



ACORNS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
INSPIRING AND EMPOWERING

CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

Reviewed: March 2023

Acorns International School is committed to creating an environment in which all members are treated with respect, patience, integrity, dignity, and consideration. Therefore, it is important that we all hold ourselves and each other to a high standard.

Reviewed by:

Lynn B. Muhangi
Head of Human Resources

Code of Conduct Policy

As we (teachers, parents, family members, guardians, drivers, nannies, volunteers, and non-teaching staff, Learning Support Assistants and visitors) are all members of a school community, it is important that we are respectful of each other and set an example for our young people. Acorns International School (AIS) is committed to creating an environment where all members are treated with respect, patience, integrity, dignity, and consideration. Therefore, the following standards are expected from staff, parents, guardians, Learning Support Assistants and all visitors on school grounds;

1. Conduct expected from AIS Staff (This includes Volunteers, LSAs and external therapists/ teachers, temporary staff etc)

- AIS Staff should always be respectful while dealing with students, parents, visitors and their fellow staff irrespective of grade and position. Everyone in the AIS community should be treated fairly and with dignity, courtesy and mutual respect.
- No staff should inflict any physical, verbal or emotional abuse such as striking, spanking, shaking, humiliating, ridiculing, threatening, or degrading towards any students, visitor or their fellow staff. It is inappropriate to raise your voice on campus or get into any physical or verbal altercation with a student, staff or parent/guardian. No swearing, racist, explicit or offensive language should be used at any time and in any case of any conflict/ concern.

The escalation process for staff in case of conflict is shown below;



Escalation of Staff issues

- Respect for each other's cultures, beliefs, religions, gender, background etc should always be considered. Always keep an open mind and listen to understand the other's point of view before a comment is made. Diversity is celebrated at AIS.
- As outlined in the Communication Policy, staff should keep an 'Open Door', so that students, parents and teachers are able to communicate openly.
- No member of staff should be in contact with parents about matters unrelated to school and communication should be limited to working hours only unless it is a matter of emergency/ urgency.
- Staff should be mindful of the privacy of students, parents and their fellow colleagues. Important conversations should be held privately; without other people around. Private conversations should only be communicated on a 'need-to-know' basis and confidentiality should always be maintained.
- Do not give out any personal information of another child/ parent or staff without their permission or authorisation from the relevant HOD.
- Do not use social media to fuel a complaint or campaign against a student, teacher, parent, or the school. If a complaint arises, the escalation process outlined above should be followed or as per the Complaint Procedure in the Communication Policy.
- Staff are not allowed to communicate with any external media on behalf of the school without authorisation from the Head of School. Strict confidentiality must be maintained by all staff regarding all commercial and technical information or any other confidential information pertaining to the school.
- Staff are required to practise a high level of integrity, honesty and professionalism in handling all personal and school business. Truthfulness and honesty should be practised in all official and unofficial communication within and outside the school.
- Staff should dress decently and professionally while at work and always have their ID tag on them. Teaching and administrative staff are expected to wear their uniform shirts from Monday to Thursday, Friday is a non-uniform day however decency and professionalism should still be maintained. Auxiliary staff are expected to always be in uniform while at work.
- Do not engage in private communications with children/ students by call, texting, email, video calls or via any form of electronic or social platforms. Staff should not be friends with any students on social media or outside of school. All communication with students and parents should be done through authorised school platforms and electronic communication that takes place over a school network or platform may be subject to periodic monitoring.
- School property and grounds should be treated with respect. Under no circumstances should anyone destroy or deface school property/ premises. Staff should contribute to making the school environment amiable to support our learners and be work-friendly

to our staff in any way they can. School resources may not be used for personal/non-job related purposes

- All staff should conduct themselves ethically and lawfully while representing the school and in their personal lives so as to enhance the honour and reputation of the school. Any staff who is convicted of a criminal offence before or during the period of their employment must immediately inform the school.
- AIS has a strict “No Touch Policy”. No one should touch another student, staff or external visitor in an inappropriate way. Sexual harassment of any form whether physical, verbal or emotional is strictly prohibited. No one should initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child that is not their own and non-platonic relationships between staff and students are strictly prohibited.
- Staff on school grounds should not be alone with a child that is not their own. Staff who are alone with a child need to remain within sight of another school member or notify an HoD for the reason they are alone with that child.
- Staff have the responsibility to report neglect or abuse of a child. If any member of the community is worried about the safety of a child, it should be reported to the relevant HoDs.
- No drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or any illegal substances are allowed on AIS grounds for any reason. Random bag checks will be done on entry into the school grounds and regular breathalyser checks will be conducted throughout the term. Breathalyser checks can be done at random or if a staff member is suspected of being under the influence of alcohol while on campus
- Staff may not, without previous written consent from the employer, during the course of their employment take on a second job with any other school or provide private tutoring services to any current students of AIS school.
- Staff may not receive monetary gifts from parents, vendors, suppliers etc. All non-monetary gifts received by staff with a value exceeding **100,000 UGX** must be declared to their respective HODs. Staff should not accept gifts from, or promise of or give gifts to students without the knowledge of their parents or guardians and approval of senior management.

2. Consequences for breach of policy for staff

Breach of this policy, the employment contract or any other school rules and regulations can be classified into minor misconduct and major misconduct and the consequences thereafter shall be decided based on the severity of the issue at hand

3.1 Minor Misconduct

Minor misconduct can be defined as but is not limited to;

- Idling or loitering during work hours
- Late attendance
- Failing to perform duties as required
- Malingering/ absenteeism
- Engaging or spreading rumours and gossip that leads to disunity
- Irresponsibility in respect to the health and safety of children
- Irresponsibility towards school equipment and instructional materials
- Failure to keep deadlines

Any employee who is found guilty of minor misconduct shall receive a verbal or written warning depending on the severity of the issue. Upon receiving a total of 2 written warning letters, you may be dismissed simultaneously with the third warning letter or face disciplinary action.

Warning letters shall remain valid for a period of 1 calendar year

3.2 Major Misconduct

Major misconduct can be defined as but is not limited to;

- Child Protection issues
- Absence from duty without permission or any other lawful cause
- Failure to carry out official instructions
- Theft and or fraud of any nature
- Physical violence or psychological abuse to children or any other people working/ visiting the school premises
- Intentional damage or misappropriation of school property and equipment
- Sexual harassment and abuse of any nature
- Disclosing of confidential information acquired during the course of work to unauthorised persons
- Criminal conviction
- Taking a second job at a school
- Working for parents
- Breach of contract

AIS management is required to constitute a disciplinary committee to handle any issues of gross misconduct and the staff shall be given a chance to hear the reasons for which they are facing the committee and defend themselves against any accusations before any decisions are made. Staff are entitled to have another person of choice present during this meeting and reasonable time will be given to the accused within which to prepare.

Any employee found guilty of a major misconduct will be subjected to the following disciplinary actions as may be deemed by the school disciplinary committee;

- Written warning
- Be suspended from duty with half pay. The suspension will not exceed 4 weeks or the duration of the inquiry, whichever is shorter
- Termination of contract without notice

Disciplinary action will be implemented within 15 days from the time the employer becomes aware of the occurrence giving rise to the disciplinary action.

3. Conduct expected from AIS Parents, Guardians and Visitors;

- Parents, guardians and visitors should treat all AIS staff with respect regardless of their grade or position. It is inappropriate to raise your voice at anyone while on campus. No swearing, racist, explicit or offensive language should be used at any time.
In case of any conflict/ concern parents should escalate the matter as per the process below;



Escalation of parent/guardian issues

- Parents need to understand that teachers have obligations and rules given to them by AIS Management. Due to this, they may be unable to fulfil some parent requests without approval from HoDs or at all.
- No drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or any illegal substances are allowed on AIS grounds for any reason.
- During events, do not behave in a manner that is disruptive to the event. This includes, but is not limited to, interrupting/stopping performances for photos, approaching the teachers/ staff with complaints mid-event, interrupting meetings with other parents, etc.

- No parent, guardian or visitor should be alone on campus with an AIS student that is not theirs unless special permission from the parent of that child has been communicated to the respective HOD.
- No parent should approach a child that is not their own for the purpose of discipline. It is inappropriate to talk to another child that is not your own about their behaviour or confront them with threats. If a parent has a concern regarding a student, they must approach teachers or HoDs. Parents may think they are being helpful and constructive, but it is highly likely the other family will see it as an assault. Parents who confront or threaten children who are not their own, risk not being allowed back on school property.
- Do not attempt to take a child home that is not on your exit card. If permission is given by the parent, the person picking up still needs to go to the Administration Office for verification.
- When children are at school, parents should communicate with them through the school.
- Do not approach a child, parent or staff and ask for the personal information of another child or parent. For example, if you want to invite students to a child's birthday party, it is inappropriate to ask the student to give their parent's number. It is appropriate to send out invites with your contact details so then parents can choose to contact you if they wish.
- Staff may choose not to give out their personal phone numbers; this is a choice that must be respected. Other avenues of communication can be explored for example email or reaching the staff through the official school line or their HOD.
- Parents need to respect the AIS working hours and not expect contact from staff outside of them. Staff may be contacted from 7.30am to 5.00pm from Monday to Friday, only matters of urgency or emergency may be communicated outside these hours.
- No firearms, weapons or ammunition are allowed on campus. If you are carrying a firearm/ weapon, please leave it in the car before picking up the student.

4. Consequences for breach of policy for Parents/ guardians/ external visitors

If any of these standards are broken by a parent, guardian, visitor etc, investigations will be conducted and consequences are possible as deemed fit by the School Management on a case-by-case basis. This may include but is not limited to; being banned from school premises, being suspended from school premises or school events or a warning letter.

Reviewed by:

Lynn B. Muhangi – Head of Human Resources

Date of Review: March 2023

Next Review Due: August 2024