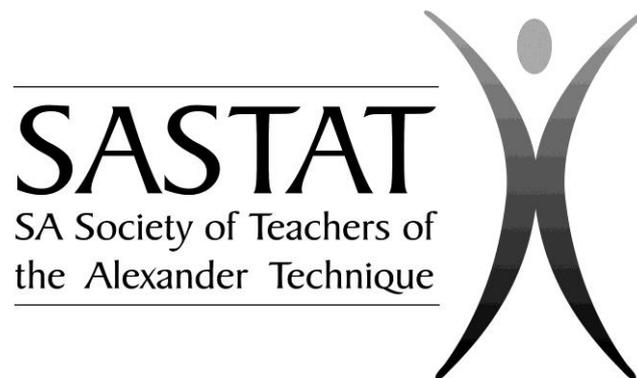


**THE SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY OF TEACHERS  
OF THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE**



**CODE OF PROFESSIONAL  
CONDUCT AND  
PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE**

Status:	Council Approved
Date Ratified:	June 2016
Name of Originator:	SASTAT Council
Target Audience:	Public & Members

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

One of the objects of SASTAT is to establish and maintain standards and codes of professional conduct and integrity amongst its teaching members. The purpose of this Code of Professional Conduct ("the Code") is to establish and maintain such standards.

The conduct of a teacher may affect not only a particular pupil but also the reputation or standing of the profession. Each teacher, accordingly, has a legitimate interest and concern in maintaining professional standards.

The Code, together with any guidelines and policies published from time to time by the Council, provides a common standard of professional conduct for all teachers to follow as well as providing guidance for both them and the public.

SASTAT and its members must promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person and by treating people with respect regardless of their ethnic origin, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. SASTAT has affirmed that the practice and theory of the Alexander Technique is incompatible with prejudice of any kind.

## **2 STATEMENT OF MEMBERS' OBLIGATIONS**

### **MISCONDUCT**

All members have a duty to observe proper standards of personal and professional behaviour in order to protect the public and the public reputation of the profession. All members are bound by the Code and any breach thereof will be considered misconduct and will be dealt with accordingly by the SASTAT Council.

### **PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE**

A teacher has a duty to act with reasonable skill and care. Allegations of professional incompetence made against a teacher may be investigated under this Code.

### **DUTY TO SASTAT**

A teacher has a duty to observe proper standards of personal and professional behaviour in order to protect the public and the public reputation of the profession. By becoming a Teaching Member of SASTAT, teachers are bound by the Code.

Teachers may find it helpful to seek initial advice from the SASTAT Council on matters concerning conduct or the Code. It should be noted, however, that the SASTAT Council may not be able to offer such advice in the event of it or its members having to exercise a quasi-judicial function.

### **3 CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE**

Breach of the provisions contained in the following paragraphs would be considered misconduct and would be likely to lead to disciplinary proceedings being initiated.

#### **A. THE TEACHER-PUPIL RELATIONSHIP**

- 1. Consent:** A teacher should clearly explain the nature of the work and procedures to be followed during the course of lessons and ensure that the informed consent of the pupil is obtained. In the case of a pupil under the age of eighteen years and for vulnerable adults, the informed consent of the pupil's parent or guardian/carer must be obtained.
- 2. Medical Diagnosis:** A teacher must not make any kind of medical diagnosis or prescribe treatment for a pupil unless qualified to do so and subject to Section 3.A.4, Mixing of Disciplines.
- 3. Risk management**  
A teacher should be aware of and manage effectively and safely any risks associated with the teaching of the Alexander Technique.
- 4. Mixing of Disciplines:** During the course of a lesson in the Alexander Technique, a teacher will not introduce other practices or disciplines without explicitly informing the pupil in advance.
- 5. Breach of Trust:** Teachers will maintain an understanding with pupils that the professional relationship will be strictly observed. The risk of a breach of trust or abuse of power can be lessened by the strict keeping of boundaries. Any action that breaches this trust will constitute serious professional misconduct. Four particular areas are identified in which this trust will be breached:
  - (i) A teacher enters into a sexual relationship with a pupil.
  - (ii) A teacher enters into an emotional relationship with a pupil which could be reasonably expected to disrupt that pupil's family life or otherwise damage or cause distress to the pupil or to the families involved.
  - (iii) A teacher improperly discloses to third party information about a pupil, which is learned directly or indirectly in a professional capacity as a teacher of the Alexander Technique. The death of a pupil does not absolve a teacher from this obligation.

There are exceptions to this rule. In all cases, except under (b) below where the law requires the information to be disclosed without the knowledge and consent of the pupil, the disclosure must be made with the knowledge and consent of the pupil and it must be in the interests of the pupil to do so:

- (a) if the disclosure is to another teacher to whom the pupil has been referred or who is giving lessons to the pupil, and it is in the interests of the pupil or for the protection of that teacher;
- (b) if the law requires such information to be disclosed;
- (c) if the disclosure is necessary for the purpose of research, training or education in furtherance of the Objects of SASTAT as laid down in its Constitution, provided that no reference is made as to the identity of the pupil concerned, and care is taken that the pupil's identity is not otherwise made known.

- (d) if there are reasonable grounds to believe that the disclosure is necessary for the purpose of eliminating or reducing a significant risk of serious bodily harm to a person or group of persons.

- (iv) A teacher abuses his or her professional position by improperly exerting influence upon a pupil in order to acquire personal gain or services, for example: persuading a pupil to lend the teacher money or to alter a will in the teacher's favour.

**6. Incapacity:** A teacher must not practise if his/her ability to do so is seriously impaired by illness or injury.

## **B. THE TEACHER'S RESPONSIBILITIES TO COLLEAGUES**

1. A teacher has a duty, where the circumstances so warrant, to inform the Council about a colleague whose conduct, behaviour or competence may have raised a question of serious professional misconduct or whose fitness to practise may be seriously impaired by reason of illness or injury.
2. It is improper for a teacher to disparage, directly or indirectly, the personality, professional skill, knowledge, qualifications or work of any other teaching member.
3. A teacher must not directly solicit the pupils of any other teaching member.
4. A teacher has a duty to observe proper standards of personal and professional behaviour towards colleagues and other professionals.

## **C. THE TEACHER'S RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE PROFESSION**

1. A teacher may not set up and run a Training School or Course to teach the Alexander Technique unless the teacher has applied for and obtained the written authority of the Council.
2. A teacher when presenting his or her qualifications and experience must do so in a way that is accurate and honest.
3. The following areas of personal behaviour may lead to disciplinary proceedings:
  - (i) performing, or attempting to perform, his professional duties whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
  - (ii) any conviction for assault or indecent behaviour if committed in the course of the teacher's professional duties;
  - (iii) any action which could reasonably be expected to damage or bring the profession or the Society into disrepute.
4. A teacher may advertise his or her services to the public by notice or announcement, published in an appropriate newspaper, journal, magazine or other media or displayed in an appropriate establishment.
5. A teacher must not make exaggerated claims regarding the efficacy of the Alexander Technique.

## **D. THE TEACHER'S RESPONSIBILITIES ON TRAINING COURSES**

1. (i) All Student Members are to be afforded the same standards and respect as are given to pupils under this Code.

- (ii) Any behaviour which disrupts or is likely to disrupt the training of any Student Member and any relationship with a Student Member which involves, for example, favouritism or exploitation, bullying or harassment will constitute professional misconduct on the part of the Head(s) of Training and/or any other teacher trainer and/or any visiting teacher concerned.
- 2. A Teacher must not directly solicit a Student Member to leave a Training Course to join any other existing or planned Training Course.

**E. 'NETIQUETTE'**

When communicating electronically by email, or participating in SASTAT Forum discussions, members will ensure their communication is respectful and courteous at all times.