

CHAPTER XI - CODE OF CONDUCT: SUPPORT STAFF

George Brown College is mandated by law and by the community it serves to provide an educational environment that demonstrates professionalism and academic currency, values diversity, and respects the learning process.

The terms of this mandate are prescribed by the founding documents of the College; by the laws to which the College is subject; by the collective agreements that govern academic employees and support staff; and by the operational policies and procedures that the College has adopted (see Appendix C).

Central to these documents and the processes that created them is the *implicit* assumption of professionalism and appropriate professional conduct on the part of all college employees.

This code of conduct is designed to provide an *explicit* definition of the standards of professional conduct expected of all support staff. It represents, for the College, a benchmark of expectations with respect to support staff conduct.

For the purposes of this document, the terms "support staff" and "employees" are used interchangeably to refer to those employees specifically designated as support staff in the collective agreement and in the College's Collective Bargaining Act, as well as employees with similar jobs who are not included in the bargaining unit.

A BENCHMARK STATEMENT ON PROFESSIONALISM

Support staff are expected to proceed in their daily duties in a professional manner and to exhibit a commitment to providing a supportive environment for learning, an enthusiasm for excellence in performance, and a general concern for the well-being of students, staff, the College, and those members of the general public with whom they interact.

1 PROFESSIONALISM AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

George Brown College expects all support staff in its employ to conform to the explicit standards of professionalism defined in this document.

Support staff who demonstrate behaviour that does not comply or is inconsistent with the minimal standards of professionalism contained in this document may be subject to the range of disciplinary actions specified in the College's *Progressive Discipline Policy*.

1.1 Scope

The term "professionalism" is used to describe adherence by support staff to an acceptable standard in the method, manner, and spirit in which they perform their duties. The professional conduct of support staff at George Brown College is assessed in relation to four distinct areas of College activity:

- job performance;
- workplace conduct;

- relationships with students;
- relationships with faculty, colleagues, administrative staff, and the general public.

1.2 Adherence to Policies

The expectations of the College with relation to each of these areas will be described in detail in the following sections of this document. The College also expects that support staff employees will:

- familiarize themselves with College policies that are relevant to their responsibilities;
- adhere to those policies to the best of their ability;
- assist and encourage others to adhere to the policies – for example, by directing a student to the appropriate channels for appeal;
- draw perceived problems with the policies to the attention of the Office of the Vice-President, Academic;
- familiarize themselves with and adhere to the relevant provisions of the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *College Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment* policy;

1.3 Inappropriate Behaviours

Support staff will not use the workplace or online environment to:

- use scurrilous, profane, or obscene language;
- make remarks or engage in behaviour that might reasonably be construed as a violation of the *Ontario Human Rights Code* (see Appendix D);
- engage in behaviour or make remarks that could reasonably be interpreted as threatening and will intervene if they witness such behaviour;
- intimidate any employee or student verbally and will strive actively to prevent others from engaging in such behaviour; or
- encourage, by inaction or innuendo, the development of an environment that is fractious, disrespectful of others, or intolerant of order and good manners
- promote their personal, religious, political, social, or business agendas
- to spread of negative, malicious, or unkind remarks or rumours
- refrain from using work time to promote personal, religious, political, social, or business agendas.

1.4 Online Environment/Communication Facilities

All staff must apply professional and ethical standards at all times when accessing, using, and distributing information and materials through use of learning technologies. Staff must use computing and communication facilities and services only for the purposes for which they are authorized. Technologies must not be used to access, use or distribute materials that are obscene, vulgar, or pornographic, or that might be perceived by others as harassment or intimidation.

The College believes that every user bears the primary responsibility for the material she/he chooses to access, send, or display. A full description of policies in this area (technology and accessibility) are located in the Appendices.

1.5 Copyright

Administrative staff will abide by all copyright laws, which applies on the internet as well as the paper. Staff wishing to copy original work shall receive written permission from the copyright owner prior to copying (George Brown College Copyright Policy and Procedures, 1985).

Employees who are not familiar with these laws may clarify their responsibilities with any College librarian. The College will not provide assistance or protection relating to charges arising from violation of copyright law.

2 JOB PERFORMANCE

All employees are expected to be prepared to perform the duties that they have been assigned. Support staff will demonstrate readiness by maintaining, developing, and expanding their capability with respect to the requirements of the position. Within the scope of their job, support staff will, for example:

- use professional development opportunities, when available, in a productive manner; and
- keep reasonably abreast of current research, technical advances, and current standards of practice in their field.

All employees are expected to perform such activities as are necessary to ensure delivery of the duties they have been assigned. Specifically, support staff will:

- understand the job scope, practices, and procedures relating to their position;
- ensure accuracy and thoroughness in the performance of their assigned duties;
- meet targets regarding work to be performed to the best of their ability;
- manage time effectively;
- be well-organized;
- demonstrate ability to problem-solve within the scope of their position;
- demonstrate ability to work independently when appropriate;
- show initiative; and
- ensure efficient and responsible follow-through on assigned duties.
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3 WORKPLACE CONDUCT

It is expected that employees will treat all students, faculty, administrative staff, other employees, and members of the general public with courtesy and respect.

3.1 General Conduct

Within the office environment, employees will:

- maintain a supportive environment for working and learning;
- commence work on time;
- notify their supervisor at the earliest reasonable opportunity if, for reasons such as accident or illness, they are unable to come to work and will arrange in advance for those absences that can be foreseen;
- provide their manager with appropriate notice of requests for vacation time;
- use all work hours productively and ensure that their activities in the workplace do not impede the effective operation of their department. Specifically, they will refrain from using work time to promote personal, religious, political, social, or business agendas;
- respect confidentiality in all matters.

3.2 Inquiries

Employees will:

- respond to telephone inquiries in a helpful and respectful manner. Specifically, support staff will transfer a misplaced call to the appropriate extension, if known, or to the switchboard, if not known, and will try to keep the call within the system so that the caller will not have to telephone again.

- inform students and the public of procedures to be followed when help is requested, for example, in course application, registration, class cancellation, and similar matters, if related to their job responsibilities;

3.3 College Equipment

Employees will:

- demonstrate a concern for the appropriate use and maintenance of all equipment provided by the College for their use;
- ensure that College services such as photocopying and postage are used only for College purposes.

4 RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS

Interactions between support staff and students occur in many contexts:

- student services, such as financial aid and counselling;
- registration services;
- Learning Resource Centres, including libraries, labs, and computer centres; and
- social and recreational environments.

Support staff will demonstrate courtesy, respect, patience, and willingness to help in all their interactions with students in any context.

Support staff should behave toward students with circumspection, avoiding conduct on College premises that might result in the imposition of College sanctions or civil or criminal proceedings. Support staff, for example, will not:

- involve a student in any interpersonal difficulties the employee might have with colleagues, faculty, or administrative staff; or
- become involved with a student or group of students in any situation that is inappropriate or inconsistent with the role of a College employee, for example, by getting drunk or using prohibited substances on College premises.

4.1 Conflict Resolution

Support staff should:

- strive actively to avoid conflict between themselves and any student
- refrain from physical intervention to resolve a conflict between students.

In the event of conflict initiated by a student, the employee will maintain an open, non-confrontational attitude and attempt to resolve the problem at hand; if a resolution is not possible, the support staff member should seek guidance from administrative staff.

In the event of conflict between students, support staff will intervene by making verbal attempts at conciliation; if these are not successful, the employee should immediately notify the appropriate authority according to the procedural guidelines established in the *College Policy on Emergencies* and the *College Policy on Student Discipline in Non-academic Matters*.

5 RELATIONSHIPS WITH FACULTY, COLLEAGUES, ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF, AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Support staff will treat all staff and the general public with courtesy and respect.

If a support staff member is asked by anyone other than an administrator to perform functions or services that are not included in applicable support staff job descriptions, such services are to be performed solely on the employee's own time. In the case of conflicting demands, the situation should be brought to the attention of the appropriate administrator.

Support staff are urged to respect the professionalism of academic employees and fellow support staff members and to refrain from behaviour that would prevent others from fulfilling their duties, for example, by failing to order books or repair equipment.