

## Principles of Good Practice for Staff at UWC Red Cross Nordic

### Intention and Background

At the Heads' Meeting in Maastricht in October 2013, it was agreed that all Colleges would create their own principles of good practice for staff – which would serve to complement the UWC Code of Conduct for students. The UWC RCN Principles of Good Practice draws upon the UWC recommended Pearson Model, NAIS Principles of Good Practice, The UWC Educational Model, the Norwegian 'Professional Ethics for the Teaching Profession with regard to UWC RCN's context.

The following is a living document to be continually developed with the input of all members of (Support and Education) Staff. The Principles of Good Practice for the staff of UWC Red Cross Nordic reflect our mission and values. This would be agreed and adopted by all adults in this work place, and will help us to be the most effective role models for our students. We will be accountable to each other and to the Rektor to uphold these professional principles.

Every member of the RCN work place should honour, in spirit and in action, the principle of consideration for others. This is the principle that underpins this document, and it should be the guiding principle in our relationships with one another.

### UWC Mission and Values

Members of staff will be in wholehearted sympathy with UWC Red Cross Nordic's ethos, aims and objectives – and will maintain the highest standards of personal conduct when carrying out their duties.

UWC makes education a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future. UWC schools, colleges and programmes deliver a challenging and transformational educational experience to a diverse cross section of students, inspiring them to create a more peaceful and sustainable future.

UWC believes that to achieve peace and a sustainable future, the values it promotes are crucial:

- International and intercultural understanding
- Celebration of difference

Personal responsibility and integrity  
Mutual responsibility and respect  
Compassion and service  
Respect for the environment  
A sense of idealism  
Personal challenge  
Action and personal example

### **Communication with Students**

Visitors to UWC RCN are often struck by the informality and sometimes closeness that exists between many adults and students. For the most part, this informal atmosphere improves the quality of living and learning at UWC RCN. With House Mentors and residents on campus living in such proximity, events like House Mentor drop-ins, advisor dinners, and intense experiences like Project-Based Learning expeditions and *Friluftsveka*, we have fewer barriers between adults and students than most other academic institutions, including many universities.

This implies that we should be especially vigilant about appropriate parameters and clearly agreed and held to forms of communication between adults and students. The Safeguarding policy and associated practices are central to staff – student interactions. What follows is both a summary of accepted custom and practice and new proposals of appropriate guidelines:

- Use of first names between adults and students is accepted common practice. Some students and members of staff may experience some discomfort with this. We show sensitivity towards this possibility and, when in doubt, seek consent. We also seek clarity over preferred names and pronunciations.
- All adults (teachers, House Mentors and advisors in particular) attempt to understand the culture and religious practices of the students with whom they are in contact. Communication (references, use of language and physical interactions) are based on this understanding.
- Assumptions and judgments about sexual orientation and behaviour are not made in conversations, discussions, classes or meetings (ref. RCN Respectful Community policy)
- Students should not be visiting staff houses after 10.30pm at night (Quiet Time back in the Student Village) unless in an emergency. Unless designated as host parents,

- members of staff may not host students overnight except with prior consultation with one of the following colleagues: the Director of Residential Life or the Deputy Rektor or House Mentor or member of staff on duty.
- Adults agree to read and honour all College Policies. The Safeguarding, Grievance, Confidentiality, First Aid and Use of Media Policy (tbc) policies are particularly relevant to our communications with students.
- Students and adults follow the email guidelines outlined in the Email Code of Conduct (available on w4 and the Staff Notice Board). It is easy to have miscommunications by email, and as such we want to take care with how we communicate with one another in this medium. If it is a complex or emotional issue, it may be best to resolve this in person rather than by email. We try to consider the intent of both sent and received email messages.
- Staff should use appropriate register and language and maintain professional standards when interacting with students – and should promote the same standards of communication within the student body.
- Use of social media networks by staff should respect professional standards.
- One-on-one contact with students should normally be in a room with the door open unless necessary professional circumstances apply (such as College Nurse / Advisor / House Mentor – student conversations).
- Adults stand by decisions of colleagues in their conversations with students, responding to student enquiries about decisions with care.
- In communications with students, adults show support for the work of their colleagues. We do not undermine the work of our colleagues in conversations with students.
- Adults are not party to critical remarks made about other community members in their absence.
- In delicate, intimate and potentially confidential matters, adults make it explicit to students when they are obliged to share a piece of information for legal or safety reasons.

## Meetings

In order to respect the time invested in meetings, it is important that discussions be clearly documented and then actions implemented by those to whom the responsibility has been given. Where a formally scheduled meeting is held in which discussions are held made that affect the wider community (for example an Education, Support Staff, Committee Meeting), the following is our practice:

- The agenda (with appropriate documentation) is made available through the appropriate mailing list preferably two days or more in advance of the scheduled meeting;
- It will be clear what the purpose of each agenda item is (to gather views, to establish a further committee, to decide on an action plan, to make an announcement and answer clarifying questions and so on) and the chair will aim to keep the discussion directed towards this outcome;
- The minutes from the meeting (if appropriate) are placed on w4 preferably within one week of the meeting, with the exception of any confidential communication.

Good practice within meetings:

- The time allocated to discussing each agenda item is respected, as far as is possible. It is the responsibility of the chair to ensure that this happens;
- Participants are encouraged to review their contributions and consider whether they are relevant and significant before speaking;
- It is the responsibility of the chair and all attending to ensure that a number of voices are heard. This may mean foregoing a chance to speak from time to time;
- It is a courtesy to listen actively in the meetings;
- Questions are framed in a spirit of inquiry to invite dialogue or response.

## Clarifying Misunderstandings

- Apologizing and taking responsibility for mistakes and hurtful behaviour:
  - o We recognize that we all make mistakes and that by taking responsibility for mistakes we grow, as individuals and as an organization. We give each other the space to make those mistakes, but expect that we each do our best to own up to those mistakes or to apologize when our behaviour may have been hurtful. We accept each others' apologies and do not hold grudges against each other.

- Clarifying misunderstandings by asking questions as soon as possible.
- We encourage, and agree to take responsibility for, the simple approach:
  - o “when in doubt, enquire”. Rather than sit with disagreement or misunderstanding, or second hand news of disagreement or misunderstanding, we agree to go directly to a person when we think there may have been a misunderstanding. We do our best to enter the enquiry process with openness and an aim to understand where the person is coming from. It might sound something like: “Based on the interaction at the meeting the other day I sense that we haven’t understood each other very well. I’m wondering what you are thinking about this situation?”
- Speaking directly to a person with whom there is a difficulty rather than expecting a person in responsibility to deal with it:
  - o If we think there is a conflict or significant issue to resolve with a colleague, we engage with that person directly. We strive to move towards understanding and a mutually acceptable resolve. Our approach to resolving conflict encourages us to seek to understand the interests and perspectives of the other person, and not merely to try to convince them of your interests and perspectives.
- Involving other parties (such as a ‘line manager’ or Staff Rep) if necessary as they have a responsibility to act on the concerns of an employee in this respect.
- Using the College Grievance Policy – available on w4 – if necessary.

### **Giving and Receiving Feedback**

We value the practice of giving and receiving feedback, and are open to both. However, we do so with care, and aim to facilitate and support growth in each other.

### **Collegiality amongst Roles**

All who work at the College understand themselves as contributors and collaborators in the UWC RCN student experience. The contributions of all employees are vital to the operation of the College, and all are valued equally. Respect for the work and the time of others should be evident in the way that we communicate with one another.

- We encourage appropriate professional engagement in the workplace. A spirit of conversation, companionship and compassion pervades our interactions with each other – and in line with arbeidsmiljøloven (Work Environment Act), we strive to promote and respect 'dignity' and 'integrity' in the workplace.
- We respect that colleagues have specific roles, responsibilities and mandates according to their job descriptions.
- When asking another College employee to complete a task, we are aware of the potential pressures on their time, and we give them as much notice as possible.
- When we need to ask for something at short notice, we are sensitive about the inconvenience we may be causing.
- Irrespective of whether a given task is part of another person's job description, requests are made with courtesy and with an acknowledgement that help is being asked for.
- We try to remember that we do not know the precise nature of each other's workloads or job descriptions, and refrain from making judgements or comparisons about who is doing what.

### **Representing the College: interactions with visitors on campus, individuals and groups off-campus**

- UWC Red Cross Nordic is and should continue to develop as a centre for projects, workshops, lectures and visits related to involvement and interest in the UWC movement and values.
- All visitors and guests are escorted with enthusiasm, pride and loyalty, and in a spirit of openness, hospitality and compassion.
- Contact with the press and external organisations and individuals is normally managed through the Director of Development's office. When direct contact is necessary, a warm professional and respectful tone is used in all forms of communication.

Our values, attitudes and actions influence the impact of our work. These ethical principles constitute a common ground for the development of our ethical awareness and

professionalism. It is our responsibility to act in accordance with these values and principles.

### **Process**

Initial draft designed by Rektor with reference to the UWC recommended Pearson Model, NAIS Principles of Good Practice and the Norwegian 'Professional Ethics for the Teaching Profession' – in consultation with the Deputy Rektor, both Staff Reps, Teaching Union Rep, and members of the Management Teams – and our personnel consultant at Stamina Helse, the Chair of RCN's Board, and the Management Team at Dale v.g.s.

Presented to Education Staff for discussion and suggestions – discussion groups - during Staff Introduction Week. Feedback passed on by facilitators and redrafted by Rektor in discussion with Deputy Rektor. Emailed to CMT, EMT and Staff Reps with latest revisions.

Translated into Norwegian and presented to Support Staff, adopted 2014.

**Most recent update Jan. 2019.**