a crush should be recorded. Staff should avoid being alone with pupils who have developed a crush on them and if the pupil sends personal communications to the member of Staff, this should be reported to the Principal and recorded.
7. **Record keeping:** Comprehensive records are essential. Any incident involving children that could give cause for concern, whether contemplated in these guidelines or not, should be reported promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and recorded, with justifications for any action taken following the procedure outlined in the Child Protection policy.

F. Physical Contact

1. **When physical contact may be appropriate:** Physical contact with a pupil may be necessary and beneficial in order to offer comfort when children are distressed, to offer reassurance, to demonstrate a required action, or a correct technique, for example, during musical instrument class, sports and games.

Any physical contact should be:

- a) in response to the pupil's needs,
- b) of limited duration and
- c) appropriate to the pupil's age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.

Physical contact can be easily misinterpreted and should be limited to what is necessary in the circumstances and in the interests of the pupil. Staff should exercise professional judgement at all times and, if in doubt, should err on the side of caution and not have physical contact with a pupil.

Physical contact must never be:

- a) secretive,
 - b) for the gratification of the adult or
 - c) representative of a misuse of authority.
2. **Guidance on using physical contact:** Staff should observe the following guidelines (where applicable):
- a) If appropriate, explain the intended action to the pupil.
 - b) Do not proceed with the action if the pupil appears to be apprehensive or reluctant, or if there are other concerns about the pupil's likely reaction.
 - c) Consider alternatives if it appears likely that the pupil might misinterpret the contact.
 - d) In case of a one-to-one meeting with a student, ensure to follow the corresponding guidelines.
 - e) Staff must NOT:
 - i) kiss or allow children to kiss them;
 - ii) touch the front or rear private parts of any child or the chest area in girls that have started to develop;
 - iii) allow children to sleep or lie in the same bed as them;
 - iv) allow children to lie on top of them;
 - v) allow children older than 9 years old to sit on their lap.
3. **Offering comfort to distressed pupils:** Touching may be appropriate where a pupil is in distress and/or needs comforting and/or reassurance. Staff should use their own professional judgement when they feel a pupil needs this kind of support and should be aware of any special circumstances relating to the pupil. For example, a child who has been abused may find physical contact particularly difficult. Avoid physical contact if offering comfort to pupils when they are alone with them or in a secluded part of the school. Staff should seek guidance from the Principal if unsure whether it would be appropriate in a particular case, or if they have offered comfort but are unsure if it was appropriate or not.
4. **Administering first aid:** When administering first aid that requires the child to undress or the administration of intimate care, staff should explain to the child what is happening and ensure that another adult is present or is aware of the action being taken. Staff should:
- a) adhere to the School's policy on administering first aid / medication;
 - b) have regard to any health plans or conditions a child may have;
 - c) make other adults aware of the task that is being undertaken;
 - d) explain to the student what is happening;
 - e) report and record the administration of first aid.
5. **Pupils' entitlement to privacy:** Children are entitled to privacy when changing or showering. However there still must be an appropriate level of supervision to ensure safety and hygiene. Staff should:
- a) avoid physical contact or visually intrusive behaviour when children are undressed;

- b) announce themselves when entering changing rooms and avoid remaining unless required;
 - c) not shower or change in the same place as children;
 - d) not assist with any personal care task which a pupil can undertake themselves.
6. **Where a child has been abused:** Where a child has previously been abused, Staff should be informed on a 'need-to-know' basis, and should be extra cautious when considering the necessity of physical contact. Some children may seek inappropriate physical contact, in which case staff should sensitively deter the pupil and help them understand the importance of personal boundaries. Such incidents should be reported and discussed with the Principal and parents.
 7. **Children with special educational needs or disabilities:** Some children may need more physical contact to assist their everyday learning, which should be agreed and understood by all concerned, justified, openly applied and open to scrutiny.
 8. **Report concerns:** If staff are at all concerned about any instance of physical contact, they should inform the Principal without delay, and make a written record per the procedure in the School's Child Protection policy.

G. Language, Appearance and Relationships

1. **Language:** Staff should use appropriate language at all times, treating students with dignity and respect and at all times observe proper professional boundaries. They should:
 - a) avoid words or expressions that have any unnecessary sexual content or innuendo;
 - b) avoid exclusive displays of affection either personally or in writing (e.g. messages in birthday cards, text messages, emails etc);
 - c) avoid any form of aggressive or threatening words;
 - d) avoid any words or actions that are 'over-familiar'. Please note that what may be considered 'over-familiar' for teachers in the more formal context of the classroom, may not be for a dorm member of staff. For example, a teacher would be expected to refer to pupils by name; dorm staff might refer to them using a term of endearment such as 'dear' or 'amore'. Likewise, it would be considered 'over-familiar' for a teacher to sit a 7-year-old child on their lap in the classroom; in the context of the dorm, on the other hand, this might happen if the child needed comforting.
 - e) not swear, blaspheme or use any sort of offensive language;
 - f) avoid the use of sarcasm or derogatory words and avoid making unprofessional, personal comments about anyone.
2. **Dress:** Staff should dress appropriately and in a professional manner, as detailed in the School Dress Code. Dress must not be offensive, distracting, revealing, or sexually provocative, embarrassing or discriminatory. Political or other contentious slogans or badges are not allowed.
3. **Relationships and general conduct:** Staff should model Sahaja Yoga culture and values in their relations and general conduct. As such, the expectation is that relations between members of the school community should be brotherly and sisterly in nature, unless they are a married couple. Members of staff who start to develop feelings for a colleague or member of the Sahaja community while working at the school must immediately refer to the Principal for advice.

H. One-to-one Meetings with Pupils

1. **Who may conduct one-to-one meetings:** While one-to-one situations with pupils should be avoided where possible, they are sometimes inevitable. Teachers and boarding staff may occasionally find themselves engaged in one-to-one situations with students.
 - a) Staff whose role includes working alone with a pupil, will conduct and agree full risk assessments with the Principal.
2. **Transparency:** For one-to-one meetings, staff should:
 - a) use a room that has sufficient windows onto a corridor so the occupants can be seen, **and/or** keep the door open, **and/or** inform a colleague that the lesson / meeting is taking place;
 - b) arrange the meeting during normal school hours when there are plenty of other people about;
 - c) avoid using "engaged", "do not disturb" or equivalent signs on doors or windows;
 - d) do not continue the meeting for any longer than is necessary to achieve its purposes;
 - e) avoid idle discussion i.e. unnecessary or irrelevant to the problem at hand¹;
3. **Particular care:** Staff working in one-to-one situations with students should recognise the possibility of allegations and plan and conduct meetings safely, to protect students and themselves. They should:
 - a) avoid sitting or standing in close proximity to the pupil, except as necessary to check work, applying first aid and so on;
 - b) avoid all unnecessary physical contact;
 - c) avoid any conduct that could be taken as a sexual advance;
 - d) make it clear that any information received that gives cause for concern regarding the safety and wellbeing of the pupil or of other people will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead;
 - e) report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead any incident that causes concern under the School's child protection procedures, and make a written record;
 - f) report any situation where a pupil becomes unusually distressed or angry to the Principal.

I. The Use of Force or Physical Restraint

1. **Corporal punishment:** All forms of corporal punishment are unlawful and the use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence. Any sanctions should be in accordance with the School's behaviour management policy.
2. **Physical restraint:** Staff should always seek to defuse situations, avoiding the use of physical intervention if possible. However, staff who are authorised by the Principal to have control or charge of pupils, may use such force or physical contact as is reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do any of the following:
 - a) committing a criminal offence;
 - b) injuring themselves or others;
 - c) causing excessive damage to property, including their own;

¹ This does not, for example, mean they cannot engage in casual conversation if to do so would help put the pupil at ease before addressing the main issue. However, if casual conversation is the main purpose of the interaction with the pupil, it should be done in a public space.

- d) engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to good order and discipline at the School or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom or elsewhere.
- 3. **Application of code of restraint:** When a teacher, dorm staff, or other authorised person, is on School premises and when he or she is in control or in charge of the pupil elsewhere, for example on a field trip or other authorised out of school activity, this code of restraint applies. It is restricted to situations where no other form of control is available and where it is necessary to intervene.
- 4. **Interventions:** Before intervening physically staff should, wherever practicable, tell the pupil to stop and what will happen if he or she does not. They should continue attempting to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident and should make it clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary. They should always avoid touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent. They should also avoid any form of aggressive contact such as holding, pushing, pulling or hitting which could amount to a criminal assault, nor act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury.
- 5. **Using reasonable force:** There is no legal definition of "reasonable force". It will always depend on the circumstances. Note that:
 - a) any use of force should be proportionate to the behaviour of the pupil involved and the seriousness of the harm prevented;
 - b) physical force could not be justified to prevent a pupil from committing a trivial misdemeanour;
 - c) any force should always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result;
 - d) whether it is reasonable to use force and the degree of force that could be reasonably employed might also depend on the age, understanding and sex of the pupil.
- 6. **Inform senior staff:** Staff should inform the Principal immediately following an incident, except the most minor or trivial, where force has been used. This is to help prevent any misunderstanding or misrepresentation of the incident, and it will be helpful in the event of a complaint. They should provide a written report as soon as possible afterwards. This should include written and signed accounts of those involved, including the pupil. The parents should be informed.
- 7. **Action taken in self-defence or in an emergency:** The law allows anyone to defend themselves against an attack provided they do not use more force than is necessary. Similarly, where a pupil is at risk of immediate injury or on the point of inflicting injury on someone else, any member of Staff (whether authorised or not) would be entitled to intervene.

J. Outside the School Premises

- 1. **Transporting pupils:** There may be some situations when Staff are required to transport pupils. They should:
 - a) not offer lifts to pupils unless the need for this has been agreed by the Principal and, if possible, there should be at least one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort;
 - b) ensure that they are fit to drive and free from any substances that may impair their judgement or ability to drive;
 - c) be aware that until the pupil is passed over to a parent or other member of Staff, they have responsibility for that pupil's health and safety;
 - d) record and be able to justify impromptu or emergency lifts;
 - e) ensure that there are proper arrangements in place to ensure vehicle, passenger and driver safety, including appropriate insurance, seat belts, appropriate car seats, adherence to maximum capacity guidelines etc;

- f) only use their private vehicle to transport children if they are authorised to do so by the Principal and always try to have one adult additional to the driver to act as an escort.
2. **Educational visits:** When taking part in trips organised by the school, staff should:
 - a) follow the School's Trips Policy;
 - b) be accompanied by at least one other adult unless otherwise agreed with the Principal;
 - c) ensure a risk assessment has been completed and they are familiar with it;
 - d) obtain parental consent;
 - e) never share bedrooms unless in a dormitory situation and arrangements have been previously discussed and agreed with the school principal, the parents and pupils.
 3. **Pre-arranged meetings:** Pre-arranged meetings with pupils outside school (including online) are not permitted unless approval is obtained from the Principal.
 4. **Home visits:** As a boarding school of mainly international pupils, visiting a pupil at home on school business would be unlikely and would only happen in exceptional circumstances. If there were a need, they should:
 - a) get approval from the Principal and adhere to any agreed work plan / contract;
 - b) ensure appropriate risk assessments are in place. Typically, this will include the need to be accompanied by a colleague;
 - c) not visit unannounced if this can be avoided;
 - d) leave the door open where they are alone with pupils;
 - e) keep records detailing times of arrival and departure, and work undertaken;
 - f) ensure that any behaviour or situation that gives rise to a concern is reported and actioned;
 - g) discuss with the Principal or DSL (as appropriate) anything that gives cause for concern and refer to other agencies if felt appropriate;
 - h) have a mobile telephone and an emergency contact.
 5. **The use of personal living space:** Pupils should not be in or invited into the personal living space of any member of Staff without the express permission of the Principal. Such permission will only be given in exceptional circumstances and on condition that there is always a second member of staff present who does not share the living space. Pupils should never be asked to assist with chores or tasks in the personal living space. Personal living spaces should not be used as an additional resource for the School.

 'Personal living space' refers to the private home of a member of Staff or their private living quarters in accommodation provided by the School.

K. Code of Conduct for Contact Outside School

1. **Contact outside school:** The close-knit nature of the Sahaja Yoga community means that it is almost inevitable, and often quite natural, for staff to come into contact with pupils outside school, as they will often be friends of the family or members of youth groups or clubs to which some pupils also belong. It is important to remember in these circumstances, that members of staff remain in a position of trust and must conduct themselves in a way that is compatible with their role in the school and its code of conduct, even during holiday time.

Most importantly, any contact with pupils outside school must be in the interests of the child and conducted openly (meaning not secretly or in a way which is exclusive or hidden) with the full knowledge and consent of the pupil's parents and the school Principal.

Without the consent of the Principal and parents, staff should:

- a) not give pupils their home address, home telephone number, mobile telephone number or email address;
- b) not send exclusive, personal communications (such as birthday cards, text messages etc.) to children;
- c) not make arrangements to meet pupils, individually or in groups;
- d) avoid contacting pupils when they are at home unless this is strictly necessary, and should keep a record of any such occasion;
- e) not give a pupil a lift in their own vehicle.

Always:

- f) follow school procedure to report and record any situation which may place a child at risk or which may compromise the School's or their professional standing;
 - g) ensure that pupils do not see anything in their home or personal space that may cause embarrassment or that might become the subject of inappropriate gossip or rumour;
 - h) avoid discussing or sharing personal data relating to other children, parents or carers.
2. **Standards of behaviour:** Staff should be aware that where they meet children or parents socially, they represent the school and as such are held to a higher standard of behaviour than might otherwise be the case. They need to be sure that their behaviour does not give rise to misinterpretation or misunderstanding.

L. Communication with Pupils (including the use of technology)

- 1. **Application:** These rules apply to any form of communication including new technologies such as mobile telephones, web-cameras, social networking websites and blogs. Staff should also ensure they comply with the more detailed E-safety Policy, and Mobile Phone Policy.
- 2. **Communicating with children and parents:** All dealings with children or parents should conform to School policy and remain within the scope of the role/job description. Except in an emergency communication should only be made using School property or devices authorised by the Principal and logged in the Authorised Devices register.
- 3. **Personal details:** Adults should not give their personal contact details to pupils, including email addresses, home or mobile telephone numbers, unless the need to do so is agreed with the Principal and parents.
- 4. **Acceptable use of IT:** Adults must establish safe and responsible online behaviours and must be familiar with the E-safety Policy and Mobile Phone Policy. Adults should report to senior colleagues any new and emerging technologies which may have a bearing on School practices and on the review of the E-safety Policy. Staff should also:
 - a) ensure that their own personal social networking sites are set as private and ensure that pupils are not approved contacts;
 - b) never use or access social networking sites of pupils and not use internet or web-based communication channels to send personal messages to pupils;

- c) not use their own equipment (e.g. mobile telephones) to communicate with pupils - use equipment provided by the School and ensure that parents have given permission;
 - d) only make contact with pupils for professional reasons;
 - e) recognise that text messaging can only be used as part of an agreed protocol and only when other forms of communication are not possible.
5. **Communicating outside the agreed protocols:** Email or text communications between an adult and a pupil outside agreed protocols may lead to disciplinary and / or criminal investigations. This also includes communications through internet-based websites.
 6. **Communication with ex-pupils:** in interactions with ex-pupils under the age of 18, Staff are governed by the same regulations as the 'Code of Conduct for Contact Outside School' outlined in this document.
 7. **Communicating with pupils after staff leave CISS:** An important feature of Sahaja culture espoused by the school is positive, fruitful intergenerational relationships built on love and understanding. We want to encourage our children to see their teachers and carers as people they can trust and turn to for help and support, even after they have moved on and no longer work for the school.

We are sensitive, however, to the risks this poses from individuals who might choose to exploit this openness as an opportunity to groom children for their own purposes.

We therefore strongly discourage any contact between former members of staff and any pupil they taught or cared for, who has not reached the age of 18 or is still at school, unless the following conditions are met:

- a) The parents are aware of and consent to the relationship.
- b) The relationship is conducted openly (meaning not secretly or in a way which is exclusive or hidden).
- c) The relationship is in the best interests of the child.

M. Code of Conduct for Photographs and Videos

1. **Permission required:** Staff should seek permission from the Principal before taking photographs or video camera footage of any pupils in class, at any school events or on a trip. They should also seek permission before displaying these photographs. If images of children are taken using personal mobile telephones, it must be with the permission of the Principal and comply with the scope of any agreed rules and conditions. Consent for taking and displaying photographs will be obtained from parents by the Principal where appropriate.
2. **Guidance where permission obtained:** Where permission has been obtained, the following should be considered:
 - a) The purpose of the activity should be clear as should what will happen to the photographs or videos. Staff must be able to justify images in their possession.
 - b) Staff should only use equipment provided or authorised by the School.
 - c) Staff should ensure that the pupil understands why the images are being taken and has agreed to the activity.
 - d) Staff should ensure that the pupil is appropriately dressed, as defined in the permission obtained.
 - e) Images should not be made during one-to-one situations.
 - f) Images must not be taken secretly.

- g) All images should be made available in order to determine acceptability.
 - h) All images of children should be stored securely and only accessed by those authorised to do so.
 - i) No identifiable image of a child may be displayed in a place to which the public have access.
 - j) Following a disclosure of abuse, adults should not take images of a child's injury, bruising or similar even if requested by children's social care; or make audio recordings of a child's disclosure.
3. **Appropriate material:** Staff must ensure children are not exposed to inappropriate or indecent images. Inappropriate material, such as films that are not age appropriate for pupils, should not be brought to work and staff must not use School property to access such material. Staff should not allow unauthorised access to School equipment and should keep their computer passwords safe. If they discover material that is potentially illegal or inappropriate, they must isolate the equipment and contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead under the School's child protection procedures immediately. Pupils must not be exposed to unsuitable material on the internet and Staff should ensure that any film or material shown is age appropriate.

N. Gifts and Rewards

1. **If a gift is received:** If staff receive a gift from a pupil or parent they should:
 - a) declare the gift where there is a possibility it could be misconstrued, or in any event where the gift is of a value of more than Euro 100. The Principal may in his / her discretion require them to decline the gift.
 - b) decline outright gifts that could be perceived as a bribe or that have created an expectation of preferential treatment. Although it is accepted for parents and children to make small gifts to show appreciation, staff must not receive gifts on a regular basis or receive anything of significant value.
2. **Giving gifts and rewards:** Where staff are thinking of giving a gift or reward:
 - a) it should only be provided as part of an agreed reward system;
 - b) in all cases except the above, the gift or reward should be of little monetary value and should be discussed and agreed with the Principal;
 - c) selection processes should be fair and where possible should be agreed by more than one member of Staff;
 - d) gifts should be given openly and not based on favouritism.
3. **Allocation of gifts and rewards:** Decisions regarding entitlement to benefits or privileges such as admission to school trips, activities or classroom tasks must avoid perceptions of bias, grooming or favouritism. The selection process must be based on transparent criteria.

O. Sexual Contact

1. **Sexual contact:** Staff must not:
 - a) have any type of sexual relationship with a pupil or pupils;
 - b) have sexually suggestive or provocative communications with a pupil;
 - c) make sexual remarks to or about a pupil;
 - d) discuss their own sexual relationships in the presence of pupils.

2. **Adults in a position of trust:** It is a crime for an adult in a position of trust (e.g. a teacher or carer) to engage in sexual activity with a person under the age of 18. Sexual relationships or contact with pupils, or encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which might lead to a sexual relationship is a grave breach of trust that will lead to disciplinary action and may also lead to criminal prosecution.
3. **Sexually explicit content in the curriculum:** The curriculum can sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussion about subject matter of a sexually explicit, political or otherwise sensitive nature. Responding to children's questions requires careful judgement and staff should take guidance in these circumstances from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

P. Consequences of Breaching this Code

1. **The School's position:** It is in the interest of all members of staff to follow this code of conduct so as to maintain standards of behaviour and their own professional reputation. A breach of this code may be treated as misconduct and will render them liable to disciplinary action including dismissal and, where necessary, referral to the relevant authorities.
2. **Termination of employment:** If the School ceases to use the services of a member of Staff or volunteer because they are unsuitable to work with children, a settlement agreement will not be used and a referral to the relevant authorities will be made as soon as possible if the criteria for a referral are met. Any such incidents will be followed by a review of the safeguarding procedures within the School.
3. **Resignation:** If a member of Staff or volunteer tenders his or her resignation, or ceases to provide his or her services to the School at a time when child protection concerns exist in relation to that person, those concerns will still be investigated in full by the School.



Cabella International
Sahaja School

**Staff Code of Conduct
Agreement**

I have read and agree to abide by the CISS Code of Conduct for Staff:

Staff (signature):

Staff name (capitals):

Position:

Date: