



## Staff Code of Conduct

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Code of Conduct ('the Code') sets out the professional standards expected and the duty upon staff, governors and volunteers, (for the purposes of this policy hereafter referred to as staff) to abide by it. All staff have a duty to keep pupils safe, promote their welfare and to protect them from sexual, physical and emotional harm. This duty is, in part, exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between staff and pupils and behaviour by staff that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement. Following this Code will help to safeguard staff from being maliciously, falsely or mistakenly suspected or accused of misconduct in relation to pupils and the Required Professional Standards.
- 1.2 Anyone must feel able to raise issues of concern and everyone must fully recognise the duty to do so particularly in terms of child protection. Staff have a duty to report any child protection or welfare concerns to the designated members of staff in School. Anyone who has concerns must follow the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy to ensure that the matter is reported as appropriate. Anyone who, in good faith, "whistleblows" or makes a public interest disclosure will have the protection of the relevant legislation.
- 1.3 This Code cannot provide an exhaustive list of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for staff. However, it does highlight behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable in relation to the Required Professional Standards. There will be occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or take action in the best interests of the pupil where no specific guidance has been given. Staff are expected to make responsible and informed judgements about their own behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the pupils for which that individual is responsible.
- 1.4 Any member of staff who is found to have committed a breach of this Code will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal.
- 1.5 Where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff the Governing Body will follow the Managing Allegations of Abuse policy and Whistleblowing policy and the guidance set out in [Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE](#) September 2018 and the statutory guidance within '[Keeping Children Safe in Education, part four, 'Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and other Staff and Volunteers'](#)' (DfE September 2016) where it is alleged that a member of staff has:
- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
  - possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or,
  - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

### 2. Expected Professional Standards

- 2.1 All staff, as appropriate to the role and/or job description of the individual, must:
- place the well-being and learning of pupils at the centre of their professional practice.
  - have high expectations for all pupils, be committed to addressing underachievement, and work to help pupils progress regardless of their background and personal circumstances.
  - treat pupils fairly and with respect, take their knowledge, views, opinions and feelings seriously, and value diversity and individuality.
  - model the characteristics they are trying to inspire in pupils, including enthusiasm for learning, a spirit of enquiry, honesty, tolerance, social responsibility, patience, and a genuine concern for other people.

- respond sensitively to the differences in the home backgrounds and circumstances of pupils, recognising the key role that parents and carers play in pupils' education.
  - seek to work in partnership with parents and carers, respecting their views and promoting understanding and co-operation to support the young person's learning and well-being in and out of School.
  - reflect on their own practice, develop their skills, knowledge and expertise, and adapt appropriately to learn with and from colleagues.
  - the same professional standards should always be applied regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity.
- 2.2 Teachers are required to comply with the Teachers' Standards in force 1 September 2012, in particular Part 2 Personal and Professional Standards.
- 2.3 All staff must be familiar with and act in accordance with Part 1 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE](#) September 2018, a copy of which is issued to all staff as part of the induction process and/or safeguarding training.

### **3. Confidentiality**

- 3.1 As data controllers, all Schools are subject to the Data Protection Act 1998. In addition, staff owe a common law duty of care to safeguard the welfare of pupils in School. This duty is acknowledged in the provisions governing disclosure of information about pupils.
- 3.2 Any member of staff may have access to confidential information about pupils in order to undertake their responsibilities. In some circumstances the information may be sensitive and/or confidential. Confidential or personal information about a pupil or her/his family must never be disclosed to anyone other than on a need to know basis. In circumstances where the pupil's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the pupil.
- 3.3 There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a pupil, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, all have a duty to pass information on without delay to those with designated pupil protection responsibilities.
- 3.4 Confidential information about pupils must be held securely. Confidential information about pupils must not be held off the School site other than on security protected School equipment. Information must only be stored for the length of time necessary to discharge the task for which it is required.
- 3.5 If anyone is in any doubt about the storage or sharing of information s/he must seek guidance from a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Any media or legal enquiries must be passed to Senior Management.

### **4. Propriety, Behaviour and Appearance**

- 4.1 All staff working with children have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of pupils. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their colleagues, pupils and the public in general. An individual's behaviour or actions, either in or out of the workplace, should not compromise her/his position within the work setting or bring the school into disrepute. The misuse of drugs, alcohol or acts of violence would be examples of such behaviour.
- 4.2 A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However staff must ensure they are dressed in ways which are appropriate to their role and not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative and specifically should not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding, should be culturally sensitive and free of any political or otherwise contentious slogans, and

not considered to be discriminatory. Those who dress or appear in a manner which may be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations of misconduct.

- 4.3 Personal property of a sexually explicit nature such as books, magazines, CDs, DVDs or such material on any electronic media must not be brought onto or stored on the School premises or on any School equipment.

## **5. Sexual Contact with Children and Young People and Abuse of Trust**

- 5.1 A relationship between an adult and a child or young person is not a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people. Staff should maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. They should report any incident with this potential.
- 5.2 Any sexual behaviour or activity, whether homosexual or heterosexual, by a member of staff with or towards a child or young person is illegal. Children and young people are protected by the same laws as staff in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour. They are additionally protected by specific legal provisions regardless of whether there is consent or not. Where a person aged 18 or over is in a specified position of trust with a child or young person under 18 years, the Sexual Offences Act 2003 makes it an offence for that person to engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of that child or to cause or incite that child to engage in or watch sexual activity
- 5.3 Sexual behaviour includes non-contact activities, such as causing a child or young person to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of indecent images of children. 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' defines sexual abuse as "forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening".
- 5.4 Staff must not have sexual relationships with pupils, have any form of communication with a child or young person which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative i.e. verbal comments, letters, notes, texts, electronic mail, phone calls, social networking contact or physical contact. The adult should not make sexual remarks to, or about, a child or young person or discuss their own sexual relationships with or in the presence of pupils. Staff should take care that their language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculations. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought.
- 5.5 There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' where the sole purpose is to gain the trust of a child or young person, and manipulate that relationship so that sexual abuse can take place. Staff should be aware that conferring special attention without good reason or favouring a pupil has the potential to be construed as being part of a 'grooming' process, which is a criminal offence.

## **6. Infatuations and Crushes**

- 6.1 A child or young person may develop an infatuation with an adult who works with them. Anyone who becomes aware that a pupil may be infatuated with him/herself or a colleague, must report this without delay to a senior colleague so that appropriate action can be taken to avoid any hurt, distress or embarrassment. The situation will be taken seriously and the adult should be careful to ensure that no encouragement of any kind is given to the pupil. It should also be recognised that careless and insensitive reactions may provoke false accusations.
- 6.2 Examples of situations which must be reported are given below:
- Where a member of staff is concerned that he or she might be developing a relationship with a pupil which could have the potential to represent an abuse of trust.
  - Where a member of staff is concerned that a pupil is becoming attracted to him or her or that there is a developing attachment or dependency.
  - Where a member of staff is concerned that actions or words have been misunderstood or misconstrued by a pupil such that an abuse of trust might be wrongly suspected by others.

- Where a member of staff is concerned about the apparent development of a relationship by another adult, or receives information about such a relationship

## **7. Gifts**

- 7.1 It is against the law for public servants to take bribes. Everyone needs to take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed by others as a bribe, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. There are occasions when pupils or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff e.g. at Christmas or as a thank-you and this is acceptable within the limits defined in the gifts and hospitality policy. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.
- 7.2 Personal gifts must not be given to pupils. This could be misinterpreted as a gesture either to bribe, or single out the pupil. It might be perceived that a 'favour' of some kind is expected in return. Any reward given to a pupil should be consistent with the School's behaviour or rewards policy, recorded, and not based on favouritism.

## **8. Social Contact and Social Networking**

- 8.1 Communication between children and staff, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, emails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites and blogs. Staff should not share any personal information with pupils. They should not request, or respond to, any personal information from the pupil, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. If a pupil seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the adult should exercise his or her professional judgment in making a response and should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.
- 8.2 Staff must not give their personal contact details such as home/mobile phone number; home or personal e-mail address or social networking details to pupils unless the need to do so is agreed in writing with senior management.
- 8.3 It is recommended that staff ensure that all possible privacy settings are activated to prevent pupils from making contact on personal profiles and to prevent pupils from accessing photo albums or other personal information which may appear on social networking sites.
- 8.4 Staff must not have any pupils or any ex-pupils under the age of 18 as friends on their social networking sites. Staff are advised not to have any online friendships with any young people under the age of 18, unless they are family members or close family friends. Staff are advised not to have online friendships with parents or carers of pupils, or members of the governing body/trustees. Where such online friendships exist, staff must ensure that appropriate professional boundaries are maintained.
- 8.5 Staff are personally responsible for what they communicate in social media and must bear in mind that what is published might be read by us, pupils, the general public, future employers and friends and family for a long time. Staff must ensure that their on-line profiles are consistent with the professional image expected by us and should not post material which damages the reputation of the School or which causes concern about their suitability to work with children and young people. Those who post material which may be considered as inappropriate by management or the community at large, could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations of misconduct which may be dealt with under the School's disciplinary procedure. Even where it is made clear that the writer's views on such topics do not represent those of the School, such comments are inappropriate.

For the purposes of this policy, social media is any online platform or app that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public forum. This includes social forums such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Social media also covers blogs and video and image-sharing websites such as YouTube.

Employees should be aware that there are many more examples of social media than can be listed here and this is a constantly changing area. Employees should follow these guidelines in relation to *any* social media that they use.

8.6 Any communications that employees make in a professional, or personal, capacity through social media must not:

- bring the School into disrepute, for example by:
  - criticising or arguing with colleagues, parents, pupils, or colleagues in other settings;
  - posting images that are inappropriate or links to inappropriate content;
- breach confidentiality, for example by:
  - revealing confidential information relating to School business;
  - giving away confidential information about an individual (such as a colleague) or organisation (such as another school);
  - discussing the School's internal workings;
- do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, for example by:
  - making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender reassignment, race (including nationality), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age;
  - using social media to bully another individual (such as an employee of the school); or
  - posting images that are discriminatory or offensive [or links to such content].

## 9. Physical Contact and Personal Privacy

9.1 There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. When physical contact is made with pupils this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate given their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity, culture and background. It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one pupil in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different pupil. Physical contact with a pupil must always take place within sight of a door with a vision panel.

9.2 Physical contact should never be secretive or casual, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported as soon as possible to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

9.3 Physical contact, which occurs regularly with a pupil or pupils, is likely to raise questions unless the justification for this is part of a formally agreed plan (for example in relation to pupils with SEND or physical disabilities). Any such contact should be the subject of an agreed and open School policy and subject to review. Where feasible, staff should seek the pupil's permission before initiating contact. Staff should listen, observe and take note of the pupil's reaction or feelings and – so far as is possible - use a level of contact which is acceptable to the pupil for the minimum time necessary.

9.4 There may be occasions when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance. This may include age-appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

9.5 Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance s/he should seek further advice from a senior manager.

9.6 Some staff, for example, those who teach PE and games, or who provide music tuition will on occasions have to initiate physical contact with pupils in order to support a pupil so they can perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument or assist them with an exercise. This should be done with the pupil's agreement. Contact under these circumstances should be for the minimum

time necessary to complete the activity and take place in an open environment. Staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the pupil

- 9.7 Pupils are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes or taking a shower. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of staff supervision in order to safeguard pupils, satisfy health and safety considerations and ensure that bullying or teasing does not occur. This supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the pupils concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.
- 9.8 Staff with a job description which includes intimate care duties will have appropriate training and written guidance. No other member of staff should be involved in intimate care duties except in an emergency.

## **10. Behaviour Management and Physical Intervention**

- 10.1 All pupils have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Corporal punishment is unlawful in all Schools. Staff must not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a pupil. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards pupils is not acceptable in any situation. Deliberately intimidating pupils by shouting aggressively, hectoring or overbearing physical presence is not acceptable in any situation. Any sanctions or rewards used should be part of the Behaviour Policy.
- 10.2 Use of force as a physical intervention can only be justified in exceptional circumstances. Non-statutory guidance is available from the Department of Education website. See 'Guide for Heads and School Staff on behaviour and discipline (including reasonable force) for maintained Schools' and 'Use of reasonable force - advice for Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies for all Schools and Academies. Staff may legitimately intervene to prevent a pupil from committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property, engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline. Staff should have regard to the health and safety of themselves and others. Under no circumstances should physical force be used as a form of punishment. The use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence.
- 10.3 All Schools must have trained first aiders/appointed persons. Staff must have had the appropriate training before administering first aid or medication except in an emergency.

## **11. One-to-One Situations and Meetings with Pupils**

- 11.1 One-to-one situations have the potential to make children/young person's more vulnerable to harm by those who seek to exploit their position of trust. Staff working in one-to-one settings with pupils may also be more vulnerable to unjust or unfounded allegations being made against them. Staff must recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure that the safety and security needs of both staff and pupils are met. Managers should undertake a risk assessment in relation to the specific nature and implications of one-to-one work for each worker and pupil. Where such a meeting is demonstrably unavoidable it is advisable to avoid remote or secluded areas of the School and to ensure that the door of the room is left open and/or visual/auditory contact with others is maintained. Any arrangements should be reviewed on a regular basis.
- 11.2 Pre-arranged meetings with pupils away from the School premises or on the School site when the School is not in session are not permitted unless written approval is obtained from their parent/ guardian and the head teacher or other senior colleague with delegated authority.
- 11.3 No child or young person should be in or invited into, the home of an adult who works with them, unless the reason for this has been established and agreed with parents/carers and a senior manager/Head teacher.

## **12. Transporting Pupils**

- 12.1 In certain situations e.g. out of School activities, staff may agree to transport pupils. Transport arrangements should be made in advance by a designated member of staff. Wherever possible and practicable transport should be provided other than in private vehicles, with at least one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort.
- 12.2 Staff should ensure that their behaviour is safe and that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. They must ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded
- 12.3 It is inappropriate for staff to offer lifts to a pupil outside their normal working duties, unless this has been brought to the attention of the line manager and has been agreed with parents/carers.
- 12.4 There may be occasions where a pupil requires transport in an emergency situation or where not to give a lift may place a pupil at risk. Such circumstances must always be recorded and reported to a senior manager and parents/carers.

## **13. Educational Visits and School Clubs**

- 13.1 Staff should take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere of an educational visit, particularly in a residential setting, or after-School activity. Staff and volunteers remain in a position of trust and the same standards of conduct apply. Please refer to the School's policy on educational visits.

## **14. Curriculum**

- 14.1 Many areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit, or of an otherwise sensitive nature. Care should be taken to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the learning outcomes identified by the lesson plan. This plan should highlight particular areas of risk and sensitivity.
- 14.2 The curriculum can sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussion about subject matter of a sexually explicit or otherwise sensitive nature. Responding to pupils' questions can require careful judgement and staff must take guidance in these circumstances from a senior member of staff. Staff and volunteers must not enter into or encourage inappropriate discussion about sexual activity or behaviour.
- 14.3 Please refer to the School's policy on Sex and Relationships Education.

## **15. Photography, Videos and other Creative Arts**

- 15.1 Many School activities involve the taking or recording of images. This may be undertaken as part of the curriculum, extra School activities, for publicity, or to celebrate achievement. The Data Protection Act 1998 affects the use of photography. An image of a child is personal data and it is, therefore, a requirement under the Act that consent is obtained from the parent of a child before any images are made such as those used for School web sites, notice boards, productions or other purposes.
- 15.2 Staff need to be aware of the potential for such images to be misused to create indecent images of children and/or for 'grooming' purposes. Careful consideration should be given as to how these activities are organised and undertaken. Photographs form part of the personal data regarding to a pupil, and are subject to the same rules regarding retention and storage that govern all personal data and whether the images will be destroyed or retained for further use and for how long, where these will be stored and who will have access to them.

15.3 Staff should remain sensitive to any pupil who appears uncomfortable and should recognise the potential for misinterpretation. It is also important to take into account the wishes of the pupil, remembering that some pupils do not wish to have their photograph taken.

15.4 Staff should only use equipment provided or authorised by the School to make/take images and should not use mobile telephones or any other similar devices to make/take images.

15.5 The following guidance must be followed:

- if a photograph is used, avoid naming the pupil
- if the pupil is named, avoid using the photograph
- photographs/images must be securely stored and used only by those authorised to do so.
- be clear about the purpose of the activity and about what will happen to the photographs/images when the lesson/activity is concluded
- ensure that a senior member of staff is aware that the photography/image equipment is being used and for what purpose.
- ensure that all photographs/images are available for scrutiny in order to screen for acceptability
- be able to justify the photographs/images made
- do not take photographs in one-to-one situations.
- do not take, display or distribute photographs/images of pupils unless there is consent to do so.

## **16. Whistleblowing and Cyber-Bullying**

16.1 Staff who have concerns about any alleged abuse or inappropriate use of ICT resources, virtual learning environments, camera/recording equipment, telephony, social networking sites, email or internet facilities or inappropriate communications, whether by pupils, parents, carers or staff, or others should alert their line manager or member of SLT. Where a concern relates to their line manager, this should be reported to the Headteacher. If a matter concerns child protection it should also be reported to one of the Designated Child Protection Officers.

16.2 Cyber-bullying can be experienced by staff as well as pupils. Staff should notify their line manager if they are subject to cyber-bullying. The School will endeavour to protect staff and stop any inappropriate conduct.

## **17. Unacceptable Use of ICT Facilities and Monitoring**

17.1 Posting, creating, accessing, transmitting, downloading, uploading or storing any of the following material (unless it is part of an authorised investigation) is likely to amount to gross misconduct and result in summary dismissal (this list is not exhaustive):

- a. pornographic or sexually suggestive material or images of children or staff which may be construed as such in the circumstances (that is, writing, texting, pictures, films and video clips of a sexually explicit or arousing nature),
- b. any other type of offensive, obscene or discriminatory material or criminal material or material which is liable to cause distress or embarrassment to the School or others.

17.2 The contents of School ICT resources and communications systems are its property. Therefore, staff should have no expectation of privacy in any message, files, data, document, facsimile, telephone conversation, social media post, conversation or message, or any other kind of information or communications transmitted to, received or printed from, or stored or recorded on School electronic information and communications systems.

17.3 The School reserves the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, staff usage of IT resources and communications systems, including but not limited to telephone, e-mail, messaging, voicemail,

CCTV, internet and social media postings and activities, to ensure that its rules are being complied with and for the following purposes:

- a. to monitor whether the use of the e-mail system or the internet is legitimate and in accordance with this Code:
- b. to assist in the investigation of alleged wrongful acts; or
- c. to comply with any legal obligation

17.4 Staff consent to systems monitoring by acknowledgement of this Code and the use of School resources and systems. The School may store copies of data or communications for a period of time after they are created, and may delete such copies from time to time without notice. If necessary information may be handed to the police in connection with a criminal investigation.

17.5 A CCTV system monitors the School 24 hours a day. This data is recorded and may be used as evidence of any alleged wrong doing.

## **18. Reporting Concerns and Recording Incidents**

18.1 All staff must report concerns and incidents in accordance with the School Whistleblowing Policy and/or the Managing Allegations of Abuse Policy. The following is a non-exhaustive list of behaviours which would be a cause for concern:

An adult who:

- Allows a pupil/young person to be treated badly; pretends not to know it is happening
- Gossips/shares information inappropriately
- Demonstrates inappropriate discriminatory behaviour and/or uses inappropriate language
- Dresses in a way which is inappropriate for the professional role or position
- Does not treat pupils fairly - demonstrates favouritism
- Demonstrates a lack of understanding about personal and professional boundaries
- Uses his/her position of trust to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine
- Appears to have an inappropriate social relationship with a pupil or pupils
- Appears to have special or different relationships with a pupil or pupils
- Seems to seek out unnecessary opportunities to be alone with a pupil