

Code of Conduct for School Chaplains¹

In this school, we will:

- Appoint a Chaplain/chaplaincy team that reflects the School catchment/roll. The appointment of our Chaplain(s) is endorsed by our Education Authority. The identity of the Chaplain(s) and a description of their role and activities within the School is included within the School Handbook. Not all our Chaplains need to be of one faith or Denomination.
- Provide support and access to the School for our chaplains in a spirit of partnership², recognising that our chaplains work with us at the invitation and direction of our Headteacher.
- Support our chaplain(s) in complying with all Scottish Government and Education Scotland legislation for staff within Schools. We will provide him/her/them with copies, and where necessary training, of all relevant School policies and protocols (e.g. on Child Protection, Equality, Human Rights, Anti-discrimination, Reporting, GDPR compliance, Diversity).
- Provide appropriate opportunities for our chaplain(s) to support the School in our delivery of the CfE 'Health and Wellbeing across Learning' requirement to support pupils in understanding and developing their "mental and spiritual wellbeing" (*All Experiences and Outcomes*, p.12). This will normally be through involvement with our Religious Observance/Time for Reflection events, and through appropriate participation in the RME programme, although we may also agree other relevant opportunities and activities.
- Develop and deliver planned Religious Observance/Time for Reflection activities as our School's responsibility, in which our Chaplain(s) may not always need to be involved. Together, we will do all we can to ensure that their RO/TfR events are inclusive and invitational.
- Make our parents aware of their right to withdraw their children, and make meaningful provision of alternative RO/TfR for pupils opted out of Chaplaincy-led events.
- Review with him/her/them, the work of our chaplain(s) annually. Additionally, we will fully evaluate our chaplaincy programme every three years, at which time we will formally re-sign with our chaplain(s) the 'Formal Acknowledgement of the Code of Conduct'.

In this school, our School Chaplain(s)³

- seek to work in a collaborative co-operation with School staff, recognising their professionalism, training, expertise and integrity. They agree to adhere to all relevant School policies and protocols (e.g. on Child Protection, Equality, Human Rights, Anti-discrimination, Reporting, GDPR compliance, Diversity). In any conflict between a School policy and a policy of the organisation which employs the chaplain or with which the chaplain is affiliated, the relevant School policies take precedence.⁴

¹ This draft document is intended as the basis on which any school in the local authority nondenominational sector may develop its own chaplaincy policy/Code of Conduct. This draft is simply a set of suggestions and any school's policy/Code of Conduct will, of course, take full account of the guidance from that school's local authority. N.B. several of the footnotes that follow are intended to provide explanatory background information, but they would not necessarily form part of a school's Code of Conduct policy document.

² The school may wish to consider developing a chaplaincy team that includes some school pupils and teachers as well as chaplains. This approach has been much commended by HM Inspectorate of Schools as promoting partnership working between pupils, teachers and the wider community.

³ The formation of a Chaplaincy Team, rather than the appointment of an individual, may be more appropriate for a Secondary School, for a Learning Community or for a larger primary school.

⁴ e.g. a denominational policy or theology of 'confessional' confidentiality cannot be placed above the obligation to report within Scotland's PVG scheme. "Chaplains are not in a confessional setting but an educational one and must abide by the educational guidelines and sensitivities. Chaplains are part of a learning community and they are learners too." (SU Scotland Guidelines).

- support the School where appropriate in delivering the content of Curriculum for Excellence, in accordance with Education Scotland guidance on the use of Religious Artefacts and on Faith Visitors.
- support, promote and safeguard the positive social, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of students and staff. This may include support in areas such as - for example - bereavement care, self-esteem, values acquisition and formation, relationships, mediation skills, violence prevention, etc.⁵
- support the whole School community pastorally, in consultation with our Headteacher.⁶
- will treat those in their care with respect and dignity, supporting the School as a place where staff and students feel cared for, supported, included and safe.
- Within the parameters of HGIOS4 and 'How Good is our Third Sector Organisation', will seek to build an effective partnership between the School and church, and between the School and the wider community, including other denominations and faith communities, seek out relevant opportunities to develop, maintain and extend their competence and capability, and their knowledge and skills. Our chaplains refer and defer to School Guidance staff when it is in the best interests of a pupil.
- provide proof of membership of the PVG scheme. He/she must adhere to the reporting requirements of the PVG scheme. The Chaplain should immediately notify the Headteacher and follow our School's protocols if a pupil makes a relevant disclosure. The Chaplain cannot maintain confidentiality in such circumstances.
- have (and maintain) a recognised or accredited status within his/her own faith community and be of good standing within that community.
- Is not permitted to proselytise or to promote sectarianism or denominationalism. Our chaplains must, at all times, be sensitive to and respectful of the culture, faith, values and beliefs of pupils/parents & guardians/staff. They will not engage in any form of discrimination on any grounds. In accordance with the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights (Article 18), Chaplains will respect the rights of individuals, faith communities and belief groups within our School to hold to their own teaching, practice, values and worship. Our Chaplain will not impose his/her own beliefs, values or practices on any member of the School community. Our Chaplain will not criticise the beliefs, values or practices of any member of the School community. At all times our Chaplain will respect the autonomy of all members of the School community to make their own belief choices and decisions.
- If a Chaplain feels that he/she is being asked at any point to compromise his/her own conscience, faith, values, beliefs, or ethics he/she should discuss this with the Headteacher.⁷ With sensitivity, it is entirely appropriate for the Chaplain to have opportunities within the School curriculum to speak about his/her own faith and beliefs and about his/her own faith figures and stories. It is permissible and acceptable for a Chaplain to use the Scriptures of his/her faith, though the purpose will always be to encourage pupils in their own Personal Search and not to mandate or manipulate that search.
- avoid unnecessary physical contact with any pupil (except where appropriate in instance of injury, danger to the individual or to another person, or distress) and will take care to avoid any compromising situation.⁸

⁵ Such support works best in the context of building good relationships. It is helpful to building relationships with staff if the Chaplain can be invited into the staff rooms and teaching bases, and with pupils if the Chaplain can be given freedom to enter dining and play areas at break times.

⁶ Any counselling of students or staff can only be at the invitation of the Headteacher and with the consent of the parents, and after providing evidence of an appropriate qualification. Chaplains must not perform professional or other services for which they are not qualified.

⁷ The relevant Government Guidelines state that in non-denominational Schools religious observance should be of a broadly Christian character - without the favouring of any one denomination and not excluding the possibility of using material from other faiths.

⁸ Special care should be taken when relating to all vulnerable groups and particularly when relating to children

- follow School practices and policies on social media contact and out-of-School contact with all pupils. Our Chaplain(s) will maintain relationships with pupils and with School staff solely on a professional basis at all times. He/she/they will exercise caution, confidentiality and restraint when communicating through the internet and electronic means, and when posting to social media.
- within the informal curriculum of our School and within extracurricular activities, offer opportunities to worship and to explore the Christian faith and will support pupils and staff on their established faith journeys to grow and develop their spiritual life. All publications, handouts and materials used by the Chaplain: should be reviewed and approved by the Headteacher **before** distribution or use; should be age and stage appropriate; should complement School material; and should complement identifiable and specific CfE experience and outcomes.
- offer prayer and spiritual guidance to groups and individuals only when requested. They will refer pupils to the organisation or faith representative who is best placed to support that pupil's particular needs in accordance with the beliefs and values of the pupil or their family.
- keep appropriate records, compliant with GDPR legislation, to evidence any support or counselling provided to a pupil.
- provide full lesson plans and detailed notes for any TfR event or RME input delivered on the School's behalf. These should indicate, where appropriate, which CfE experiences and outcomes were intended.

Formal Acknowledgement of Code of Conduct

Name of School _____

Acknowledgement by School chaplain

Name: (Please print).....

I understand and agree to the terms of this Code of Conduct.

..... Signature of School chaplain

.....Signature of Headteacher or SMT representative

Date:

Breaches of the Code of Conduct

A School chaplain must be accountable for their actions. The Headteacher (or representative) will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the School chaplain complies with this Code of Conduct.

If there is an actual or perceived breach of this Code of Conduct, the School chaplain must immediately cease providing chaplaincy services. The Headteacher (or representative) will notify the Education Authority at once. In such circumstances, School chaplains must not continue to provide any services until the Headteacher (or representative) give written agreement for the chaplaincy services to continue.

with mental health concerns or learning support needs. [See section 4.5 'The Use of Touch and Physical contact' in UKBHC (2014) Code of Conduct for Healthcare Chaplains. Cambridge: UKBHC [available at www.ukbhc.org.uk]