MRCPCH & DCH Examiner Code of Conduct Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 MRCPCH and DCH examinations rely on Fellows of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health and other Royal Colleges to be committed and professional in all aspects of MRCPCH Clinical and DCH Clinical examinations both in the UK and Overseas.

1.2 To maintain the quality and standards of our examinations, all aspects are monitored including the appointment and performance of examiners ensuring a rigorous initial training programme and an examiner re-training programme which must be completed after 5 years examining. Failure to complete re-training means that an examiner’s status will be reviewed. Both training programmes include and ensure all examiners are compliant with relevant equality and diversity legislation. Examiners will be kept informed of any significant changes to the examinations during this 5 year period.

1.3 Additionally, we monitor examiner performance at each Clinical examination and all examiners are given this feedback on their performance in comparison to the overall pass rate / when or if candidate marks are changed at the Clinical Examination Board or Appeals Panel in order to further quality assure the process of examining.

1.4 MRCPCH & DCH examiners are expected to follow the Code of Conduct for RCPCH & DCH Clinical examiners which provides the framework against which any allegations of misconduct will be judged. In the event of any allegations of misconduct being made the RCPCH will follow the process in accordance with the MRCPCH & DCH Examiner Misconduct Policy.

2. General standard of behaviour

2.1 All MRCPCH and DCH Examiners are expected to behave in a professional manner, befitting a Fellow of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, whilst undertaking all duties associated with the examination. Adherence to the principles and values within GMC’s Good Medical Practice¹ (or equivalent in overseas countries) is

expected at all times. No examiner should be involved in legal/court proceedings involving their professional conduct with children.

3. **Interacting with candidates**

3.1. RCPCH expects all examiners to behave in a way that is non-discriminatory in terms of attitudes, activities, assumptions, beliefs and abilities.

3.2. It is the responsibility for all examiners to refer to the roles and responsibilities section of the RCPCH Information for Examiners document and ensure examiners are aware candidates may be nervous and they should endeavour to help them relax and have a positive examination experience.

3.3. The role and expectation of each examiner is to provide a consistent approach to each candidate’s encounter with a patient, role player and parents and to the subsequent questioning, in a manner that helps candidates to show what they can do and what they know. The examiner’s manner and tone should be tailored accordingly.

3.4. Examiners should allow the candidate to complete their clinical examination without interruption or direction, unless it is evident that the candidate needs guidance on how to proceed, or they are causing the patient, role player or parent discomfort.

3.6. Examiners should only make a remark to the candidate about their on-going performance if there are issues of patient safety. Performance judged to be good or bad should not be commented on. Examiners should avoid teaching or coaching candidates during their assessment.

3.7. Examiners should not discuss any aspect of the examination or a candidate’s performance with a candidate at any point during or after the MRCPCH or DCH Clinical examination.

3.8. Examiners should avoid making any physical contact with the candidate, for example, to guide them from one patient to another.

3.9. MRCPCH and DCH Clinical examinations candidates are from across the world, and therefore may not be familiar with local customs and practice in the centre at which they sit the examination. Examiners should all be sensitive to this fact and should provide guidance to candidates on how they should approach patients if any specific cultural beliefs about which they may not be aware apply.

4. **Interacting with patients, parents and role players**

4.1. Examiners should maintain an awareness of patient, parent and role player comfort and safety at all times.
4.2. If a patient, parent or role player is for any reason uncomfortable about participating in the examination, either before the circuit starts or during the circuit, examiners should facilitate the withdrawal of that patient, parent or role player.

4.3. The dignity and modesty of all patients must be respected at all times. Examiners should ensure that the degree of exposure of a patient is acceptable to the patient and is maintained throughout the circuit.

4.4. Examiners should ensure that anyone in contact with the patient observes the appropriate hygiene protocols, specifically regarding hand washing.

4.5. Examiners should be polite, courteous and professional in their approach to all patients, parents and role players during exam days.

5. Interacting with colleagues

5.1. Examiners are expected to act with respect for fellow examiners, clinicians and other staff within the team running the examination at all times.

5.2. If an examiner has any concern about the conduct or performance of a fellow examiner this should be brought to the attention of the examiner in question, or, confidentially, to the host or the Senior Examiners on the day as soon as is possible.

6. Handling personal and sensitive data

6.1. Examiners are reminded to maintain strict confidentiality and avoid divulging the identity of patients and scenarios to be used in the examination, results, candidate performance or any other information relating to a candidate to any third party who does not have a right to such information.

6.1.1. Patients – When arranging for patients to participate in the examination, examiners must ensure that explicit consent is given by the patient, and reduce the use of identifiable information to the minimum required to run the examination. The host examiner is responsible for ensuring that any clinicians helping to run the examination also follow these guidelines.

6.1.2. Candidates – Examiners are expected to maintain the confidentiality of candidate results. This includes general indications of performance, as well as specific marks and grades. Please also refer to 3.7.

6.1.3. Examination material – Examiners are expected to ensure the security of all scenarios, and patient information before, during and after the examination.
7. Completion of Marksheets

7.1. All candidates are sent copies of their marksheets. Comments on the marksheets should, therefore, be legible, accurate and phrased in a professional manner. A useful guideline is that no comments should be made on the marksheets that the examiner would not be prepared to make to the candidate in person. Examiners should refer to the anchor statements for further guidance.

8. Participation in commercial activities

8.1. It is not acceptable for MRCPCH & DCH examiners to take part in commercially run (i.e. for profit) training courses. If a non-examiner takes part in such courses and is invited subsequently to become an examiner, it is on the understanding that such activity will cease.

8.2. It is not acceptable for examiners to write or contribute to non-college books or other materials, such as CD-ROMs or any other technological formats, or to re-edit or revise existing texts or other publications where the specific purpose is to help candidates prepare for any or all parts of the MRCPCH or DCH examinations.

8.3 Examiners should not use their College status to market non-College courses or products. The Examinations Manager and Chair of the Clinical Examinations Board will monitor external products.

9. Copyright and use of materials

9.1. Copyright of questions used in RCPCH Examinations belongs to the RCPCH. The MRCPCH and the DCH questions are prepared and revised through the hard work of many College members and staff. Our aim is to produce valid, appropriate and well-prepared questions so that our examinations are fair and effective. Our question bank and reputation are threatened by unauthorised copying of exam questions. Examiners must report instances of infringement of copyright. Examiners should not divulge examination questions to outside organisations. The penalties for examiner misconduct regarding examination security are stated in the MRCPCH Examiner Misconduct Policy.

9.2 Examiners must agree not to publish, any material which they have prepared for, or reviewed, in connection with the MRCPCH and DCH examinations for non-College products.

10. GMC reporting

10.1. Examiners should promptly inform the Examinations Manager if any limitations on practice are placed on them by the GMC (or the equivalent in the country in which they practice).
11. **Appeals and Complaints**

11.1. Any allegations of examiner misconduct will be investigated in a fair and transparent manner in line with the RCPCH Examiner Misconduct Policy document.

11.2. It is often necessary to approach examiners for comment on candidate appeals and complaints, and examiners are expected to respond to any such approaches in an open and timely manner.

Examinations Team October 2013