



VANCOUVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE

CODE OF ETHICS

Approved October 26, 2000

Reviewed November 2002

PREAMBLE

This VCC Code of Ethics has been developed with input from representatives of each constituent group at VCC. It is meant to be educational and aspirational to show all members of the College community the climate that we foster, and expresses the ethical principles and guidelines for the conduct of all VCC employees. It also informs the public whom the employees serve, of the standards of ethical conduct for which employees are responsible.

Employees of Vancouver Community College have a responsibility to ensure that they are familiar with this Code of Ethics, understand its application to their conduct, and adhere to its principles. Employees should also be familiar with other sources of information which will assist them in making informed decisions. These include the laws, policies and agreements which are relevant to their work.

The VCC Code of Ethics includes examples of the applications of the ethical principles. While the examples are intended to provide further guidance and assistance, no part of this Code can substitute entirely for the active process of ethical decision-making. In instances of ethical demands or dilemmas where a simple or direct application of this Code is not possible, employees should seek clarification and assistance.

*For the purpose of this document, our definitions are provided in Appendix A.
Recommendations for addressing ethical concerns are provided in Appendix B.*

Code of Ethics: Principles and Application Examples

The following Principles and attached examples have been developed based on the stated values of: *integrity, competence, equality and acceptance, honour and trust, and privacy*, to assist employees in interpreting the VCC Code of Ethics. The applications are not inclusive of every situation; rather, they are intended to provide some examples of the way the Code is applied.

PRINCIPLES

A. INTEGRITY

- 1. Employees must act with integrity in their relationships. They must cooperate and treat others with respect, honesty, and fairness. They must accept the rights of others to hold values and beliefs that differ from their own.**
- 2. Employees must maintain VCC's Code of Ethics when engaged in any college-related activity.
*Personal standards and conduct are private matters; however, when employees act as representatives of the College, they must conduct themselves according to the VCC Code of Ethics.**

**VCC recognizes that many employees act under other codes of conduct or standards of practice and licensure. The College accepts that these professional standards supersede VCC's Code of Ethics.*

APPLICATION EXAMPLES

- Visitors to the College must be treated courteously and provided with helpful and accurate information.
- Colleagues should maintain polite, professional relations. Shunning, ostracizing and gossip constitute unprofessional behaviour.
- The VCC Code of Ethics applies to representatives of the College in College-sponsored activities (e.g. the VCC Golf Tournament, United Way Campaign, VCC Foundation Notable Event).

PRINCIPLES

- 3. Employees must avoid creating the impression of speaking or acting on behalf of the College or any College group when they speak or act as private persons.**

- 4. Employees must not condone or participate in breaches of VCC's Code of Ethics.**

APPLICATION EXAMPLES

- Employees participating in a political or partisan demonstration must not promote themselves as representatives of the College.

- When promoting a private business, an employee must not use the name of VCC to enhance credibility.

- Employees must not use VCC letterhead other than as part of their assigned college duty. Letterhead must be used only for VCC business.

See Appendix B

PRINCIPLES

C. EQUALITY AND ACCEPTANCE:

- 7. Employees must allow others to hold fundamental beliefs and differing opinions and protect fundamental human rights prescribed by law.**

- 8. Employees must act to prevent intimidation, harassment, favouritism and discrimination.**

APPLICATION EXAMPLES

- Employees must respect that the opinions and ideas of students and other employees may differ from their own.

- Employees must not ignore discrimination in situations where a reasonable person would believe there is an inequity.

- Employees must make a reasonable effort to include or welcome all class members in any social activities. An employee may engage in social activities with a class but must not restrict social activities to an individual or a select group of students.

- Employees must not collude against other employees or against students.

- Employees must make a reasonable effort to create an inclusive environment for all colleagues and students.

PRINCIPLES

- 11. Employees must not allow their private interests, whether personal, financial or of any other sort, to conflict or appear to conflict with their professional duties and responsibilities. Employees must avoid any conduct that would lead a reasonable person to conclude that the individual might be biased or motivated by personal gain or private interest in the performance of duties. All known or potential conflicts of interest must be disclosed, in accordance with College policy.**

- 12. Employees may not take credit for others' ideas or work, even in cases where the work has not been explicitly protected by copyright or patent.**

APPLICATION EXAMPLES

- Employees must not financially contract or recruit business for services outside the College with individuals who would normally be able to receive the same service free within VCC.
- Employees must not rent accommodation, rent equipment or charge any sort of fee to their current students.
- An instructor must not be a Homestay host for a student from the College, if that student will be attending classes taught by the instructor.
- Employees must not use sick time to free themselves for employment elsewhere.
- Employees should consider the impact on the College of selling to VCC competitors' curriculum and teaching materials, for which the employee holds the copyright.
- When an employee uses or reports an innovation or ideas from a fellow employee, they must give credit to the originator of the idea.

PRINCIPLES

E. PRIVACY :

- 13. Employees must respect the privacy and confidentiality rights of others with whom they work. Confidential information must be used only for the purposes for which it was originally provided and shared only with authorized parties, on a need to know basis, unless consent is given or required by law.**
- 14. Employees must obtain authorization or permission before using or accessing another person's material or belongings.**

APPLICATION EXAMPLES

- Instructors must not discuss confidential student information with another student.
- An instructor must only share a student's work with the class when the student has given permission.
- Employees must only discuss the health or conduct of a student or colleague with their permission, or on a need to know basis.
- An employee must not access another employee's space, desk, or materials on other work-related matters, without asking permission.
- An employee must not access a colleague's personal e-mail or computer files without their permission and knowledge and then only if the reasons for access can be reasonably justified.

APPENDIX A

Definitions for Code of Ethics

Acceptance - Favourable reception (of persons, things or ideas); approval; assent, belief.

Collude - Have a secret agreement. Conspire, plot, connive; act together in secret.

Competence - Power, ability, capacity (to do, for a task, etc.); legal authority, qualification or admissibility.

Condone: - forgive or overlook

Equality - The condition of having the same rights, rank, power, etc., with others.

Ethic: - A set of moral principles

- ... the moral principles by which any particular person is guided; the rules of conduct recognized in a particular profession or area of human life.

Fairness - Honesty, impartiality, justice.

Honesty - with upright conduct; without fraud, by honest means; sincerely, fairly, openly.

Honour - High respect, reverence, reputation, good name.

Integrity - Soundness of moral principle; the character of uncorrupted virtue; uprightness, honesty, sincerity.

Intimacy - Closely personal friendship or acquaintance; close familiarity.

Intimate - United by friendship or other personal relationship; familiar, close.

Law - A rule of conduct imposed by a secular authority.

Licensure - the granting of licenses especially to practice a profession.

- Personal** - of, pertaining to, concerning, or affecting a person as an individual (rather than as a member of a group or of the public).
- Policy** - A course of action or principle adopted or proposed by a government, party, individual, etc.; any course of action adopted as advantageous or expedient.
- Principle** - A fundamental truth or proposition on which others depend; a general statement or tenet forming the basis of a system of belief, etc.; chain of reasoning.
- Privacy** - Freedom from unauthorized intrusion.
- Prescribe** - 1. - Lay down as a rule or guide; order; direct
2. - Order as a remedy or treatment
- Profession** - A vocation, a calling, esp. one requiring advanced knowledge or training in some branch of learning or science.
- Proscribe** - prohibit, as wrong or dangerous: condemn
- Professionalism** - The body of qualities or features, as competence, skill, etc. characteristic of a profession or professional.
- Reasonable person standard** - whether or not a reasonable person in roughly the same position would come to the same conclusion.
- Respect** - Deferential esteem felt or shown towards a person, thing, or quality; a feeling of deferential esteem; the state of being esteemed or honoured.
- Therapeutic** - A curative agent; a healing influence.
- Trust** - Faith or confidence in the loyalty, strength, veracity etc., of a person or thing; reliance on the truth of a statement, etc., without examination.

GUIDELINES FOR ADDRESSING ETHICAL CONCERNS

**Principle # 4:
Employee must not condone or participate
in breaches of VCC's Code of Ethics.**

If a person has reason to believe that an employee of VCC is not acting in accordance with the VCC Code of Ethics, the person must:

1. Raise the concern directly with the employee.
2. Ask a third party to raise the concern directly with the employee.
3. Raise the concern with the employee's supervisor(s).
4. Raise the concern with the employee's union representative if the employee is a union member.

Any concerns about an employee's behaviour must be addressed through relevant college policies, Collective Agreements or Terms of Employment.

Relevant college policies to consider include:

1. Human Rights Policy
2. Conflict of Interest Policy
3. Employment of Relatives Policy
4. Use of Drugs or other Medication and Alcohol Policy
5. Appropriate and Responsible Use of Educational Information Technology Policy
6. Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Policy
7. Suspension and Dismissal of Employees Policy