



## Code of Conduct

Scope and Purpose	This document outlines the code of conduct and disciplinary procedures, applying to all students at Belfast Bible College.
Who uses the process	Staff and students within the college
Process review	This process should be reviewed following the end of each academic year
Date last reviewed	June 2021
Date next review	August 2022

### Our Goal

Belfast Bible College's goal is to equip 21st century disciples through theological education that is orientated towards a lived-out faith that impacts the world.

### Our Ethos

BBC is called to be a welcoming community in which God works to form his people by integrating spiritual, academic and practical education rooted in his Word, for growth in Christian life and service, locally and around the World.

### Our Expectations

In light of our vision and ethos we expect all our students to conduct themselves in an honourable manner before God, each other and the wider community.

### General expectations of conduct are formed by the following *Guiding Principle*

The College, in pursuance of its Christian principles and purpose in training, seeks to achieve its objectives within an agreed Code of Conduct. Throughout the course of their involvement with



the College, students of the College (full-time and part-time; while on campus and involved in activities representing BBC off-campus) are expected to abide by this Code of Conduct, which is based upon Biblical concepts of love and respect for individuals, property and the environment, as well as generally-accepted high standards appropriate to Christian leadership. In our daily interaction with each other, consideration, equality of esteem, honourable behaviour, mutual trust and concern are an expression of our community commitment. Each member of the community has a responsibility to promote these standards and the College places responsibility for self-government in relation to these on the student body.

**The *Guiding Principle* stated above governs all areas of students' involvement with College including the following specific areas:**

**1. Academic diligence**

We expect diligence in the students' approach to learning. Examples of academic diligence are attendance at lectures, punctuality and submission of work on time, as well as diligence in setting aside personal study time. It is the responsibility of students to make themselves aware of the academic expectations and disciplinary policies of the university in which they are enrolled - Queen's University, Belfast or the University of Cumbria.

Students enrolled on an Internal BBC programme or under an Exchange programme are expected to act in accordance with BBC standards of academic etiquette, which are commensurate with those of the universities.

**2. Plagiarism**

We expect honesty and transparency as students present their own work, appropriately cited and referenced, for assessment. Issues relating to plagiarism will be dealt with directly by the appropriate regulations of BBC, Queen's University, Belfast or the University of Cumbria.

**3. Technology in the classroom**



We expect integrity and respect for tutors in relation to use of personal technology (e.g. laptops, iPads and Smartphones) in the classroom. All use is by permission of the Teaching Staff.

#### **4. Internet use**

We expect the internet to be used with care and integrity and in a way which is in full compliance with our IT Student Acceptable Use Policy. Students are required to keep themselves informed of these policies. While internet usage by students is closely monitored, we expect each student to exercise discernment and adhere to Christian values in gaining access to sites and obtaining material. We expect students to use social networking (including but not limited to Facebook and Twitter, as well as any future developments in this area) with the utmost respect for their fellow students, the staff, the Board and reputation of the College. No software should be uploaded onto any College computer without the express permission of the IT Coordinator. Only software which has a full commercial licence (and not just a personal licence for home use) can be uploaded on any College machine. Under no circumstances can freeware or shareware be uploaded.

#### **5. Restricted access**

We expect privacy and property to be respected. For reasons of privacy, practicality and security, the following areas of the College campus are designated out of bounds, unless specific authorisation is given: all staff offices/studies, College kitchen and store, and the roof of any building. Likewise, all Hostel rooms (including Riverside Lounge) are out of bounds to all but the respective hostel resident students. Others may visit by specific invitation within the bounds set down within the Hostel guidelines.

#### **6. Responsible community living**

We expect a diligent and co-operative approach to all aspects of College life, in which each student plays an active part in creating a supportive community and in which all students can take responsibility for their learning and growth at all levels, spiritual, practical, academic and relational. We expect responsible life choices in community and



respect for the integrity of other people's relationships. We ask that students conduct their relationships in a way in which they would expect others to act towards them, consistent with Christian principles. *Alcohol* is not permitted anywhere on the College campus. *Smoking* on the College campus is not permitted for legal and insurance reasons. *Drug or other substance* abuse and any other activities liable to criminal prosecution are not permitted. Safeguarding of Children and Adults at risk is of the utmost importance to the College. Care must be taken with regard to the presence of children on campus so as to protect their safety at all times. It is the responsibility of students to make themselves aware of the College's Safeguarding Policy and general expectations about community living and as stated in the College Handbook. Any concerns regarding Safeguarding should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer immediately.

#### **7. Local area**

We expect positive involvement and collaboration with neighbours and residents in the wider general community of Dunmurry, where the Campus is situated. Students are expected to avoid engaging in behaviour likely to cause annoyance, or distress, to members of the local community, the result of which is likely to prejudice the reputation of the College.

#### **8. Vehicles**

We expect care and consideration of others. Student parking, at the owner's risk, is available only in the main car park. The area directly in front of Glenburn House must be used only for loading and unloading. Please also respect the needs of disabled people by leaving the disabled parking spaces free for them. Students must observe the 10mph speed limit within the confines of the drive and campus. Failure to do so may result in an offending student being barred from bringing their vehicle on campus.

#### **9. Insurance**

We expect students to make responsible insurance provision for their personal property. While the College holds all necessary insurances for public liability, all



insurances for personal risk and property are the responsibility of students and visitors. These include, for example, personal effects in study bedrooms and around the campus; bicycles left on campus, including in the bicycle shed; cars parked in the car park and driven on College grounds; accidents occurring during sports events or during any other activity; musical instruments; travel and any other risks relevant to each student's personal circumstances.

#### **10. First aid**

We expect appropriate action in the case of a medical emergency, as set out in the College Handbook. The names of the College's registered First Aiders are on display at Reception, in the hostels and the kitchen.

#### **11. Meals and special diets**

We expect to be as fully informed as possible of the particular needs of students and of their use of the dining facilities. At BBC, we attempt to provide a varied choice. The college holds a 5-star rating for Food Hygiene. All meals taken by students or those visiting students must be paid for and there will be no refund for meals not eaten. Any special dietary requirements must be communicated to the Kitchen staff in good time. Instructions for signing in for meals must be strictly adhered to. The "Mustard Seed" should be seen as the normal place where food is consumed. Students are permitted to consume their own food in this area. Eating and drinking in classrooms, apart from bottled water, without permission is prohibited.

#### **12. Security**

We expect all students to play their part in ensuring the safety of all on Campus. Security is of utmost importance given the open aspect of the College campus. All students should therefore be vigilant; any person in the grounds or buildings who is acting suspiciously should be immediately reported to Reception or a member of staff. If out of hours, the Wardens should be contacted and if they are unavailable, PSNI should be contacted directly.



### 13. Equipment and use of rooms

We expect responsible and careful use of all property and equipment.

- a. Photocopiers and printers are available for student use at the rates displayed. Any faults or problems should be reported to Reception immediately. We have service contracts in the case of breakdown and faults; attempts on the part of students to effect repairs, are not permitted.
- b. Projectors and A/V Equipment in the lecture rooms are not to be removed without prior agreement of the IT Coordinator and should not be used by any student without the express permission of a member of staff.
- c. The Chapel is a public space. The use of equipment (sound, projector etc.) in Chapel is not generally available but request for use can be made. Musical instruments must be stored neatly after use.
- d. The Lounge is available for student use by permission from the College when it is not in use by the staff or Board. Request for use of the Chapel or Lounge should be made in advance to the Operations Manager.

### 14. Breakages, damages and faults

We expect openness and transparency. All breakages and damage should be reported *immediately* to the appropriate person: in the case of all kitchen equipment to the Cook; all general breakages to the Operations Manager; all Hostel breakages or damage to the Wardens and all technical equipment to the IT Coordinator. Payment may be required. All faults in facilities or equipment should be reported clearly in the Maintenance Book (at Reception) so that they can be rectified.

### Our Disciplinary Policies and Procedures

All breaches of this Code (or actions or activities deemed not in keeping with the spirit of this Code) will normally activate the official Disciplinary Policies and Procedures of the College.



## Student Disciplinary Procedure

The following procedures are to be followed in the event of an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct of the College.

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The expectations in regard to conduct of students at Belfast Bible College are set out in the College Code of Conduct, which is included in the BBC College Handbook and Moodle. The disciplinary procedures which follow will be instigated in situations where a significant breach of the Code of Conduct, or commonly agreed standards of behaviour, has occurred or is alleged to have occurred.
- 1.2 Less serious breaches will be handled through the normal pastoral oversight relationships within the College, in most cases through the student's Programme Leader.
- 1.3 **Students of the College, who are registered on programmes of Queen's University Belfast**, will, in their capacity as students of the University, be subject to Queen's disciplinary regulations in relation to academic matters. In relation to matters of general conduct they will be subject to the College Code of Conduct.
- 1.4 **Students of the College, who are registered on programmes of the University of Cumbria**, will, in their capacity as students of the University, be subject to the University of Cumbria's disciplinary regulations in relation to academic matters. In relation to matters of general conduct they will be subject to the College Code of Conduct.
- 1.5 **All other students of the College** will be subject to the College Code of Conduct.



- 1.6 Every effort will be made to ensure that action taken under the Student Disciplinary Procedures is fair. Students who become subject to the procedures will be given the opportunity to state their case and to appeal against any decision of the Disciplinary Committee that they consider to be unfair or unjust.

## **2. Misconduct**

- 2.1 Indicative examples of conduct which would make a student liable to disciplinary action include the following:

- a. conduct which constitutes a criminal offence
- b. indecent or immoral behaviour
- c. abusive behaviour or harassment or bullying
- d. dangerous behaviour or physical assault
- e. significant breaches of the Student Code of Conduct
- f. deliberate or reckless damage to College property or misuse of College property or facilities
- g. objectionable or insulting behaviour
- h. disruption of, or improper interference with, the education or support activities and functions of the College
- i. fraud, deception or dishonesty in relation to the College, its programmes, its activities or its personnel
- j. failure to comply with a reasonable instruction relating to discipline issued by a member of staff acting with the authority of the Principal
- k. failure to abide by the College rules and procedures in relation to health and safety, internet use and security
- l. failure to pay fees
- m. bringing the College into disrepute



### **3. Disciplinary authority**

3.1 The Principal is the designated disciplinary officer of the College in matters relating to the discipline of students of the College. He or she may nominate another senior colleague to act on his or her behalf in this capacity. Reference to the Principal in these procedures signifies also reference to persons so nominated.

### **4. Criminal offences**

4.1 Where the alleged misconduct, if proved, would also constitute an offence under criminal law, the College will take account of the procedures set out under the relevant University's Student Disciplinary Regulations:

- a. Where the alleged offence may be dealt with internally, it will be so dealt with or the Principal may at his or her discretion defer action until the police and courts have dealt with the matter.
- b. In all other cases no internal disciplinary action will normally be taken other than the possibility of suspension until the matter has been reported to the police and either a prosecution has been completed, or a decision not to prosecute has been taken.
- c. The College under statute is required to report certain matters to the legal authorities.
- d. Any sentence by the court on the same facts will be taken into account in any sanction imposed under the College's internal procedures.

### **5. Disciplinary process**



- 5.1 A student will only be disciplined after careful investigation of the facts and having had the opportunity to present his, or her, side of the case. A student who is the subject of an allegation of misconduct may be suspended with immediate effect, where appropriate, from the residential and/or worshipping community of the College by the Principal, pending the conclusion of the disciplinary process. This is without prejudice to the outcome of the disciplinary process and should not be regarded as disciplinary action or sanction of any kind.
- 5.2 The student has the right to be accompanied by a fellow student, family member or College member who may act as a witness or speak on his, or her, behalf at all stages of the formal disciplinary and appeal procedures. No legal representation will be permitted at this stage of the process.
- 5.3 If a student is disciplined, he or she will receive an explanation of the sanction imposed and will have the right to appeal against the finding and the sanction.

## **6. Summary dismissal of case**

- 6.1 Allegations of misconduct should be made to the Principal in writing. The Principal may dismiss the allegation immediately if he or she believes, acting reasonably, that there is no case to answer or that it is, for some other reason, appropriate and reasonable to do so.

## **7. Preliminary interview**

- 7.1 If the allegation is not dismissed, a member of the Management Team (MT) will invite the student for an interview, indicating in advance that an allegation has been made which he or she wishes to investigate. This invitation may be provided orally or, at the request of the student, in writing. Particularly in cases of alleged serious misconduct, it is important that opportunity is given to the student to respond in a considered manner. However, the period for a written submission may not exceed 5 working days.



The MT member, together with a colleague, will interview the student. The purpose of the preliminary interview is to hear the student's initial response to the allegation of misconduct.

The MT member will also interview any other parties deemed relevant to the complaint.

Following the interview, the MT member will write to the student with his or her decision as to whether there is a case to be answered, or whether no further steps need be taken.

- 7.2 If the MT member decides to take the process further, he or she may deal with the case summarily without recourse to a Disciplinary Committee, where he or she considers, acting reasonably, that it is appropriate to do so and where the student, who is subject to the allegation, agrees that it should not be referred to a Disciplinary Committee. This will normally only happen where there is an admission of guilt from the student and the penalty does not involve the discontinuation of studies. Otherwise, the case will be referred to a Disciplinary Committee. Any decision taken will be communicated to the student in writing and recorded on the student's file.

## **8. Disciplinary Committee**

- 8.1 The Disciplinary Committee will be composed of the Principal (or his or her nominee), who will chair the committee, and two or four other members, as determined by the Principal, including another member of the College Teaching Staff and the Chair of the Student Committee, or failing whom, the Vice Chair (subject to paragraph 8.3 below). The Disciplinary Committee will be gender-balanced.

The committee will not include members of the College Board of Directors who may constitute an Appeals Committee under these procedures.



The Principal will appoint an appropriate member of the College staff to act as secretary to the Disciplinary Committee, who will issue all notices as appropriate and arrange for notes of the proceedings to be taken. The secretary will invite the student, giving at least 5 working days' notice in writing, to attend a meeting with the committee and make representation. The secretary will also notify the student of his or her right to be accompanied by another student of the College or a family member.

- 8.2 The committee will rely solely on evidence presented at the hearing and will find that a student has committed the misconduct if, on the evidence provided, it is satisfied on the balance of probabilities of the student's guilt. If a unanimous decision cannot be achieved, the decision may be determined if a majority of the members agree that they are satisfied that the student's guilt is beyond all reasonable doubt.
- 8.3 The student who is subject to the disciplinary hearing may make representations to the Principal, although the Principal may agree that a student representative should not form part of the committee. (The need for confidentiality at all stages should be taken into account.) No student who has been a close associate of the student who is subject to the disciplinary hearing or is a representative of either the person bringing an allegation, or the person subject to the allegation, shall form part of the Disciplinary Committee.
- 8.4 The Chair will produce a written report of the outcome of the hearing, setting out the alleged misconduct, a summary of evidence received, the decision of the committee regarding guilt with grounds for the decision and the penalty, if any, imposed, which will be communicated to the student who is the subject of the disciplinary action as soon as is reasonably possible, but in any event normally within 10 working days unless the College calendar or annual leave makes this impracticable.



## 9. Appeals

9.1 A student who wishes to appeal against the decision of the Disciplinary Committee shall notify the secretary to the Disciplinary Committee, (see 8.1 above), in writing within 5 working days of receipt of the decision, stating his or her reasons on which the appeal is based. Such an appeal may be made solely on the grounds of incorrect procedure in the disciplinary hearing or new evidence coming to light subsequent to the disciplinary hearing.

The Chair of College Board of Directors will nominate three persons to form an Appeals Committee of whom at least two members should be members of the College Board. The chair of the committee will be appointed by the Chair of Board and may be him or herself. The Appeals Committee will include at least one male and one female.

The student is entitled to appear before the Appeals Committee in person. This option must be notified in his or her written submission. In this event at least 5 working days' written notice of the date, time and venue will be provided.

No member of the Disciplinary Committee shall be present or take part in the hearing of the Appeal. The Appeals Committee shall be informed of the situation where the decision of the Disciplinary Committee was not unanimous.

If the student is not satisfied with the outcome, he or she may appeal to the Northern Ireland Public Services' Ombudsperson.

## 10. Communication.

10.1 All correspondence concerning proceedings under the Disciplinary Policy will be sent to the student at the last term-time address notified by the student to the College and to



their College email address. Correspondence may also be sent to the student's last notified home address, as appropriate.

Students are responsible for maintaining the accuracy of personal information including home, term-time and email addresses. Messages sent at any time to the postal address last notified by the student or, during term-time, to a student's **College** email address will be considered as sufficient to discharge the College's obligation to provide due notice.

## **11. Sanctions**

11.1 Where a student is found guilty of misconduct and he or she is to be penalised, that penalty shall, so far as possible, be commensurate with the seriousness of the misconduct.

## **12. Recommendation for public ministry**

12.1 A decision to undertake disciplinary action will not in itself constitute evidence that a candidate should not be recommended for public ministry. Such decisions are taken by the Principal in considering all matters relating to the fitness of the candidate for public ministry, including any breaches of College discipline. Neither shall a decision not to recommend a candidate for ordination, or for public ministry, within their denomination or church be construed as evidence of a breach of discipline. The decision to recommend, or otherwise, a student for public ministry remains at all times in the reasonable discretion of the Principal.

## **13. Membership of the residential community**

13.1 Membership of the residential community of the College, especially in accommodation managed by the College, on campus or off campus, may, where it is reasonable, be withdrawn, or withheld, from a student at the discretion of the Principal on grounds of incompatibility, quite independent of matters relating to College discipline.