RIGHT TO DISCONNECT POLICY

Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Ms. Sahra Potts, the EAL Coordinator or a member of the Principal Team.

Purpose

This policy establishes the college's commitment to upholding the right of all staff to disconnect from work outside of their designated working hours, in line with relevant laws and regulations. It also outlines the exceptional circumstances under which staff may be required to respond to work-related communications outside regular hours.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the college, including teaching staff, learning support staff, administrative staff, and those in leadership roles.

Right to Disconnect

Employees have the right to disengage from work-related communications—including emails, messages, phone calls, and social media—outside their scheduled working hours. Staff members are not expected to respond to work-related communications during personal time, including weekends, holidays, and any other periods when they are not officially on duty.

Exemptions to the Right to Disconnect

While the college is dedicated to fostering a healthy work-life balance, there are specific situations where it may be necessary for staff to respond to work-related communications outside of normal working hours. These exceptions include, but are not limited to:

Emergencies Involving Student Safety:

Situations where a student's safety is at immediate risk, such as severe injury, health emergencies, or critical incidents, requiring prompt communication with parents, emergency services, or relevant authorities.

Urgent Operational Matters:

Issues that critically affect the operation of the college, such as severe weather events, fires, or other emergencies necessitating a rapid response to ensure the safety and security of the college community.

Time-Sensitive Legal or Compliance Issues:

Legal or compliance matters that require immediate attention or action to prevent significant harm, legal consequences, or non-compliance with regulations. For instance, this may involve requests from the legal branch for documentation, context, or additional information necessary to address urgent matters before the courts or to respond to impending legal actions. It is important to note that such situations are expected to be rare.

Leadership

Staff in leadership roles or those designated as on-call may be required to respond to urgent communications outside regular hours as part of their duties.

Preferred Method of Contact

In situations where it is essential to contact a staff member outside their normal working hours due to one of the exemptions above, the preferred method of contact is by phone to ensure prompt and appropriate action. Staff are encouraged to maintain voicemail capability to allow messages to be left. If voicemail is unavailable, a text message will be sent to notify the staff member that contact is necessary.

Implementation and Compliance

Staff are encouraged to clearly define their working hours and communicate these boundaries to colleagues, supervisors, and direct reports. It is advisable for staff to set up an out-of-office response for emails during periods of leave.

Email signatures should include the following statement to reinforce the college's commitment to work-life balance:

"*Please note: In support of our school's commitment to work-life balance and the Right to Disconnect, there is no expectation to respond to this email outside of your working hours. Thank you for prioritising your well-being.*"

The Assistant Principal for College Operations will ensure this statement is included in the College's standard email template.

Leadership is responsible for respecting the right to disconnect and making decisions on a case-by-case basis regarding exemptions. If a staff member believes there has been a breach of this policy, they should raise the concern with a member of the College Executive. The procedure for addressing such concerns includes:

- **Arranging a Meeting**: The staff member should arrange a meeting with a member of the College Executive to discuss the issue. If the concern involves a member of the College Executive, the staff member may choose a Leadership team member with whom they feel comfortable. This individual can support or represent the staff member's concerns in a manner that ensures impartiality and fairness.

- **Agency**: Allowing the staff member to express their preferred resolution.

- **Action:** Having the College Executive investigate the matter and, where appropriate, implement measures to prevent further breaches.

Review and Amendments

This policy will be reviewed annually and may be updated as necessary to ensure continued alignment with legal requirements and the evolving needs of the College community.

Policy last reviewed	September 2024
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	September 2025