

## **Staff Code of Conduct**

It is essential that all staff, governors and volunteers working in school are conscious of how they should conduct themselves to minimise the risk of finding themselves as the subject of any child protection processes. All staff are held in a 'position of trust' by the children's parents and the school is required to formally state what behaviour and conduct is acceptable or unacceptable. All staff, governors and volunteers should be aware of the following code of conduct and abide by it at all times.

### **Safeguarding**

All staff are required to read and follow the school's Safeguarding Policy and all child protection procedures and report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), and external agencies where necessary, any concerns about child welfare and safety and concerns about the conduct of other school staff, volunteers and contractors. Do not misuse your position of power, trust and influence over children. Record in writing all relevant incidents. Work in an open and transparent way, discuss and report any incidents that might lead to concerns being raised about your conduct towards a child. Report any incidents that suggest a pupil may be infatuated with you, or taking an above normal interest in you, to the DSL. Staff should not allow boundaries to be unsafe in more informal settings such as trips and out of school activities. Listen to pupils when they express concern about staff which might appear to be just and check facts versus fiction. Staff should read the Whistleblowing Policy and be able to follow the school's child protection procedures. In the absence of the DSL, please contact one of the Deputy DSLs if you have any concerns.

### **Child Protection Investigation**

Contact your professional association or trade union if you are the subject of concerns or allegations of a child protection nature. Fully co-operate with any investigation into child protection issues in school.

### **Confidential or Intimate Discussions with Pupils**

In general, pupils should be encouraged to discuss with their parents or guardians issues that are troubling them, Failing this, an interview with the school counsellor or member of the pastoral staff will often solve any issues of an intimate or private nature a child may have. Under no circumstances should a member of staff engage in a conversation with a pupil, anywhere or anytime, that is of a sexual nature unless it is in a controlled environment such as a PSHCEE lesson.

### **Physical Contact with Pupils**

Staff need to ensure that their actions do not inadvertently lay them open to allegations of inappropriate conduct or behaviour or be misconstrued by a parent or onlooker. No physical punishment of any kind is permitted. A member of staff can never take the place of a parent in providing physical comfort and should be cautious of any demonstration of affection. 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. Senior staff should be made aware in advance of any meetings with pupils in closed rooms. Any physical contact should be the minimum required for

care, instruction or restraint and should not be secretive. Staff should, therefore, use their professional judgement at all times.

If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be recorded as soon as possible via the low-level concerns form on the staff portal. However, if the incident is more serious, then the school's DSL should be informed.

Avoid volunteering to house children overnight.

### **Physical Restraint**

Any physical restraint is only permissible when a child is in imminent danger of inflicting an injury on themselves or on another, and then only as a last resort when all efforts to defuse the situation have failed. Another member of staff should, if possible, be present to act as a witness. Where physical contact is essential for educational or safety reasons, gain pupil's permission for that contact wherever possible. All incidents of the use of physical restraint should be recorded in writing and reported immediately to the Headmaster or DSL who will decide what to do next. Where this relates to the Pre-Prep department, parents will be informed of any physical restraint used on their child the same day or as soon as reasonably practicable.

### **Physical Education and Other Activities Requiring Physical Contact**

Where exercises or procedures need to be demonstrated, extreme caution should be used if the demonstration involves contact with pupils and, wherever possible, contact should be avoided. It is acknowledged that 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.

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 child.

Allow children to change clothes with levels of respect and privacy appropriate to their age, gender, culture and circumstances.

### **Suitability of Sanctions**

No excessive punishments should ever be used including any punishment intending to cause pain, humiliation, anxiety or corporal punishment.

### **Transporting Pupils**

It is inadvisable for a teacher to give a lift in a car to a pupil alone. Wherever possible and practicable it is advisable that transport is undertaken other than in private vehicles, with at least one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort. If there are exceptional circumstances that make unaccompanied transportation of pupils unavoidable, e.g. an emergency trip to the hospital, the journey should be made known to a senior member of staff and best practice is for the child to be seated in the back of the car.

### **Confidentiality**

Staff members should never give absolute guarantees of confidentiality to pupils or adults wishing to tell them about something serious. They should guarantee only that they will pass on information to the minimum number of people who must be told in order to ensure that the proper action is taken to sort out the problem and that they will not tell anyone who does not have a clear need to know. They

will also take whatever steps they can to protect the informing pupil or adult from any retaliation or unnecessary stress that might be feared after a disclosure has been made.

### **Boarding House**

Only those staff on duty in the Boarding House should access the Boarding accommodation.

### **E-communication with Pupils**

Staff should not give their personal mobile phone numbers, email addresses or other personal details to pupils, nor should they communicate with them privately by text message, email or social media. If they need to speak to a pupil by telephone, they should use one of the school's telephones or the school's network for emails.

### **Social Media**

All staff have a duty to uphold the good name and standards of the school, even when using social media outside of school. The school recommends that colleagues regularly check the privacy settings of their social media accounts. They should also not post images or statements which may adversely affect the school in a public setting. This would include images of staff wearing school kit or passing comment on the school in a negative manner.

### **Attendance and Timekeeping**

Staff who are not employed in boarding duties should expect to be in work by 8.00am (at the latest) Monday to Saturday and normally be on site until at least 5.00pm regardless of their teaching timetable. However, a common sense approach should be taken on Wednesdays and Saturdays where staff members may depart once all duties have been fulfilled. These include the essential role of liaising with parents at pick-up in terms of PR and pastoral care. Should a staff member need to be absent or expect to be late for any reason, they should inform the Director of Teaching and Learning or their Head of Department in advance when possible. Planned absences require the express permission of the Headmaster no matter what. If this is not possible, they should contact the school office at the earliest opportunity. Teaching staff are given a free half day each week and this starts at 11.30am when they are permitted to leave the school campus.

### **Alcohol and Illegal Drugs**

Consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs is not permitted on site. Only at an official school function or otherwise may modest amounts of alcohol be consumed. Staff may not consume alcohol if they are on duty no matter what the event. Staff whose conduct or performance has been, or is, affected by the use of drugs or misuse of alcohol will be immediately suspended and disciplinary procedures instigated. Staff who reside on site may consume alcohol in the privacy of their accommodation when they are not on duty.

### **Security**

Staff, especially those who live on site, play an important role in the security of the school. All staff should remain observant and be prepared to challenge or report anyone or anything they may regard as suspicious or unusual at the time.

### **Personal Appearance**

The school regularly receives visits from parents, potential parents and others, and naturally wishes to convey an impression of efficiency, organisation and self discipline by the staff who act not only as role models for the pupils but also 'in loco parentis' by setting an example. There is a sensible

'dress code' for staff in the *Guidelines for Staff* document, but you are required to look smart and tidy in appearance and wear appropriate clothing for a school environment.

### **Mobility and Flexibility (Cover)**

Due to the demands and nature of the school, staff should be prepared to transfer upon request within departments either temporarily or permanently, to undertake work of a different nature, providing it is reasonable and safe to do so and the staff member is adequately trained. Staff must also be prepared to cover for their colleagues when they are absent.

Any individual tutoring outside of school hours is arranged directly between the pupil's family and the teacher and is therefore entirely independent from the School. Permission should be sought from the Headmaster to undertake any personal tutoring in line with the School's contract of employment.

### **Use of Mobile Phones and Cameras**

Images of children are only to be taken, published or shared with parental permission. Official photographs will only be taken of children by designated staff members. Where photographs are taken by staff on their mobile phones to give evidence of a child's progress or for the school magazine, website, newsletter, notice board etc. they must be immediately downloaded onto a designated school computer, where they will be stored and then deleted when no longer required. Photos cannot be used or passed on outside the school. Staff must not store photographs of pupils on their phone or computer after they have passed them over to the school; they must be deleted.

### **Gifts**

Special attention on one child should only be conferred as part of an agreed school plan or policy. Children should not be given personal gifts and regular gifts from children should not be accepted.

### **Conduct Out of School**

Do not access abuse images (sometimes referred to as child pornography) or other inappropriate material. Do not engage in activities out of school that might compromise your position within school and so avoid establishing social contact with pupils outside the school. Do not do anything that might bring the School into disrepute.

Reviewed: September 2022

Compliance checked: September 2022

Next Review: September 2023