



## Code of Conduct (Staff)

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## **1 Purpose**

- 1.1 The aim of this Code of Conduct is to set out the standards expected of all employees and to provide further information to employees. This should be read in conjunction with our disciplinary policy and the Teachers' Standards.
- 1.2 This Code should make it clear to employees the expectations the school has of them. Employees should note that this Code is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of conduct and they must use common sense in adhering to the underpinning principles. If any employee is ever unsure what the expectations are in any given circumstance they should speak to their line manager.
- 1.3 This Code does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.
- 1.4 Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct and with the associated policies may result in disciplinary action being taken where breaches of the Code warrant such action.
- 1.5 The Code should be provided for all employees (either electronically or by providing a paper copy) to read before they commence work at the school. Before having any contact with pupils, all employees should be given an opportunity to discuss the Code with a member of the school leadership team and ask any questions in order to clarify understanding. They should then be asked to sign a pro forma to confirm that they have read, understood and agree to comply with the Code.
- 1.6 When the Policy has been reviewed, any updates will be sent to all staff.

## **2 Scope**

- 2.1 The Code applies to all employees regardless of length of service including those in their probationary period. It also applies to agency workers and self-employed contractors although, unlike employees, breaches of the Code will not be managed through the disciplinary procedure.
- 2.2 As recognisable figures in the local community the behaviour and conduct of employees of the school outside of work can impact on their employment. Therefore conduct outside work may be treated as a disciplinary matter if it is considered that it is relevant to the employee's employment (see disciplinary rules).

## **3 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children**

- 3.1 All employees are responsible for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. This means that they are required to take action to protect children from maltreatment, prevent impairment of children's health or development and ensure that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care. This will enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- 3.2 All employees must be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect and know what action to take if these are identified.
- 3.3 To do this employees must have fully read and understood our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and be aware of our systems for keeping children safe and must follow the guidance in this policy at all times.
- 3.4 All employees must cooperate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary.

#### **4 Duty of care**

Employees must:

- a. understand the responsibilities, which are part of their employment or role, and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached;
- b. always act, and be seen to act, in our students' best interests;
- c. avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and/or intentions;
- d. take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour.

#### **5 Health & Safety**

All employees must ensure that they:

- a. familiarise themselves with the Health and Safety statements produced by the school as published in the Health and safety Policy;
- b. read and understand the school's Health and Safety Policy;
- c. comply with Health and Safety Regulations and use any safety equipment and protective clothing which is supplied to you by the school;
- d. comply with any hygiene requirements;
- e. comply with any accident reporting requirements;
- f. never act in a way which might cause risk or damage to any other members of the school community or visitors;
- g. inform the Headteacher of any paid work undertaken elsewhere, including exam marking. This is to comply with the 'Working Time Regulations', which are a Health and Safety initiative;
- h. smoking is banned at the School, including the school grounds. The ban applies to anything that can be smoked and includes, but is not limited to, cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, pipes (including water pipes such as shisha and hookah pipes), cigars and herbal cigarettes;
- i. chewing gum is not permitted whilst teaching;
- j. on rare occasions, it may be appropriate for a hot drink to be carried into a lesson. In this case, it should be in a mug with a lid for health and safety reasons.

#### **6 Honesty and personal integrity**

- 6.1 Employees are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct.

Employees uphold public trust in our school and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:

- a. treating students with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to their professional position;
- b. having regard for the need to safeguard students' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions;
- c. showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of other;
- d. not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
- e. ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit students' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law and to ensure political impartiality.

- 6.2 Employees must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of our school and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- 6.3 Employees must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.

## **7 Tackling discrimination**

- 7.1 Employees are required to understand the types of discrimination and bullying that students and colleagues may be subject to. Employees are required to have read and understood our Bullying and Harassment Policy.
- 7.2 Employees must not ignore any form of discrimination. This includes inappropriate jokes and banter. Any incidents must be reported using the school's Yellow Form. Employees must positively promote equality and diversity and inclusion at all times.

## **8 Professional boundaries and relationships with students**

- 8.1 Employees in our school are in a position of trust in relation to our students which means that the relationship between an employee and a student is not one of equals.
- 8.2 Employees must ensure that they avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. This includes any type of communication that they may have with students.
- 8.3 Employees must not make sexual remarks to any student or discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of students. Employees must not discuss a student's sexual relationships in inappropriate settings or contexts. Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff towards any student is unacceptable and illegal.
- 8.4 Employees must ensure that professional boundaries are maintained at all times. This means that they should not show favouritism to any student and should not allow students to engage in any type of behaviour that could be seen to be inappropriate. Students are not friends and should not be treated as such.
- 8.5 Employees should be aware that it is not uncommon for students to become strongly attracted to a member of staff or to develop an infatuation. If any member of staff becomes aware of an infatuation they should discuss it with a Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately so that they can receive support on the most appropriate way to manage the situation.
- 8.6 Separate changing, showering and toilet facilities are provided on site for staff and students. Employees must ensure they use only those provided for staff.

## **9 Professional relationships with colleagues**

- 9.1 Employees should always refer to other colleagues with professional courtesy, regardless of the circumstances.
- 9.2 Employees should never make sexual remarks, jokes or any other form of harassment in their interactions with colleagues.
- 9.3 Employees should never talk about other members of staff to students in an informal or disrespectful manner. If students start to make comments, state clearly that these are not appropriate and that you do not want to hear them.

- 9.4 Employees should when observing or working with a member of staff who makes an error, choose a discreet moment to mention it rather than pointing it out in front of the class/student.

## **10 Confidentiality and protection of data**

- 10.1 Employees may have access to confidential information about students, colleagues or other matters relating to the school. This could include personal and sensitive data, for example information about a student's home life. Employees should never use this information to their own personal advantage, or to humiliate, intimidate or embarrass others. They should never disclose this information unless this is in the proper circumstances and with the proper authority.

Once a matter concerning a pupil or colleague has been reported to a member of SLT it should not be discussed further with other colleagues.

- 10.2 If an employee is ever in doubt about what information can or can't be disclosed they should speak to a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- 10.3 The school holds and processes data that is protected under the Data Protection Act 1998. Employees are expected to comply with the school's systems for collecting, storing and using data. If any employee becomes aware that data is at risk of compromise or loss, or has been compromised or lost they must report it immediately to the Data Protection Officer.
- 10.4 Employees must ensure that they have read and understood all of our policies that relate to data including our Computers Acceptable IT Use Policy and GDPR Data Protection Policy.
- 10.5 Staff and volunteers are allowed to take digital / video images to support educational aims, but must follow school policies concerning the sharing, distribution and publication of those images. Those images should be taken on school equipment whenever possible; if a photograph is taken using a personal device then it must be deleted at the earliest given opportunity.
- 10.6 Staff should not take images of a child's injury, bruising or similar (e.g. following a disclosure of abuse) even if requested by children's social care.

## **11 Physical contact with students**

- 11.1 There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for employees to have physical contact with students. Employees must ensure that they only do so in ways that are appropriate to their professional role and in response to the student's needs at the time. This should be of limited duration and appropriate to the age, stage of development, gender and background of the student. Employees should always be able to explain why they have made physical contact with a student.
- 11.2 There may also be occasions where a student is in distress and needs comfort and reassurance which may include age appropriate physical contact. If an employee is in this position then they should consider the way in which they offer comfort, ensuring that it is not open to misinterpretation and is always reported to a DSL.
- 11.3 Employees may legally physically intervene with students to prevent them from committing a crime, injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property, engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline. Physical force should never be used as a form of punishment.

- 11.4 Sexual contact, including grooming patterns of behaviour, with students is unlawful and unacceptable in all circumstances.

## **12 Social contact with students**

- 12.1 Employees should not establish or seek to establish social contact, via any channels (including social media), with students for the purposes of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. Employees should use their work provided email address for communicating electronically with students.
- 12.2 Neither phone numbers nor personal email addresses should be given to students **of any age**. You should not be using a student's personal email address, as this is a safeguarding issue. Communication through school email needs to be professional at all times. (See Communications Policy (staff)).
- 12.3 Students should not be added as friends on social networking sites. Employees should avoid over familiarity with students and maintain a professional distance. Additional consideration should be given to this if your social network involves regular contact with students outside of school.
- 12.4 Our school is part of our community and we recognise that, as members of the community, employees will come into contact with students outside of the school. We expect employees to use their professional judgement in such situations and to report to a DSL any contact that they have had with a student, outside of school, that they are concerned about or that could be misinterpreted by others.
- 12.5 Teachers who undertake tutoring on a self-employed basis should be aware that this could be a conflict of interest and should be declared on the annual register of interests form circulated by HR.

Members of staff and volunteers, who undertake tutoring outside school on a self-employed basis, should ensure that they do not tutor children who attend this school outside the school premises as this would be a blurring of professional boundaries. It is appropriate for staff and volunteers to offer independent tutoring to pupils at the school on the school premises on a self-employed basis at lunch times or outside school hours for subjects not available through the regular curriculum (e.g. musical instrument tuition, dance, minority interest sports), subject to written approval by the Headteacher, written parental consent and compliance by the teacher with this Code at all times. Members of staff must also inform the Headteacher if they undertake any additional employment outside the school premises including tutoring of children who attend different schools and always ensure they have the parents' / carers' consent.

## **13 Working one to one with students**

- 13.1 There will be times where an employee is working one to one with a student and this is acceptable. Employees need to understand that this means that they may be more vulnerable to allegations being made against them. Therefore it is important that, where at all possible, employees:
- a. avoid meeting on a one to one basis in secluded areas of the school;
  - b. ensure that the door to the room is open or that there is visual access into the room;
  - c. inform a colleague or line manager of the meeting, preferably beforehand;
  - d. report to their line manager if the student becomes distressed or angry.

If in a car, refer to the Safe Driving Policy.

## **14 Home Visits**

- 14.1 All work with pupils and parents should, wherever possible, be undertaken in the school or other recognised workplace. However, there are occasions when it is necessary to make one off or regular home visits in response to urgent or specific situations.
- 14.2 In these circumstances it is essential that appropriate risk assessments are in place to safeguard pupils/students and members of staff who work with them. Any home visits should be discussed with a Designated safeguarding Lead prior to the visit.

## **15 Dress and appearance**

Working in our school, employees are role models to our students and how they present themselves is important. Our expectation is that employees are decently and appropriately dressed in work at all times. Dress should be to a professional standard and appropriate to each curriculum area. Generally, this will be a tie and shirt for males and smart clothes for females. We do not permit the wearing of clothes that are revealing, either through thinness of fabric or design, or allows underwear to be seen, have offensive logos or writing, or are ripped or torn at any times. If an employee is unsure whether any item of clothing is inappropriate then they should not wear it to work. Employees can always speak to their line manager if they are unsure. A professional conversation will be had with any employee who is identified as wearing unacceptable clothing.

## **16 Use of mobile phones**

- 16.1 Employees should keep mobile phones out of sight and on silent during lessons and whilst on duty. Members of SLT are permitted phones so that they can be contacted if there an urgent situation arises.

## **17 Gifts and hospitality**

- 17.1 For many of our employees there will be a limited opportunity to accept gifts and hospitality, but all employees must be aware that it is not acceptable for employees to accept bribes. Therefore any gift, promotional offer or hospitality, intended either for the employee or for the school that appears excessive (professional judgement required) must be discussed with their line manager. If an employee is ever unsure, then the best course of action is to politely decline the offer.

Students and their parents or carers may give gifts as a small token of appreciation or as a thank you to members of employees at certain times throughout the academic year. This Code of Conduct is not designed to stop that practice. Employees must use their judgement as to whether a gift seems excessive and if unsure discuss with their line manager. Employees should make a DSL aware of any student who is giving them gifts on a regular basis, or any student or parent or carer who expects something in return for a gift, as this would not be acceptable.

- 17.2 Employees should not give gifts to students unless this is part of a recognised practice in department practice e.g. prizes for competitions.

## **18 Keeping within the law**

- 18.1 Employees are expected to operate within the law. Unlawful or criminal behaviour, at work or outside work, may lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal, being taken. However, being

investigated by the police, receiving a caution or being charged will not automatically mean that an employee's employment is at risk.

Employees must ensure that they uphold the law at work:

18.2 Never commit a crime away from work which could damage public confidence in them or the school, or which makes them unsuitable for the work they do. This includes, for example:

- a. submitting false or fraudulent claims to public bodies (for example, income support, housing or other benefit claims);
- b. breaching copyright on computer software or published documents;
- c. sexual offences which will render them unfit to work with children or vulnerable adults;
- d. crimes of dishonesty which render them unfit to hold a position of trust.

18.3 Employees must tell the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors if they are the Headteacher) immediately if they are questioned by the police, charged with, or convicted of, any crime whilst they are employed at the school (this includes outside of their working hours). The Headteacher and/or governors will then need to consider whether this charge or conviction damages public confidence in the school or makes the employee unsuitable to carry out their duties.

## 19 Conduct outside of work

19.1 Unlike some other forms of employment, working at our school means that an employee's conduct outside of work could have an impact on their role.

19.2 Employees must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community. Employees should be aware that any conduct that we become aware of that could impact on their role within the school or affect the school's reputation will be addressed under our disciplinary procedure. We therefore expect employees to make us aware **immediately** of any such situations that have happened outside of the school.

19.3 The school respects employees' and volunteers' rights to a private life. However, employees who wish to set up personal web forums, websites or 'blogs' must do so outside of work and not use school equipment for the purpose.

In addition to the above expectations, employees and volunteers using personal social media accounts, websites, web forums or 'blogs' must:

- a. refrain from identifying themselves as working for the school in a way which has, or may have, the effect of bringing the school into disrepute;
- b. not identify other school employees, volunteers or pupils;
- c. not allow pupils/students or their parents/carers to access their personal social networking accounts;
- d. when they are contacted by a pupil or parent/ carer, bring that to the attention of the Headteacher at the earliest opportunity.

Any breach of these expectations may lead to disciplinary action.