

Staff Code of Conduct

[published on the Portal as part of the safeguarding documentation for staff]

The Staff Code of Conduct applies to all staff (teachers, support personnel, governors, agency workers, contractors and volunteers).

Action	Policy to be reviewed annually		
	Owner	Date	Completed
Review	P Vanni	1 September 2016	✓
Reported	Education Committee	27 September 2016	✓
Approved	Board of Governors	8 December 2016	✓

To be published on the following:	
Staff Portal	✓
School website	✓



Introduction

All staff have a role to play in safeguarding our pupils. Teachers and school staff have daily contact with children in a variety of situations, including in a caring role. Staff should follow this Code of Conduct to mitigate against the potential risk of placing pupils or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a pupil. The Code of Conduct does not contain an exhaustive list of acceptable and unacceptable standards of behaviour. In situations where guidance does not exist in the Code of Conduct, staff are expected to exercise their professional judgement and to act in the best interests of the pupils and the School. Staff are also required to adhere to the Safeguarding (child protection) policy and Staff Acceptable Use of ICT policy.

This Code of Conduct forms part of the School's safeguarding documentation and is provided to all staff (including temporary staff and volunteers) at induction. It is also published on the staff Portal.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct may result in the school initiating disciplinary procedures and, if appropriate, criminal proceedings.

1. Key principles

1.1 Lone working

When lone working with pupils the following principles apply:

- Doors to the room should normally be kept open or staff should ensure that they are in a room with an uncovered glass panel. In exceptional circumstances, privacy will be required and staff should consider what is appropriate in order to provide a confidential environment for the pupil (e.g. counselling sessions).
- If 'lone working' is a regular occurrence, such as individual music lessons or one-to-one tuition, the parents should be made aware of the situation.
- If a one-to-one meeting is required, staff should consider whether it would be appropriate to ask for a discreet presence to be maintained without prejudicing the pupil's need for confidentiality. Should anything happen during a session that makes a member of staff feel uncomfortable, they should report this to the Designated Person for child protection (Su Wijeratna) immediately.
- Teachers should not offer additional tuition to pupils at their own home (whether in groups or for one-to-one tuition, in school staff accommodation or in a private home).

1.2. Inappropriate relationships

Under no circumstances should an adult encourage an inappropriate relationship with a pupil or groom a pupil. 'Grooming' is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for purposes of sexual abuse, exploitation, or radicalisation.

Staff should not use their personal cameras or portable devices to take photographs of pupils.

Where a member of staff is concerned that a pupil has developed a 'crush' or attachment to them, they should report this to the Director of School or the Director of Pastoral Care immediately, and should discourage social exchanges with them which are in any way different from those with other pupils.

All staff should be aware that it is a criminal offence under 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 (e.g. as a member of school staff) in respect of the child, even if that relationship is consensual.

Any sexual relationship with a pupil at the school is unacceptable.

A sexual relationship with a pupil aged 18 is a disciplinary offence and would be likely to result in dismissal. In addition, a referral would be made to the Secretary of State for Education.

1.3. Trips

- For all trips and activities, staff should consult the educational visits coordinator (Su Wijeratna) to agree appropriate supervision arrangements.
- Staff should not travel alone in a car with a pupil. Staff should notify the Senior Management Team (SMT) emergency contact if there are exceptional circumstances that require them to transport a pupil alone in a car and parents should also be informed. If it is an emergency and circumstances do not permit the above people being informed before the journey taking place, they should be notified as soon as possible after the event.
- School phones to take on trips are available from the IT department and, other than in an emergency, should be used rather than personal phones to communicate with girls and parents.
- Should staff wish to take photos of girls on a school trip (or other school activity), loan cameras and memory cards are available for use from the IT department. Photos should then be downloaded onto the School's network. Girls must always be appropriately dressed in such photos. Photos of pupils should never be used or distributed outside the School, unless for use in agreed publications. In such circumstances, permission should be sought from the director of pastoral care.
- Staff should take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere of an educational visit, where a more relaxed discipline or informal dress and language code may be acceptable. However, staff remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour cannot be interpreted as seeking to establish an inappropriate relationship or friendship.

1.4. Other activities away from school

- Staff should think carefully before arranging or accepting invitations to events with pupils outside of school that are not formal school trips. Staff should be particularly mindful of their conduct in situations where alcohol is available. Prearranged dinners with senior pupils may be acceptable but should be notified to the Director of Pastoral Care in advance. Members of staff should not arrange to meet pupils currently on the school roll in a pub or similar location.
- Caution should be exercised when meeting recent OPs in a social environment.
- It is important to be aware that disciplinary action will be taken if a member of staff is found to have acted inappropriately towards a pupil or if a member of staff's actions have brought the School into disrepute.
- Situations with pupils and recent former pupils where one's behaviour might be considered unprofessional should therefore be avoided.

1.5. Communication with pupils and parents, and E- safety

- In accordance with the Staff Acceptable Use of ICT policy, staff should not 'connect' or communicate with pupils on social media sites (e.g. Facebook). Staff are advised not to 'connect' with recent OPs online.
- Staff should always avoid giving out their personal contact details to pupils and parents and should use the school's communication systems whenever communication is necessary.
- If staff are required to communicate with pupils using their own portable device, communication should be via the school email system and must adhere to the Staff Acceptable Use of ICT policy.

1.6. Physical contact with pupils

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that any contact is appropriate to the professional requirements of the role; staff should therefore use their professional judgement at all times.

Where exercises or procedures need to be demonstrated, caution should be used if the demonstration involves contact with pupils, and unnecessary 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 staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the pupil.

Where a pupil is distressed or shows a need for physical comfort, it is vital that any demonstration of professional comfort should only take place either in a classroom situation or in front of another member of staff who can act as a witness.

1.7. Physical intervention

The School's policy on physical intervention by staff is set out in the School's Behaviour policy and physical intervention should only ever be necessary in specific circumstances (e.g. to prevent a pupil from causing injury to others or themselves). Any use of physical intervention should be reasonable, proportionate and lawful. Any such events should be recorded in writing (and where possible signed by a witness) and passed to the Director of School and the Director of Pastoral Care.

2. Reporting an allegation about another member of staff

Staff should refer to the School's Safeguarding (child protection) policy for detailed guidance about reporting allegations or complaints about another member of staff. This information also forms part of induction training and all staff are reminded of procedures at the start of the academic year. In summary, any allegation about a member of staff should be immediately reported to the High Mistress. If the allegation is about the High Mistress, the Chair of Governors should be contacted.

3. Reporting a concern about safeguarding practice

All staff should feel able to raise concerns about any element of the School's practice or activities that they genuinely feel may place pupils at risk of abuse or other serious harm. Any concerns should be reported to the High Mistress (or to a member of the SMT if the matter is urgent and she is not available).

If the member of staff feels unable to raise their concern with the High Mistress (or a member of SMT), the Chair of Governors should be contacted. There will be no retribution or disciplinary action taken against a member of staff for making such a report provided that it is done in good faith. If the member of staff remains unsatisfied or feels unable to contact the Chair of Governors, further guidance is available in the Safeguarding (child protection) policy and the Whistleblowing policy, both of which are available on the staff Portal.