

Integrity Code of Conduct

Onderwijsstichting Esprit

Amsterdam, adopted by the Executive Board on 23 October 2014
Re-adopted by the Executive Board on 14 December 2022

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Introduction

Esprit believes that transparency and accountability are self-evident values for a responsible and effective use of public resources. Esprit strives to create a culture in which it is logical and normal for the interests of the individual to give way to the interests of the students and the school during working hours. We believe that a culture in which you favour yourself or others is unacceptable and harmful to the organisation. We call each other to account on matters relating to integrity. We do this top-down, bottom-up, and of course directly between colleagues.

This code of conduct is for everyone working for Esprit, whether or not with an employment contract: employees, student teachers, trainees, agency workers and volunteers (hereinafter: the staff). Esprit also expects external contractors, when carrying out an assignment, to act in line with this code.

By integrity, or acting with integrity, we mean that you perform your job or task openly and transparently, with due regard for your responsibilities and the applicable rules, and respectfully towards others. Even if rules are not laid down, we expect you to use your judgement and act in a morally responsible way, based on generally accepted social and ethical norms. You take responsibility for your own actions, are accountable for your behaviour and you hold others to account for their behaviour.

The code provides a framework for interpreting, assessing and weighing up whether or not certain behaviour is acceptable. This might be what to do about gifts from parents and contacts and private use of the telephone and computer, or how to deal with businesses when you are responsible for purchasing, and how to manage situations where colleagues do not act with integrity. The code can be used to prevent or tackle undesirable conduct, thus contributing to creating a safe learning and working environment.

Esprit endorses and follows an important element of the Good Educational Management Code (*Code goed onderwijsbestuur*), which was drawn up nationally in 2019 for primary and secondary education.

Staff, students, parents/carers, external contacts and other stakeholders can view the code - including all related schemes and protocols, on the Esprit website. (www.espritscholen.nl)

We expect all staff to be familiar with the contents of this code. The code will be discussed at all schools during management, team or work meetings. That way we ensure that integrity, undesirable conduct and desirable conduct will be open to discussion and everyone will be aware of what is permitted and what is not. New staff members will be informed separately of this code by their supervisor.

Directions for use

For the sake of readability, 'he/him/his' is used throughout the code. Naturally this should also be taken to mean 'she/her'.

This code is divided into a number of chapters:

1. The values of Esprit
In this chapter we discuss the values that are central to Esprit regarding the integrity of staff. (page 5)
2. The rules
In this chapter we set out precisely what the rules are concerning ethical conduct. These rules give a clear idea of the behaviour we expect at Esprit and the procedure to follow if rules are broken. (page 6-8)
Staff at Esprit have an exemplary function for students. This is expressed in the way we demonstrate or refrain from specific behaviour. Examples are given in a separate appendix (Integrity Code of Conduct).
3. Use of the code
In this chapter we describe how to report an actual or suspected violation of the code and what measures can then be taken. (page 9)
4. Adoption of the code
This chapter states that the code has been adopted following a positive recommendation from the joint participation council. (page 10)

1 The values of Esprit

As the touchstone for integrity, the fundamental values at Esprit are Openness & Transparency, Responsibility and Respect.

a. Openness & transparency

For Esprit, 'openness' means being receptive to alternative views and new experiences. 'Open' also means being open about things oneself and standing up for one's own position. It also means being transparent, verifiable where necessary, and accessible when asked. A learning organisation is an open organisation in which colleagues feel able to call each other to account.

b. Responsibility

A learning organisation also requires each individual to be given and accept the responsibility that is appropriate to his role and position. Each individual must therefore be willing to account for the way in which he exercises this responsibility. No open and active participation without individual responsibility. No responsibility without accountability.

c. Respect

First and foremost, for Esprit respect means avoiding causing harm to individuals and property. Above all, respect means accepting others as they are.

d. Attention to society

Esprit expects its staff to be attentive to and participate in their social environment. Today's student in Amsterdam is tomorrow's citizen of the world. It is therefore Esprit's ambition to exploit the richness of cultural diversity to achieve greater social cohesion and active world citizenship. Internationalisation offers many opportunities for the future, is distinctive and attractive to students and parents.

2 The rules

These rules apply to all situations involving staff at Esprit. The rules are not intended as a summary of rules and sanctions. They are designed to set in motion a process of respect, awareness and dialogue.

By setting these rules, Esprit enables and encourages its schools to provide the best possible education. The rules also facilitate good communication and dialogue between everyone involved, which will improve the quality of the organisation and the schools.

2.1 We treat each other with respect

Esprit wants everyone to treat each other with respect. Not only when in our contacts with each other on the work floor, but also in online contact with each other.

Treating each other with respect means that you accept each other as a decent and valuable person. You treat each other as you would wish to be treated yourself, where physical and verbal violence is not tolerated.

In addition, you take care when dealing with property belonging to the organisation or other staff. You are also mindful of sharing information with staff and third parties in a respectful way. These rules are set out in Esprit's privacy regulations which can be found on the Esprit website.

2.2 Professional integrity

2.2.1 We keep our private lives and work separate

- Personal relationships:

Wherever people work together on a professional level, relationships can arise, or already exist, that go further than simply professional. A non-professional, personal relationship at work can lead to problems. If a non-professional, personal relationship exists or arises with a colleague, Esprit expects you to inform your supervisor. It can then be assessed per situation whether, and if so, what measures would be appropriate. In any case, it should be considered whether a relationship of power or authority exists between those involved. Openness and good communication are extremely important in such a situation.

We avoid intimate relationships with parents/carers/supervisors of students to ensure that there will be no conflict of interest when supervising students.

- Personal interest:

Staff of Esprit are not permitted to have a direct or indirect private interest in outsourcing work or with deliveries of goods and services to Esprit. As regards ancillary work, the rules apply as laid down in each relevant collective agreement (CAO).

- Property of the employer

You use tangible or intangible property of Esprit to carry out your job. You may only make use of such property for private purposes with your supervisor's permission. For the use of

computers, laptops, phones, iPads etc. we refer you to the ICT user regulations for students and staff.

- Personal data:

Schools may process personal data provided they abide by the statutory rules. The law stipulates how schools should deal with processing these data, the provision of data, the right to inspect data and the retention obligation. More can be found on this in the privacy regulations on our website (www.espritscholen.nl).

- Performing occasional activities for third parties during working hours:

If you perform activities for third parties during your working hours, such as giving a lecture or presentation, you must ask permission from your supervisor beforehand.

- Conflict of interest and awarding assignments:

Staff who maintain close personal contacts to a lesser or greater extent with an existing or potential contractor of Esprit will not participate in the decision-making process for awarding assignments to that contractor. The General Purchasing Conditions of Esprit apply for the delivery of goods and services.

An employee of Esprit may not be hired as an ‘external party’ or contractor to perform work for Esprit at the same time.

- Job performance, ancillary work, confidentiality, intellectual property and safety:

For all the above themes, the provisions as contained in the collective agreements for primary education and secondary education apply. These can be found on the website of Esprit.

2.2.2 Business gifts

Esprit wants to prevent the offering or receiving of business gifts being regarded as payment for a service that has been or is to be delivered, or to bring about a business relationship between Esprit and third parties. The way we deal with this at Esprit is explained below.

- Physical goods:

If the value of a gift is less than €50, as an occasional gesture of appreciation for a service provided (such as a lecture) in the form of a bouquet of flowers or a bottle of wine, for example, the member of staff may accept and keep it. You must always inform your supervisor of this.

Gifts with a value exceeding €50 must be given to the school management, which will decide on an appropriate use for them.

All Christmas and New Year gifts are collected at school level and divided among all school staff.

- Excursions, work visits, study trips, conferences and events:

We never accept invitations for excursions, work visits, study trips, conferences and events in exchange for something. The invitation must remain within reasonable limits.

Ultimately it is for the supervisor to decide whether an invitation remains within reasonable limits or is no longer acceptable for the school. Participation in these kinds of activities must also serve a functional purpose and be important for carrying out one's job. If this is not the case but it may nevertheless be useful to attend, it must be decided in consultation with the supervisor whether an exception can be made. In any case there must be full transparency regarding the activity to be attended.

- Lunches, dinners and receptions:

Attending lunches, dinners or receptions at the invitation of business contacts of the organisation must serve a functional purpose and remain within reasonable limits. If you receive an invitation, you must inform your supervisor, preferably in advance. You may not accept an invitation to lunch etc. while negotiations are ongoing.

3 Use of the integrity code

Reporting inappropriate behaviour

If you believe or suspect that this code is not being adhered to, discuss the matter with the head of your school. If necessary, the head will pass it on to the Executive Board.

If the report involves the supervisor, discuss the matter with the Chairman of the Executive Board.

If the report involves the Executive Board, you should contact the Supervisory Board.

For the sake of completeness, Esprit refers to the existence of the confidential counsellor, who may also be external. The confidential counsellor may also be consulted in situations of undesirable conduct by staff of Esprit.

Measures if rules are broken

Violation of this code by a member of staff is a serious matter. Measures will be taken depending on its gravity. They may lead to a disciplinary measure against the member of staff, dismissal or ending the association with that person.

If the application of the code leads to evident unfairness, the Executive Board may decide that the code will not apply, or be applied in a different manner. If the code does not provide rules for a particular situation, the Executive Board may make a decision independently.

Other rules

Other rules also apply if there is an actual or suspected situation of abuse.

- *Duty to report sexual abuse in education:*

All staff in education are obliged to report immediately to the school management any suspicion of a possible sexual offence against a minor student by a member of the school staff. More information on the duty to report can be found on the website of Esprit.

- *Whistleblowers' scheme*

The whistleblowers' scheme gives employees the ability to report safely an actual or potential situation of abuse in the organisation. The scheme aims to improve the reporting of social situations of abuse within organisations by making it possible to investigate abuses.

For more information on this topic, please consult our website.

- *Complaints scheme*

If you have a complaint about the behaviour and decisions, or lack of them, by the appropriate authorities or fellow staff members, you may make use of Esprit's complaints scheme, which can be found on the Esprit website. Usually the complaints about day-to-day matters in the school can be dealt with in consultation, with due regard for this code. If this is not possible, though, or the complaint has not been dealt with satisfactorily, you may submit a formal complaint.

4 Adoption

The Onderwijsstichting Esprit Integrity Code of Conduct was drawn up in 2014 in and after consultation with the Management Team and adopted following approval by the joint participation council.

The code was amended in 2022 and following a positive recommendation by the joint participation council was re-adopted by the Executive Board of Onderwijsstichting Esprit on 14 December 2022.