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# Wenona Staff Code of Conduct

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## Rationale

The Wenona (“the School”) Staff Code of Conduct has been developed and updated to provide an outline of professional, legal and workplace requirements expected of all staff while in the employ of the School.

- For the purpose of this document “*staff*” refers to all employees of Wenona School Ltd, including teachers, administrative, maintenance, support and otherwise.
- It is essential that all staff are aware of and comply with their professional responsibilities to ensure students at the School are provided with every opportunity to experience high quality education, conducted in a safe environment and underpinned by the School’s philosophy and Christian principles.
- All staff should conduct themselves in a manner that is in keeping with the School’s philosophy and ethos and the Staff Code of Conduct.
- All staff are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of professional and ethical behaviour, exercise professional judgement and act in a respectful, courteous and sensitive manner when interacting with students, parents or caregivers, other staff and the public.
- The teaching staff members have a particular responsibility to ensure that they provide students with teaching and learning experiences that meet the School’s curriculum and learning commitments. All staff have a responsibility to ensure that student behaviour is informed and managed in accordance with the School’s Christian values and any relevant School policies.

## Guiding philosophy and values for staff conduct

### Motto

*Ut prosim, that I may serve*

### Vision

Wenona's vision is to educate and empower young women in a global learning community, to serve and shape their world.

## **Mission**

To provide an outstanding, global education for the girls in our care, by developing a contemporary, innovative and engaged learning community, marked by a commitment to the inherent value and potential of every child.

## **Purpose**

Our main purpose is to create the preeminent leading Australian girls' school marked by a world class, contemporary and relevant education, a culture based on positive, respectful relationships, and with a focus on developing leadership within a strong service culture.

## **Aims**

Our aim is for Wenonians to graduate as creative, resilient, articulate and well educated women, filled with a sense of humour and a capacity for adventure. We aim for our students to develop integrity, grace and a sense of purpose, and a strong moral and ethical outlook, raised to value service and to be a proactive and positive voice within the local, national and global community.

## **Renaissance women**

At Wenona, we stand for the values and ideals of the 'renaissance' woman. We believe in the inherent value of every woman to be exceptionally well educated, both morally and intellectually, having developed a strong sense of belonging and self-worth. A renaissance woman engages in a wide range of creative and physical pursuits, and is committed to compassionate, proactive and thoughtful service.

## **Why are we different?**

Wenona is different because our attitude of service manifests itself in every area of school life, and this service is proactive, compassionate and thoughtful.

We believe in an egalitarian model of leadership whereby women can take their place and contribute to society, having been exceptionally well educated, both in character and across a broad range of disciplines.

We are about educating and developing young women to make wise, informed, thoughtful decisions about their life and about ways they can contribute to make this complex and changing world a better place.

We want Wenona to be one of the great schools of the world, and a leading light in educating women.

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## Introduction

1. The Staff Code of Conduct is divided into four parts as follows:
  - Part A: Staff Conduct
  - Part B: Interaction with students and parents
  - Part C: WHS, discrimination and harassment
  - Part D: Copyright, communication and facilities
2. The Staff Code of Conduct has been formulated to clarify for staff the standards of professional conduct required in the performance of their duties. It also provides practical assistance for staff in recognising and resolving ethical challenges, and to avoid situations that may expose staff to a professional or vexatious claim risk.
3. Staff will be required to exercise professional judgement in the performance of their duties and if a staff member is in doubt about the appropriate course of action to be adopted in any circumstance, the matter should be discussed with a supervisor and/or raised formally with the Principal.
4. The Staff Code of Conduct meets the requirement of the Federal Government, NSW State Government and Board of Studies in documenting the standards of behaviour expected of staff in dealing with colleagues, clients and students.
5. Some of the requirements of the Staff Code of Conduct are the subject of specific legislation. If there is any conflict between the Staff Code of Conduct and any legislation, the legislation will prevail.
6. The Staff Code of Conduct reflects a contemporary view of professional behaviour and practice for staff. To maintain its currency and value, the Staff Code of Conduct may be amended from time to time to take account of changed circumstances and legislation or at the discretion of the School if it considers it appropriate.
7. Staff breaching the Staff Code of Conduct will be asked, in the first instance, to meet with the Principal and/or the Principal's nominee to discuss the nature of the breach.
8. Depending on the seriousness of the breach, action may be taken including further training or professional development, or disciplinary action such as a warning, suspension or termination of employment (including summary dismissal for serious misconduct).

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## Part A: Staff Conduct

### 1. Professional behaviour

In performing their duties and responsibilities, all staff must:

- 1.1. Comply with all lawful directions given by a supervisor or from the Principal's Office.
- 1.2. Comply with legislation and School Policies relevant to their responsibilities. Staff must:
  - 1.2.1. have a working knowledge of the legislation that is relevant to their professional duties and responsibilities. Some of the relevant Acts and associated web links are listed on the Wenona. Portal, and/or are contained in the appropriate School Policy
  - 1.2.2. read and comply with the School Policies, Procedures and Guidelines which are published in the Staff and Student Handbooks and/or on the School Portal. Handbooks and Policies are updated periodically and should be reviewed by staff accordingly.
- 1.3. Implement the priorities of the School as delineated in the School's Vision and ensure all actions promote the intent of the School's Vision.
- 1.4. Work in a collegial and collaborative manner with other staff members.
- 1.5. Treat each other and other people with whom they deal in the course of performing their duties, with respect and courtesy. If problems arise between staff members, the School expects staff to be proactive and professional in dealing with those issues, including seeking the assistance of their direct supervisor or the Dean of Professional Studies, if appropriate, in accordance with the School's Grievance Procedures for Staff.
- 1.6. Undertake appropriate ongoing professional development as detailed in the Staff Handbook and on the Portal.
- 1.7. Dress in appropriate and professional attire. When School activities such as sports day, excursion or camps take place suitable casual attire may be worn. Additionally, Academic dress may be required at more formal functions such as Prize Day, Carol Service, Foundation Day and the School Leaders' Induction Service. Staff must ensure they comply with WHS legislation when selecting attire, including footwear.
- 1.8. Take extreme care and comply with School Procedures, Guidelines and traffic laws when driving School vehicles and/or driving on School property.

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## **2. Alcohol, drugs and smoking**

### 2.1. Staff must not:

- 2.1.1. attend School or perform duties while under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs or substances
- 2.1.2. consume alcohol or take illegal drugs or substances while performing their duties
- 2.1.3. smoke anywhere on the School premises or while performing their duties,

including at School functions, off campus excursions, overnight excursions, camps and tours where staff members are responsible for the supervision of students or other staff.

### 2.2. The Principal may authorise the consumption of alcohol in writing in limited circumstances.

## **3. Staff notification requirements**

### 3.1. Staff must notify the School immediately if they are:

- 3.1.1. charged with a criminal offence, or
- 3.1.2. alleged to have engaged in conduct that would prevent them from carrying out any aspects of their duties (eg loss of driver's licence for staff required to drive School vehicles), or
- 3.1.3. alleged to have engaged in any conduct that would be reportable conduct under Child Protection Legislation, including charges or allegations that raise concern as to their suitability to be working with, or in proximity to, children, or
- 3.1.4. in possession of a Work With Children Check clearance which has expired or has had a bar or interim bar placed on it, or
- 3.1.5. engaged in any behaviour or activity resulting in undue media or public interest.

## **4. Personal interests**

- 4.1. Staff must ensure that there is no actual or perceived conflict between their personal interests and their professional duties, and if in doubt, seek clarification from their supervisor or the Principal.
- 4.2. Staff may only undertake other employment with the prior consent of the Principal. The coaching of Wenona students for financial remuneration will be approved only in exceptional circumstances.
- 4.3. In general, it is not necessary or expected that staff obtain permission to be involved in voluntary or unpaid activities. However, where a conflict of interest or perceived conflict of interest arises between these activities and performance of their duties, staff must raise the issue with their supervisor or the Principal.

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- 4.4. Staff must ensure that their participation in and promotion of political, religious or community matters does not cause any conflict of interest with their professional responsibilities, nor with the reputation of the School community.
  - 4.5. The use of School letterhead and logo is officially sanctioned for School business. When a staff member is writing in his/her official capacity as a member of the School's staff, use of the letterhead is appropriate once permission has been sought from the Principal or Deputy Principal. It is not appropriate for any private correspondence or for references that are not officially sanctioned by the Principal to appear on School letterhead. The School envelope should be used for official business correspondence only.
  - 4.6. Letterhead and other items such as compliments slips and business cards should be used when they will enhance the professional standing of the School. Staff must not produce their own compliment slips, fax headers or similar.

## **5. Acceptance of gifts and benefits**

- 5.1. Gifts of nominal value generally used for promotional purposes by the donor, or moderate acts of hospitality may be accepted by staff. As a general rule gifts valued at \$100 or less would be considered nominal.
- 5.2. Staff must not accept gifts or hospitality offered as an inducement to purchase regardless of their monetary value. Examples of inducement include a bookshop offering teachers a personal dinner for two to the value of \$60 for every \$1000 of textbook orders and an employment agency offering administrative staff theatre tickets valued at \$70 for each temporary person employed.
- 5.3. Acceptance of gifts and hospitality is a matter of judgement for the individual staff member who must be satisfied that his or her position will not in any way be compromised or appear to be compromised by acceptance of the gift or hospitality. If in any doubt, the staff member should speak to their supervisor about acceptance of such gift or hospitality before doing so.
- 5.4. If acceptance of a gift valued above \$100 is appropriate, the details of the gift must be logged in the Gifts Register which is maintained in the Business Office.

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## Part B: Interaction with students and parents

### 1. Duty of Care and Child Protection

- 1.1. Staff have a duty of care to students and are required to take reasonable steps to protect children in their care against risks of injury which are reasonably foreseeable.
- 1.2. Staff must comply with Child Protection Legislation and must:
  - 1.2.1. attend in-service and professional development courses addressing legislation and mandatory reporting
  - 1.2.2. obtain a Working With Children Check (WWCC) clearance from the Office of the Children's Guardian (NSW) as required by Child Protection Legislation prior to commencing employment
  - 1.2.3. ensure all guests, casual lecturers, or volunteers who are working in an unsupervised capacity with students have a WWCC clearance from the Office of the Children's Guardian (NSW), which has been verified by the Dean of Professional Studies or his delegate, to work with children before they commence to do so.
- 1.3. Staff must report:
  - 1.3.1. all observations or allegations of child abuse; and
  - 1.3.2. all threats and knowledge of self-harm by a studentto the Principal or nominee as detailed in the School's Mandatory Reporting Policy.
- 1.4. Staff must not, under any circumstances, use any form of behaviour management or discipline that involves corporal punishment, or engage in any form of behaviour that is considered to be reportable conduct under Child Protection Legislation. Staff should refer to the School's Student Management Policy and the Staff Guidelines for Student Management.
- 1.5. Staff must not give students alcohol or any other drugs (except as noted below in this clause) and must not encourage or condone the use of alcohol or illicit drugs or substances by students. Staff may, however, administer or supervise the administering of prescribed medications consistent with School Policies, Guidelines and Procedures. Staff should also refer to the School's Drug and Alcohol Policy.

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## **2. Supervision of students**

- 2.1. Students must be adequately supervised at all times. Staff are required to provide competent supervision and management of students. Specific guidelines involving supervision of students include:
  - 2.1.1. adequate and competent supervision requires active observation of assigned areas. In the case of sporting activities, this includes active supervision of playing fields, buses, change rooms and storerooms; and
  - 2.1.2. staff responsible for the supervision of changing rooms should give due notice to students that they are about to enter the changing facility. Supervision should be discreet. It is neither necessary nor appropriate to stand and watch students change or shower. The supervision of change rooms should normally be undertaken only by adults of the same gender as the students using the change room. In an emergency, where the safety and security of a student may be at risk, exceptions may be made to this rule and appropriate warnings should be given before entering a change room. This also applies to sleeping and changing areas in the boarding residence, on camps and on excursions.
- 2.2. Parents and caregivers must be informed fully (preferably in writing), when students leave the School campuses for an activity under School supervision. Details should be advised in writing and include time, venue, transport and supervision arrangements.
- 2.3. If a teacher wishes to give a student permission to use a room at recess, lunchtime or other out of class time, it is that teacher's responsibility to provide adequate supervision.

## **3. Meeting with students**

- 3.1. Where a staff member may be left with the responsibility of a single student, they should ensure this is in an open space in full view of others, or in a regularly used student consulting room with persons nearby. When this is not possible, the staff member's supervisor should be advised as soon as possible thereafter giving details of the circumstances.
- 3.2. Staff should avoid situations where they are alone or in an enclosed space with individual students that is not considered to be in the normal course of their teaching, such as storerooms, maintenance sheds, change rooms and vehicles.
- 3.3. Staff may engage in intensive discussion with students as part of their pastoral care role. This is appropriate. However, staff must exercise caution before making personal comments about a student or themselves, or asking probing questions about a student's sexuality, relationships etc., particularly if an experienced senior staff member, School Counsellor and/or a family member is

not present. In any case, where a student makes a disclosure of abuse, no further questioning may be undertaken as described in the Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Policy. The staff member must then report this disclosure to the Principal or her delegate.

- 3.4. Staff must not socialise with students outside the School in any situation in which they may place themselves or the School in a potentially vulnerable position or find themselves or the School compromised professionally. If in doubt, staff should seek the advice of the Principal or a senior staff member before attending a private social function attended by students of the School.
- 3.5. Staff members are required to treat all students with respect and without favouritism. There is no place for sarcasm, derogatory remarks, inappropriate familiarity or personally offensive comments in staff interactions with students or in any discussion about students.

#### **4. Communication with parents**

- 4.1. Staff must comply with the Email Communication Guidelines and methods for meeting and communicating with parents. Staff must not circumvent these pathways and should redirect parents who attempt to do so by referring them to the appropriate person.
- 4.2. Email communication with parents should be brief and limited to factual information that needs to be communicated in a timely manner. More serious or ongoing student concerns should ideally be raised and dealt with over the telephone or in a formalised meeting. Email communication should not be used to debate matters with parents or to discuss sensitive issues or matters of conflict. Heads of House should be copied into emails sent to parents and students where student welfare, serious issues and /or potential conflict is of concern.
- 4.3. Before meeting parents, background material should be obtained on the issue or topic for discussion. This may require liaising with various members of staff to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the situation before the meeting is undertaken. Staff should be proactive in negotiating meeting times and handling meetings. Concerns raised by persons present at formalised meetings must be followed up in a timely manner and outcomes formally conveyed to all concerned.
- 4.4. Should a staff member become concerned by the nature or direction of the discussion, the meeting should be politely terminated so that additional information or more experienced/specialised support can be sought at a follow-up meeting.

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## 5. Physical contact

- 5.1. Staff should only make physical contact with a student where it is a necessary part of teaching, coaching or exercising their duty of care. Staff should take great care in these situations and must exercise caution to ensure that such contact is appropriate, reasonable and not excessive.
- 5.2. It is sometimes appropriate for staff to touch students when congratulating, comforting or conveying professional care. However, conveying any impression of personal intimacy or student preference is to be avoided. For example, a handshake, a pat on the shoulder or a brief hug may be acceptable for older students.
- 5.3. Comforting of a student in distress or intense emotion is part of the School's pastoral care. It may be appropriate for a staff member to put an arm around a student in an age appropriate manner in this context if the student is willing to be comforted in this way.
- 5.4. Touching a student can be appropriate in the context of demonstration and this is safest when conducted in the company of other students or staff rather than alone. It is wise to seek permission from the student – "Do you mind helping me demonstrate how to hold the javelin"; "Do you mind if I show you how to hold the violin?" Staff need to be sensitive to responses, especially those indicating a reluctance to be touched or obvious discomfort as indicated by body language.
- 5.5. Medical assessment and treatment will often make touching necessary. As recommended by first aid protocols, always ensure students are aware of your intentions and that they will be touched for assessment or treatment purposes– "I am going to see where your leg hurts by applying pressure in some places. Is that all right?" or "I am a trained first aid officer, can I help you? I may need to touch you".
- 5.6. Staff must administer first aid or medical treatment only to the level of their qualifications and competence as part of their duty of care obligations.
- 5.7. The safety of an individual student, other students or colleague may sometimes require physical contact or physical restraint in an emergency. In such cases the principle of "reasonable judgement" applies, and thought needs to be given to the nature and minimal intensity of physical contact required to ensure safety of all present.

## 6. Sexual misconduct

- 6.1. The relationship between staff and students is a professional one in which staff members have a duty of care to each student. Staff must not, under any circumstances, have sexual relationships with students. It is irrelevant whether the relationship is homosexual or heterosexual, consensual or non-consensual or condoned by parents or caregivers. The age of the girl or staff member involved is also irrelevant.
- 6.2. Improper conduct of a sexual nature by a staff member against a student includes (but is not limited to):
  - 6.2.1. sexual intercourse or sexual interaction or contact of any kind
  - 6.2.2. any other form of reportable conduct (as defined in Child Protection Legislation)
  - 6.2.3. inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature
  - 6.2.4. obscene language of a sexual nature
  - 6.2.5. suggestive remarks or actions
  - 6.2.6. jokes of a sexual nature
  - 6.2.7. obscene gestures
  - 6.2.8. unwarranted and inappropriate touching
  - 6.2.9. sexual exhibitionism
  - 6.2.10. personal correspondence with students in respect of the staff member's personal or sexual feelings for the student
  - 6.2.11. deliberate exposure of students to sexual behaviour of others, other than in the case of prescribed curriculum material in which sexual themes are contextual
  - 6.2.12. "grooming" to build trust in order to test the boundaries, to perhaps engage in sexual activity or to develop an unhealthy emotional dependency, and
  - 6.2.13. child pornography offences.

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## Part C: WHS, Discrimination and Harassment

### 1. Work, Health and Safety (WHS)

- 1.1. All staff have obligations under WHS legislation to take care of their own health and safety at work. Staff also have a responsibility to ensure that their activities do not place at risk the health and safety of their co-workers, students or visitors to the School.
- 1.2. Staff must comply with WHS legislation and the School's WHS policy.
- 1.3. Staff must report:
  - 1.3.1. any breaches of safety conditions or any safety concerns; and
  - 1.3.2. any incidents and accidents in the workplace,to the relevant senior person or to the School's WHS Responsible Officer for action.
- 1.4. School owned specialist technical equipment or specialist property areas may only be used or accessed by industry certified personnel (eg use of chainsaw by certified staff only, use of commercial kitchen by trained staff, use of Elevated Work Platform by trained staff).

### 2. Discrimination, harassment and bullying

- 2.1. Staff must not subject other staff members, students, or other people with whom they deal in the course of performing their duties to unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying.
- 2.2. Staff must comply with their obligations under discrimination legislation and must comply with the School's Discrimination, Harassment and Grievance Policies, Statements, Guidelines and Procedures.
- 2.3. If a staff member feels that they are being unlawfully harassed, discriminated against or bullied they should raise the issue as a grievance in accordance with the School's Discrimination, Harassment and Grievance Policies, Statements, Guidelines and Procedures.

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## Part D: Copyright, Communication and Facilities

### 1. Copyright

- 1.1. Staff must comply with the *Copyright Act 1989* and associated legislation.
- 1.2. Any documents/materials/resources/files generated as part of a staff member's employment at the School or for School purposes are the property of the School. Staff must not copy or transfer these documents/materials/resources for external use or personal gain without the School's written permission.

### 2. Use and security of School information

- 2.1. The School's *Wenona Weekly*, calendar, handbooks, portal bulletins, all staff emails and other electronic and written publications are means of communication among various members of the School. Staff members are expected to be familiar with their content as appropriate to the responsibilities of their position and to act on any relevant pieces of information. Notices should be read and acted on in a time appropriate manner.
- 2.2. Staff must:
  - 2.2.1. share information about students, other staff or School business only on a need to know basis
  - 2.2.2. maintain the integrity and security of all official information in compliance with the Privacy legislation
  - 2.2.3. maintain the integrity and security of all official documents for which they are responsible or to which they have access, including class lists, addresses, medical information and electronically stored information. Particular care should be taken with information and/or documents dealing with student welfare, student performance and staff records; and
  - 2.2.4. return to the School all such private, personal and confidential information on termination of employment.
- 2.3. Staff are required to assist with the security of School property and premises and ensure that suitable arrangements are in place to maintain the security of confidential and sensitive documents.
- 2.4. Staff must comply with the School's ICT Acceptable Use Policy for Staff which outlines the appropriate and acceptable use of the School's technologies, electronic resources, and use of social networking sites.

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### **3. Media contact**

- 3.1. Only persons with specific authorisation from the Principal's Office are to place advertisements or speak to the media (newspapers, radio, television etc) on any School related issue.
- 3.2. A staff member who is an elected or nominated spokesperson for the School is entitled to make public comments on authorised issues. Staff making such statements should clearly acknowledge the capacity in which they are expressing their views.

### **4. Use of School facilities and equipment**

- 4.1. Staff are required to ensure that resources, funds or equipment entrusted to them are used safely, effectively and economically in the course of their duties.
- 4.2. Committing the School to expenditure may be done only within the permission granted by the Annual Budget or after receiving permission from the appropriate authority.
- 4.3. Neither the services of other staff members, or School facilities or equipment may be used for private purposes unless prior approval has been granted by the appropriate authority.
- 4.4. Where prior approval has been granted, private use can occur only under the following circumstances:
  - 4.4.1. the use does not limit the access of colleagues to do their work
  - 4.4.2. all consumables are provided by the staff member
  - 4.4.3. the staff member assumes responsibility for lost, stolen or broken equipment in the event of neglect or wilful damage
  - 4.4.4. the staff member undertakes to comply with all relevant copyright legislation in the use of that equipment
  - 4.4.5. a record of the terms of approval is kept by the approving senior person.
- 4.5. All staff are required to take responsible action in securing personal valuables on the School's premises. No responsibility can be accepted for valuables brought to School. Large sums of money or expensive personal items should not be stored at School. In exceptional cases, staff should seek advice on the use of the School's safe when the need to secure large sums of money or expensive items is required.
- 4.6. After hours and at weekends it is the direct responsibility of any staff member to ensure that the Property Manager has been informed of their intention to enter the School and to obtain a security code. Arrangements must be in place for the area to be secured while the staff member is in the building and upon departure. Access at such times should be limited to only those people with

legitimate purpose for being in the area. Where possible, access to other areas of the School should be restricted.

- 4.7. Any staff members inviting visitors to the School to lecture, demonstrate etc, must check with the Business Manager or Deputy Principal to ensure that insurance requirements are met and proper documentation for payment is made before the visit takes place. Likewise, if the visitors are to work in an unsupervised capacity with students then the relevant documentation and induction procedures must be completed in accordance with the School’s Child Protection Policy and the School’s Guidelines for receiving Visitors, Volunteers and Contractors.

## Related Documentation

Please also refer to *Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Policy, Employee Screening Procedures and Guidelines, the New Working With Children Check 2013, Child Protection (Offenders Registration) Act 2000, Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012, Office of the Children’s Guardian (NSW), ICT Acceptable Use Policy for Staff, Student Management Policy, Staff Guidelines for Student Management, WHS Policy, Unlawful Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Statement for Employees, Contractors and Volunteers, Grievance Procedures for Staff and Guidelines for receiving Visitors, Volunteers and Contractors.*

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## Staff Code of Conduct Agreement

I have had the opportunity to read and discuss the Staff Code of Conduct. I understand that in performing my duties and responsibilities as a member of the Wenona Staff I must at all times behave in accordance with the standards of professional conduct described in the Wenona Staff Code of Conduct.

Name *(please print)* \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*(Please sign, detach and return with the signed copy of your contract)*