

Teachers' Handbook



Message from Director of Studies

Dublin Centre of Education is an English Language College which endeavours to provide the highest standard of tuition and training for students. Therefore, we require teachers of the highest quality who are fully qualified educators. We also encourage our teachers to fully participate in continuous professional development. We are members of ELT Ireland, and this body offers some wonderful opportunities for CPD.

We recognise the efforts of Unite the Union and its ELT branch to improve the English Language Teaching Industry, and have signed a statement that we recognise the union.

We, as professionals, have an important role within the College to transmit excellent language tuition, and to prepare students to have enough confidence to communicate in English.

We, as educators, should never stop thinking about new ways to become better educators while keeping within the parameters of the professional.

Carla Kerr
Director of Studies

Introduction

Congratulations on joining our teaching staff.

As a teacher, you have been entrusted with a position of responsibility within the College. It is essential that you are aware of your position at all times, and conduct yourself in an appropriate manner.

Every school has its own ethos, which is reinforced by a set of shared values. You are expected to share these values and to feel proud to be a part of the College. You should strive to uphold your school's good standards and follow the school's code of practice to ensure uniformity.

Staff are expected to treat all students as individuals and to respect their differences and diversity.

Students learn language at different paces, and teachers are expected to push each student to maximise their potential level of attainment.

Code of Ethics in relation to Students

1. The teacher shall give foremost consideration to the student's well-being.
2. The teacher shall direct his/her whole professional effort to assist each student to develop his/her ability to the full.
3. The teacher shall foster integrity, honesty and consideration for others, and lead by example.
4. The teacher shall act and be seen to act with justice.
5. The teacher shall be punctual at all times.
6. The teacher shall exercise authority in accordance with the law.
7. The teacher shall follow the syllabus as set out by the College.
8. The teacher shall encourage and prepare students to sit public examinations facilitated by the College.
9. The teacher shall be aware of and implement health and safety rules.

Responsibilities in relation to Colleagues

1. The teacher should uphold the highest standards of professional courtesy with regard to work colleagues.
2. The teacher should assist new colleagues as much as possible.
3. The teacher shall recognise his/her obligation to advance the causes of language education in the College.
4. The teacher shall not knowingly make a false statement in relation to qualifications, competence and experience.
5. The teacher should not make any attempt to bring the College into disrepute.
6. The teacher has the right to express their professional opinion at all times.
7. The teacher shall act with the ELT community in a manner which enhances the prestige of the profession.
8. The teacher should coordinate their plans with their partner teacher, where relevant, and ensure that there is a clear connection between the two halves of the class, and that material is not repeated due to lack of planning.

Teachers' Job Description

- To teach and educate according to the agreed syllabus of the College;
- To teach and educate students according to the educational needs, abilities, and attainments of individual students.

Main Responsibilities

1. Plan, prepare, and deliver lessons.
2. Teach according to the educational needs, abilities, and attainment levels of the individual student or group of students.
3. Assign work, correct, and regularly mark work carried out by the students, taking due care.
4. Assess, record and report on the development, progress, attainment and behaviour of the students.
5. Provide or contribute to oral and written assignments, reports and references relating to individual students or groups of students.
6. Participate in arrangements within an agreed national framework for the appraisal of the students' performance.
7. Promote the general progress of individual students, groups of students, or classes.
8. Provide guidance and advice to students.
9. Communicate, consult and cooperate with other members of College staff where necessary, *especially where classes are shared*.
10. Participate in College and CPD meetings.
11. Review and evaluate teaching methodologies.
12. Provide and maintain teaching resources.
13. Take adequate care of school equipment.
14. Register attendance of students.

Lesson Preparation

While preparing lessons, the following points should be considered:

- What added value are you giving to the student's level of achievement?
- How can you create ways of adding value to the student's language education?
- How do you intend to test what has been achieved?
- What are your remedial plans?

Lesson plans must be filled out ahead of time and filed in the appropriate folder or given to the Director of Studies by the end of each week. You may send them by email.

Effective Classroom Style

In developing your style, it may help you to consider the following points.

- Try to be as well-organised and efficient as you can.
- Show by your manner that you are looking forward to teaching the class, and that you do not expect any problems.
- Make clear to the class what is expected and valued.
- Praise good work.
- A calm, relaxed facial expression is characteristic of an effective teacher.
- Resist any temptation to use physical contact with students.
- Deal with students in a positive, assertive manner, and never show anger.

Homework and Study

Homework is essential and should consolidate the work done in class. It should be given on a regular basis, and always corrected.

Assessment & Feedback

Assessment is an important part of DCE's courses, and it is essential that students receive clear and helpful feedback on all forms of class assessment.

Weekly tests have been designed according to the learning outcomes of the curriculum. Teachers are also free to design their own assessment tasks, as long as they correspond to the material taught in class. Feedback should also be given on any written work that students complete in class, and any homework undertaken by students.

Formative Assessment (e.g. the weekly test, placement test, class quizzes, comprehension questions, or presentations) is designed to help students to see how well they are progressing during the course. It enables students to make improvements where necessary, and can help the teacher to assess the effectiveness of their teaching methods and change if necessary.

Summative Assessment (e.g. the end-of-course examination, the mid-course test and the 25-week test) checks that the students have learned and can understand the material presented in the course.

Good feedback can help to increase students' confidence, enable them to understand the material, and help them to develop their learning skills. Poor feedback or lack of feedback can demotivate students and make them less likely to participate in future assessment activities. When giving feedback to students, please consider the following:

- Give your feedback clearly, either verbally or in writing.
- Focus on the most important parts of the assessment.
- Be clear about whether you are pointing out a mistake, or making a suggestion for improvement based on your own opinion.
- Give your feedback as soon as possible after the completion of the assessment task.
- Encourage students to apply your feedback to the next task.
- Be constructive – suggest how the student could improve their work.
- As well as pointing out mistakes and problems, highlight where the student did well.
- Be specific.

After receiving feedback, the student should:

- Know what was good and bad about their work.
- Understand where they went wrong.
- Know how to improve for next time.
- Feel motivated.

We recommend that you check with your students regularly whether they feel your feedback is effective. If not, consider where you can make changes.

School Activities

By getting involved in school activities, you will have the opportunity to develop relationships with other members of staff, and build good rapport with students.

Dress Code

The dress code at DCE College is business casual. Teachers should dress as befits the dignity of the profession and in order for students to respect them.

Absences

If for any reason you cannot take your class, please contact the College as soon as possible. If you are going to be absent for a number of days, you will need to inform the College at your earliest convenience, so that a substitute may be organised. A medical certificate will be required for absences in excess of two days. Excessive absenteeism may result in disciplinary procedures being implemented.

You must contact the College before 5pm on the day of your absence to update us on whether you can return the following day. If you do not contact us by that time, it will be assumed that you will remain absent, and cover will be arranged. This cannot then be cancelled in the event of late contact.

In cases of appointments or holidays, appropriate notice must be given. In general, please give one week's notice of a day's leave, and one month's notice of a week or longer.

Holidays will be granted on a first-come-first-served basis and no more than one employee may be on leave at any one time, so it is advisable to book holidays as early as possible. You should not book any flights or accommodation (etc.) before receiving confirmation of your holiday by email from the management.

Please leave as much information and material as possible for your cover teacher when you are going to be absent. A form is provided for your convenience when planning this. If you agree to cover another teacher's absence, you must cover the material left for you.

School Policies

It is essential that you familiarise yourself with school policies and procedures, so that you can explain to students if asked. The managers and Director of Studies can help you with this.

Terms and Conditions

The terms and conditions of your employment are contained in your contract of employment.

Data Protection

All information and all materials holding information about students shall remain the property of the employer. This rule is in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2003.

Accountability

As a teacher, you are expected to:

- Be punctual and do a fair day's work
- Be prepared and organised for all lessons
- Keep all students occupied and interested
- Mark all work constructively
- Monitor all work constructively
- Access all resources in order to remain informed of latest information.

Staff Support Service

A support service for teachers is available:

- CPD support service
- Psychological service
- Advice
- Mentoring

Attendance Records

As some students will require a student visa to remain in the country, attendance records are of utmost importance. Visa students must maintain an attendance rate of 85% and the College must show that attendance is recorded strictly and accurately.

As a teacher, you are responsible for recording the attendance of your class. The attendance list is a legal document and as such, any attempt to falsify attendance is a criminal offence.

- Students must sign the attendance list both before and after break.
- Students arriving more than 15 minutes late may not sign the first half. The list will usually be collected 15 minutes after the start of class. In the event of late collection, please put a line in the box to prevent students from back-signing. ***It is a criminal offence to allow students to sign the list after this time, whether or not the list has been collected.***
- Be vigilant and ensure that students do not sign on behalf of any absent student. Any attempt to do so should be reported to the Director of Studies immediately.
- Students leaving early may not retain attendance for the second half unless they have written permission from the Director of Studies to leave up to 15 minutes early.

This permission is only granted in case of emergency. No student may leave more than 15 minutes early. In case of students leaving without permission, or leaving more than 15 minutes early, you should inform the Director of Studies.

- Students must be back after break at the appropriate time and do not have another 15 minutes' grace. Late students may not sign the second half.
- You are responsible for the attendance list; please ensure that it is not lost or soiled, and return it to the Director of Studies immediately after class. Do not leave it anywhere else or remove it from the building.
- No monetary or other type of reward may be offered or accepted in return for falsifying attendance. Such actions will be seen as gross misconduct and will result in disciplinary procedures being implemented.
- If you make a mistake and put a line in the box where a student is actually present, you may indicate this by allowing the student to sign over the line and initialling the box yourself. A line will always be considered an absence without a teacher's initials; this is to prevent students from ignoring the rule and signing over the line when late.
- You must write the total number of students present in the box, and sign at the end. This is a legal requirement.

Grievance, Disciplinary, Bullying and Harassment Policies

Grievance Policy

DCE College places great importance on creating and maintaining good relations between management and all employees. It is in the interest of everyone that where problems arise, they are dealt with quickly and effectively.

In the event of work assignments being in dispute, the employee is required to carry out the assignment while the grievance procedure is being processed.

The following procedure is designed to ensure that problems are brought to the attention of management at the earliest possible stage and to ensure they are dealt with without undue delay.

Step 1: The employee must first raise the issue with their immediate supervisor/manager, who will make every effort to solve the problem as quickly as possible. The employee will then be informed of the resolution within three working days.

Step 2: If the matter is not resolved, the employee is entitled to raise it at the next management level. A decision will be made by the manager within 10 working days. The employee may be accompanied at this meeting by another employee if they so choose.

Step 3: If all the supervisor/management levels below General Manager have failed to resolve the issue, then it can be referred to the General Manager. A decision will be made by the General Manager within 10 working days. The employee may be accompanied by another employee at these meetings if they so choose.

More than one meeting may be required at any stage of the grievance procedure.

Written records will be kept of each meeting.

An employee has the right to appeal a decision to the next management level. This appeal must be made in writing within 5 working days of the decision being communicated to the employee. In the event that a grievance is not resolved within the company, then an independent third party will be appointed to resolve the matter.

Disciplinary Policy

The need for satisfactory standards of performance, attendance and behaviour from employees is essential for all organisations. DCE College operates a fair and comprehensive disciplinary procedure in cases where employees deviate from these standards.

The following behaviours may be considered to be misconduct and may result in disciplinary action being initiated under the disciplinary procedure. Note that these examples are provided for illustrative purposes only, and this list is not exhaustive.

All cases are considered on their own merits:

- Minor breach of a workplace policy or procedure;
- Poor timekeeping;
- Abuse of sick leave policy;
- Insubordination;
- A refusal to carry out a reasonable request;
- Minor breaches of health and safety regulations;
- Bringing the College into disrepute;
- Misuse of College property.

Gross Misconduct

The following behaviours may be considered to be gross misconduct and may result in summary dismissal, depending on the circumstances of the case. Note that these examples are provided for illustrative purposes only, and this list is not exhaustive.

All cases are considered on their own merits:

- Serious harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, victimisation or other acts of discrimination;
- Theft or other fraudulent behaviour;
- Serious breaches of health and safety rules or endangerment of another person in the workplace;
- Serious breaches of confidentiality;
- Being under the influence of an intoxicant at work or in the course of employment;
- Violent or threatening behaviour;
- Refusal to participate in a workplace investigation or other action;
- Serious failure to adhere to an agreed workplace procedure or other agreed terms of employment.

Informal

Procedure

Action taken at an early and informal stage before the formal procedure is used can lead to improved standards of performance, attendance and behaviour/conduct. The objective of the informal discussion is to correct the issue of concern in a frank and constructive manner.

The informal discussion will:

- focus on helping the employee to understand how their performance/conduct/attendance has fallen short of the acceptable level; and
- suggest possible solutions and timeframes for improvement.

If the necessary improvements have not been made within the agreed timeframe, the formal disciplinary procedure will commence.

Formal

Procedure

In all cases where an employee's standards of performance, attendance and/or conduct allegedly falls below those expected by the Organisation, the formal disciplinary procedure may be initiated. In all cases in which the Formal Procedure is initiated, a hearing should be held with the employee to put the allegation(s) to him/her, and to hear his/her responses to the concerns raised.

During the formal stage of the procedure:

- The Employee is presented with the case against him/her and advised that the outcome of the meeting may result in further disciplinary action.
- They are allowed representation if requested.
- They are given the opportunity to state their case.
- The Employer hears the case being made.
- The Employer only forms judgement after having heard all of the facts.
- An Employee may be suspended on full pay at any stage during the disciplinary process, even before any allegation is presented to the Employee. This is done with no inference of guilt or otherwise against the Employee. Suspension is for a reasonable period only and will depend on the duration of the disciplinary investigation process.
- A follow-up disciplinary meeting is then held with the employee where the decision is communicated to the employee. The employee may have a representative present at this meeting. Formal disciplinary action is confirmed in writing.

In instances where the Employer invokes the Disciplinary Sanction Procedure in relation to concerns regarding an employee's performance, attendance or conduct competence, an employer should also initiate an action plan in order to attempt to resolve the issue in the future.

This plan should include:

1. Identifying the specific areas in which improvement is required of the employee going forward.
2. Agreeing the timeframe in which the specific goals/objectives must be achieved.
3. Providing an opportunity to improve and provide further training and support if necessary.
4. Notifying the employee that a failure to satisfactorily reach the standards required may result in further disciplinary action.

The stages of the formal disciplinary process are:

- Stage 1. Formal Verbal Warning**
- Stage 2. First Written Warning**
- Stage 3. Final Written Warning**
- Stage 4. Dismissal from Employment**

There are two ways in which dismissal may occur. Generally, the employee will have been notified of concerns and provided with an opportunity to improve through one or more stages of the disciplinary procedure.

The other form of dismissal is a summary dismissal, which normally results from an act of gross misconduct. An act of misconduct is considered as gross misconduct where the act is so serious that the Organisation cannot reasonably be expected to retain the Employee in employment. Summary dismissal occurs without recourse to the earlier stages of the disciplinary procedure.

In all cases an appropriate and fair hearing, which adheres to the principles set out in this procedure, should be undertaken, and careful consideration given to the decision on whether or not dismissal is the appropriate sanction given the circumstances of the case. In cases of alleged gross misconduct, an in-depth investigation may be necessary, and an Employee will be suspended on pay pending the outcome of this investigation.

The College also retains the right to impose alternative disciplinary sanctions, where deemed to be appropriate, and may include additional observations, transfer, demotion, suspension without pay, withholding of a salary review for a set period, or removal of another benefit.

Note on Probation: During the period of an Employee's probation, including extended probation, the full rigours of the disciplinary process may not apply, and the Organisation retains the right not to exhaust the disciplinary procedure during probation.

Bullying & Harassment Policy

The Management at DCE College is opposed to all forms of bullying and harassment at work. It is College policy to take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual or any other form of harassment at work. This includes any offensive, humiliating or intimidating conduct towards another employee or a student, whether or not of a sexist nature.

Examples of harassment can include, but are not limited to, spoken words, gestures, or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials, which are offensive.

Bullying and harassment will be dealt with as misconduct under the College's disciplinary procedures, as above. Depending on the seriousness of the misconduct, appropriate disciplinary action up to and including suspension without pay or dismissal will be considered.

Any employee suffering sexual harassment, bullying, or any other form of harassment, is required to report the matter to his/her supervisor. However, where reporting the issue to the supervisor may cause embarrassment or is thought to be inappropriate by the employee, it may be reported to any other member of the management team.

Management will deal seriously and confidentially with any allegations of sexual harassment or bullying in the workplace.

If investigations of an allegation of harassment or bullying reveal a deliberate untruth or that the complaint was malicious, this may be deemed as misconduct by the complainant and may be dealt with under the College's disciplinary procedure.

Health and Safety Policy

As your employer, we are required to comply with all safety and health legislation that applies to the College. With this in mind, we have carried out risk assessments of all our key operations and processes in all the workplaces we control.

This statement sets out the health and safety measures we are implementing to protect everyone who works here.

The Management of DCE College has endorsed this statement and is responsible for implementing it. We are committed to ensuring that the health and safety measures set out in our safety statement are met.

Everyone is responsible for ensuring compliance where they work.

We expect all employees to cooperate with us so that we can achieve our target of avoiding accidents.

You must play your part under the safety statement.

- Comply with all the health and safety rules for your area.
- Work safely and think of others as you do so.
- Know and understand the risk assessments for your area.
- Report any health and safety concerns/problems to your supervisor.
- Familiarise yourself with the fire exits and procedures.
- The designated First Aiders for DCE College are Carla Kerr and Mujeeb Mohammed.

Covid-19 Protocols

At the current time, some different rules are necessary in order to keep everyone safe and comply with public health directives. We ask all staff to familiarise themselves with these rules and obey them at all times.

The Lead Worker Representative is Lisa Burnham. If you believe the Covid-19 protocols are not being correctly adhered to, you should contact her by email on info@dcedu.ie to report this. She will work to rectify the issue.

When you arrive at DCE:

- You must wear a mask at all times when you are in the building. If you do not wear a mask, you will not be allowed to enter. This will be considered an unauthorised absence.
- If you are medically exempt from wearing a mask, you must provide us with proof of this. In this case, we recommend using a screen or visor in class.
- Please sanitise your hands when you enter, and after touching doorknobs or other items.
- We recommend that you wear warm, layered clothing. This is because we must keep all doors and windows open during the day for ventilation. You must not close the doors or windows in your classroom.
- Please maintain social distancing in the school.
- You must fill in the Covid-19 Declaration Form and complete the online induction before starting work. These will be emailed to you.

During class

- Do not share your materials with the students. They must have their own materials.
- Each student must sit in their assigned seat and you must keep a record of this every day. If a student wants to change their seat, they can arrange it with you.
- Do not move any of the furniture – this has been placed in accordance with social distancing rules.
- Only allow one student to leave the room at a time. They must ask your permission before leaving.
- Please do not allow students to eat in the classroom.
- You may use the toilet at any time – just inform your students and give them something to do first.
- Keep your mask on at all times. This is not negotiable.
- If any student removes their mask, ask them to leave the classroom.
- Group work and pair work are not permitted at this time.
- Please stop teaching 5 minutes before the end of class and wipe down your area with the antibacterial wipes. Ask students to do the same.
- Students may not handle the attendance lists at this time. Mark them present with a tick or absent with an X. Students can view their attendance online if they are anxious.

If you are sick:

- Do not attend work with any Covid-19 symptoms.
- Please inform us if you have Covid-19 or have been designated a close contact.
- If you feel sick during your class, you must inform the Director of Studies immediately. We will escort you to the isolation room and assist you in returning home.

Between Classes:

- You must not congregate with students or other teachers.
- Please use the common area to have your lunch.
- Maintain your own class pack with your own pens, markers, books, etc. Do not share materials or items with other teachers.

Holidays:

- If you travel outside Ireland on your holiday, please let us know.
- If you need to quarantine after returning to Ireland, please give us proof.
- Remember that the status of different countries can change quickly. Always check before you travel.
- You must complete the Covid-19 Declaration Form again after your holiday.

During Covid-19, we cannot have face-to-face meetings. You will be informed of any important information by email. Please also contact us by email if you have questions, concerns or complaints.

Important: Groups of students will not be admitted to the office or Reception area for any reason. If a group wishes to leave your classroom to approach Reception or office staff, please inform them that they will not be entertained. Similarly, we will not accept any handwritten letters or petitions from a group.

Please make yourself aware of the symptoms of Covid-19 and remember that not everyone will experience every symptom. These are available on the HSE website (www.hse.ie).

Conclusion

The above is not intended to be exhaustive. If you have questions about anything in the Handbook, or anything not covered by the Handbook, you should ask a member of Management.

It is hoped that your experience as a teacher will be an enjoyable and productive one, for you and for the students in your charge.