



Staff Code of Conduct

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Staff Code of Conduct

Introduction

A Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all staff are expected to observe. School staff working with and around children are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example and acts as a role model to children of all ages.

Underpinning Principles

- the welfare of the child is paramount
- staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivations and intentions
- staff should work and be seen to work in an open and transparent way
- staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from a member of the Senior Leadership Team over any incident which may give rise to concern
- records should be made of any such incident and of decisions made or actions agreed
- staff should apply the same professional standards regardless of gender or sexuality
- all staff should know that the Head teacher is the designated person for Child Protection and be familiar with the School's Safeguarding Policy

Duty of Care

All staff, whether paid or voluntary, have a duty to keep young people safe and protect them from 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.

Staff are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority, manage risk, use resources and protect pupils from discrimination and avoidable harm. There are legitimate high expectations about the nature of the professional involvement of staff in the lives of children. When individuals accept a role that involves working with children and young people, they need to understand and acknowledge the responsibilities and trust inherent in that role.

Employers have a duty of care towards their employees which requires them to provide a safe working environment for staff and guidance about safe working practices.

Setting an Example

All staff 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 peers, pupils and the public in general. An individual's behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, should not compromise her/his position within the work setting or bring the school into disrepute.

All staff who work in schools provide a role model for behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils. All staff must, therefore, demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same.

Power and Positions of Trust

All adults working with pupil's in education settings are in positions of trust in relation to the young people in their care. A relationship between a member of staff and a pupil cannot be a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people; staff have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.

Guidelines for Staff

Staff should always maintain appropriate professionalism and wherever possible, they should avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others, and report and record any incident with this potential. They have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of the pupils. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain that confidence.

Staff need to ensure that their behaviour does not inadvertently lay them open to allegations of abuse. They need to treat all pupils with respect and try, as far as possible, not to be alone with a child or young person. Where this is not possible, for example, in an instrumental music lesson, or sports coaching lesson, it is good practice to ensure that others are within earshot. Where possible, a gap or barrier should be maintained between teacher and child at all times.

Conduct Outside Work

Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school, the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.

Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school nor be to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance.

Confidentiality

Members of staff may have access to confidential information about pupils in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities. In some circumstances staff may be given additional highly sensitive or private information. They should never use confidential or personal information about a child or his/her family for their own, or others' advantage.

Confidential information about pupils should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person 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. 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.

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, individuals have a duty to pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated child protection responsibilities. If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Adults need to be aware that although it is important to listen to and support pupils, they must not promise confidentiality or request pupils to do the same under any circumstances.

Private Meetings with Pupils

Staff should be aware that private meetings with individual pupils may give rise to concern. There will be occasions where a one to one meeting is necessary but such interviews should be conducted in a room with visual access or with the door open and another pupil or adult should be present or nearby. Where such conditions cannot apply, staff should ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. Meetings with pupils away from the School premises should only be arranged with the specific approval of the Head teacher.

Social Contact

Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. If a young person seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise his/her professional judgment in making a

response and be aware that such social contact in person could be misconstrued and may place the member of staff in a very vulnerable position.

Staff must not give their personal details such as home/mobile phone number, home/e-mail address to pupils or parents unless it has been agreed in advance with the Head teacher. No child should be in, or invited into, the home of an adult who works with them unless the reason for this has been firmly established and agreed with parents and senior leaders or the home has been designated by the organisation or regulatory body as a work place e.g. childminders, foster carers.

Social Networking Sites and Online Gaming

Staff may use social networking sites for personal use. However, the school requires that profile and photos of the member of staff are secured as private so that pupils or parents do not have access to personal data or images. Staff should not request or use any means of personal contact with pupils via text messaging, instant messaging or similar. There should be no contact with pupils through social networking websites in accordance with the School Safeguarding Policy and Use of ICT Policy.

Staff must deny current or recent pupil's access to their profiles so they do not put themselves in a vulnerable position. Staff should be aware that they leave themselves open to a charge of professional misconduct if images of a member of staff in a compromising situation are made available on a public profile by anyone.

If a pupil does gain access to the profile of a member of staff by impersonation the Head teacher should be informed immediately. Where relationships exist between staff and those who are also parents at the school, or personal friends who are parents at the school, social networking is acceptable but caution must be exercised so that professional standards are maintained and staff do not compromise themselves or the school.

As soon as a member of staff becomes aware that they are in an online game with a pupil of the school, the member of staff should cease to play against that pupil and should not enter any games containing that player as part of the group. Under no circumstances should staff seek out pupils and/or share their own gamer tags/ID with pupils, or use school equipment to play online games.

Staff should also avoid contact with parents through these means.

Physical Contact with Pupils

There are occasions, such as comforting a distressed child, when it is appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils. This would normally happen with younger children, but staff must take care to behave professionally and use their professional judgment at all times.

It is acknowledged that some staff are likely to come into physical contact with pupils from time to time in the course of their duties. Examples include:

- showing a pupil how to use a piece of apparatus or equipment
- demonstrating a move or exercise during games or PE
- restraining a pupil physically to prevent injury

Physical contact should never be secretive or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be recorded as soon as possible, the DSL informed and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the pupil's file.

Any physical contact should be the minimum required for care, instruction or restraint.

Physical Education and other activities that require physical contact

Some staff, for example, those who teach PE and games, or who offer 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.

Staff should consider alternatives where it is anticipated that a pupil might misinterpret any such contact, perhaps involving another member of staff or a less vulnerable student in the demonstration. 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.

Sexual Contact

Any sexual behaviour with or towards a child or young person is illegal. Children and young people are protected by the same laws as adults in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour. They are additionally protected by specific legal provisions regardless of whether there is consent or not.

All adults working in the school who have contact with pupils are in positions of trust and therefore are prohibited from having a relationship with any pupil regardless of age. It is an offence under section 16 of The Sexual Offences Act 2003 for a person aged 18 or over to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual.

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 and volunteers 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.

Inappropriate contact does not just involve physical contact but includes inappropriate conversations.

Gifts from Pupils and Parents

Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.

There are occasions when pupils or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff, for example at Christmas or as a thank-you, and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value. Any member of staff receiving gifts or entertainment valued at more than £100 must disclose this to the Head teacher.

Members of staff may not give personal gifts to students. This could be misinterpreted as a gesture either to bribe, or single out the young person. It might be perceived that a 'favour' of some kind is expected in return.

Any reward given to a pupil should be consistent with school policy, recorded, and not based on favouritism. It is acceptable for staff to offer prizes of small value in certain tasks or competitions.

Infatuations

Staff need to be aware that it is not uncommon for children to be strongly attracted to a member of staff and/or develop an infatuation. Staff should be aware that such circumstances always carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against staff.

A member of staff who becomes aware that a child may be infatuated with themselves or a colleague should discuss this at the earliest opportunity with the DSL so that appropriate action can be taken. In this way, steps can be taken to avoid hurt and distress for all concerned.

Behaviour Management

All pupils have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Corporal punishment is illegal and this School does not use corporal punishment. Staff should not use force as a form of punishment. They should try to diffuse situations before they escalate. All members of staff should adhere to the School's **Behaviour Policy**.

Physical Intervention

Any physical restraint is only permissible when a child is in imminent danger of inflicting an injury on himself/herself or on another, and then only as a last resort when all efforts to diffuse the situation have failed. Another member of staff should, if possible, be present to act as a witness. All incidents of the use of physical restraint should be recorded in writing and reported immediately to the Head teacher who will decide what to do next.

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.

One to One Situations

Staff working in one to one situations with children and young people are more vulnerable to allegations. Teachers and others should recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure the safety and security needs of both staff and pupils are met.

Pre-arranged meetings with pupils away from the school premises will not be permitted unless approval is obtained from their parent and the Head teacher.

Extra-Curricular

Staff should take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere of an after-school activity. Parents should be informed about the activity; the member of staff should undertake a risk assessment and ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times.

First Aid

First Aid arrangements are in line with the School's **First Aid Policy**. Staff should ensure that their actions cannot be misconstrued when administering first aid and wherever possible another member of staff should be present or aware of the action being taken.

Administering Medication

See the **Sickness and Medication Policy** for detailed information. Staff should ensure that their actions cannot be misconstrued when administering medication and wherever possible another member of staff should be present or aware of the action being taken.

Intimate Care

All children have a right to safety privacy and dignity when contact of an intimate nature is required. For example, assisting with toileting or removing wet/soiled clothing, for children within the Early Years Setting. A care plan should be drawn up and agreed with parents if a pupil who requires intimate care on a regular basis in accordance with the **Safeguarding Policy**. Children should be encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their own personal care as is practicable.

Relationships between Staff

The School recognises that relationships may develop between members of staff. Where this happens the members of staff concerned should be aware that the relationship should not interfere with their ability to fulfil their professional duties in accordance with their Contract of Employment. Neither should their actions bring the school into disrepute or affect the smooth running of the school. Staff are reminded that they should behave in a professional manner at all times whilst in school. Overt displays of affections are not appropriate.

Staff Dress Code

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However staff and volunteers should recognise that they are role models to the children and their choice of dress should uphold the school's expectations for the children. Staff and volunteers must ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake. Those who dress or appear in a manner which could be

considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations of misconduct. Please refer to the school **Dress Code Policy** for more details For further information.

Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. Please refer to the school **Whistleblowing Policy** for more details.

Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior leadership and/or relevant external agencies. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

Sharing Concerns and Recording Incidents

All staff should be aware of the school's child protection procedures, including procedures for dealing with allegations against staff. Staff who are the subject of allegations are advised to contact their professional association.

In the event of an incident occurring, which may result in an action being misinterpreted and/or an allegation being made against a member of staff, the relevant information should be clearly and promptly recorded and reported to the Head teacher. Early discussion with a parent could avoid any misunderstanding.