

# 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	Helen Semple	March 2020	✓
Reported	Education Committee	12 May 2020	✓
Approved	Board of Governors	25 June 2020	✓

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



## Introduction

All staff have a role to play in safeguarding and ensuring that the school's pupils and staff study and work in an environment that respects and values difference and diversity. Discrimination, bullying and harassment are not tolerated in the school and will be addressed under the appropriate policy as a serious matter.

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 student. 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 IT 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. A new visitor policy information booklet is available for all visitors to the schools which also highlights a summary of this guidance.

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

The Staff Code of Conduct takes into account the following:

*Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006* (DfE, February 2015)

*Working together to safeguard children* (DfE, July 2018)

*What do you do if you're worried a child is being abused* (DfE, March 2015)

*Keeping children safe in education* (DfE, September 2018) together with *Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales* (2019)

*St Paul's Girls' School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.*

## 1. Key principles

All staff are expected to put the well-being, development and progress of pupils first by:

- taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils under their supervision;
- using professional expertise and judgment for the best interests of pupils in their care;
- demonstrating self-awareness and taking responsibility for their own actions and for providing help and support to pupils;
- raising concerns about the practices of teachers or other professionals where these may have a negative impact on pupils' learning or progress, or may put pupils at risk;
- being familiar with St Paul's Girls' School's child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures;
- being aware that they are in a position of trust (i.e. the adult is in a position of power or influence over the pupil due to his or her work); that the relationship is not a relationship between equals and that this position must never be used to intimidate, bully, humiliate, coerce or threaten pupils.

All Staff should demonstrate respect for diversity and take steps to promote inclusion by:

- acting appropriately and in accordance with this Code of Conduct, towards all pupils, parents, guardians, carers and colleagues;
- complying with the school's anti-bullying and Equal Opportunities policies and this Code of Conduct;
- addressing issues of discrimination and bullying whenever they arise;

- helping to create a fair and inclusive School environment.

All Staff should work as part of a unified staff body by:

- developing productive and supportive relationships with colleagues;
- exercising any management responsibilities in a respectful, inclusive and fair manner;
- complying with all School policies and procedures;
- participating in the school's development and improvement activities;
- recognising the role of the school in the life of the local community;
- upholding the school's reputation and standing within the local community and building trust and confidence in it;
- arriving on time for staff briefings, meetings, lessons and appointments.

All staff should understand that the school has a legal duty to have regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism, and consequently should be aware of:

- what extremism and radicalisation means and why people - including pupils and fellow staff members - may be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism as a consequence of it;
- what measures are available to prevent people becoming drawn into terrorism and how to challenge the extremist ideology that can be associated with it; and
- how to obtain support for people who may be being exploited by radicalising influences.

### **Additional principles for teachers**

Teachers should take responsibility for maintaining the quality of their teaching practice by:

- meeting the professional standards for teaching applicable to their role and position within the school;
- reflecting on their current practice and seeking out opportunities to develop knowledge, understanding and skills;
- helping pupils to become confident and successful learners; and
- establishing productive relationships with parents, guardians or carers by:
  - providing accessible and accurate information about their child's progress;
  - involving them in important decisions about their child's education;
  - complying with this Code.

Teachers should maintain public trust and confidence in the school by:

- demonstrating honesty and integrity;
- understanding and upholding their duty to safeguard the welfare of children and young people;
- maintaining reasonable standards of behaviour whether inside or outside of normal School hours and whether on or off the school's site;
- maintaining an effective learning environment.

### **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 (Sandrine Paillasse) 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 Senior Deputy Head 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. 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.

## **1.4. Physical intervention**

The school's policy on the use of force by staff to control or restrain pupils is set out in the school's Behaviour policy.

The law allows teachers to use reasonable force to prevent pupils from committing an offence or causing personal injury to others or themselves or causing damage to the property of any person.

School staff will only use restraint as a last resort to enable a pupil to calm down and regain self-control so that other methods of management can be used.

Where, exceptionally, it is necessary to restrain a pupil, the minimum amount of force should be used and staff will always try to act in such a way as to avoid causing harm or injury to the pupil.

Any such events should be recorded in writing (and where possible signed by a witness) and passed to the Senior Deputy Head and the Director of Pastoral Care.

**NB Corporal punishment: Under section 131 of the school Standards and Framework Act (1998), corporal punishment is prohibited for all pupils in independent and maintained schools.**

### **1.5. Trips**

- For all trips and activities, staff should consult the Deputy Head, Director of Co-Curriculum 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 Communications 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 school phones are available for use from the Communications department. Photos to be retained for future use must be downloaded onto the school's network [in the area to be specified by the Director of Communications - each department to have its own area which the Dir of Comms also has access to]. The Communications department will permanently delete all photos from the loan camera or phone before it is loaned to another member of staff. 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 Communications. Before photos of pupils are published on school social media accounts staff must refer to the Quick Guide to Posting Images on Social Media attached at Appendix C of the Staff Acceptable Use of IT Policy and then obtain authority to post from the Director of Communications.
- Staff should take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere of an educational visit. 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.

### **1.6. 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.
- Staff should not invite current pupils to their house and should exercise caution before doing so with recent OPs (those within two years of leaving the school after taking A levels). Staff should inform the Director of Pastoral Care in the event of an invitation being extended to recent OPs.
- Staff should not accept invitations to a student's house without parental consent and the clear understanding that another responsible adult would be present at the same time. A line manager should be informed.
- Staff should not take up any other duties (whether remunerated or not) outside their normal hours of work which might impede or interfere with the proper performance of their duties under this agreement without the prior written consent of the High Mistress (which will not be unreasonably withheld). The term "other duties" may be used to refer to tutoring.
- 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.

- Staff are advised that, upon leaving the school, they should continue to exercise caution when engaging with former pupils. The school's advice is not to contact current or recent pupils directly. Staff are advised to report to the Director of Pastoral Care any contact made by pupils directly to them.

## **2. General Conduct**

### **2.1 Alcohol, Smoking and Drugs**

Staff should not normally drink alcohol during the working day and should never be under the influence of alcohol while exercising his or her professional duties, either inside or outside the classroom. During working hours – including on educational visits – there is a duty to refrain from any intake of alcohol which could impair the proper performance of one's duties or cause justifiable adverse comment. Staff should also be aware of their obligations within the law and within the bounds of good practice not to purchase for or serve alcohol to pupils. If you are to drive a vehicle on school business you must refrain from alcohol.

St Paul's Girls' School is a no smoking site. Smoking is not permitted on or immediately outside any school premises and should not take place within sight of pupils during visits or expeditions. The possession or use of illegal drugs by a member of staff, in or outside of school, is likely to be regarded as gross misconduct.

### **2.2 Confidentiality**

Professional conversations take place daily within schools, between colleagues and with external stakeholders. All staff and members of the school community have a right to their privacy. Confidentiality is important for the smooth functioning of the school and preserving relationships of mutual trust. Conversations with parents should always be strictly professional, other pupils or parents should not be discussed, nor should information private to the school be disclosed. Further information regarding privacy rights can be found in the school's privacy notices and other data protection documentation.

## **3. Language and Appearance**

### **3.1 Appearance**

Staff at St Paul's do not need to follow a distinct dress code. However, dress should be appropriate for the workplace and not be offensive, discriminatory or political. The High Mistress will be the arbiter of appropriate dress.

### **3.2 Language**

Language should be appropriate at all times. Always consider the impact, audience and manner of delivery when speaking to others to ensure it is never used to humiliate or offend. Language should be used to facilitate positive and appropriate relationships.

## **4. Safety Online**

### **4.1 Acceptable Use of IT**

In accordance with the Staff Acceptable Use of IT policy, except for school managed accounts staff should not 'connect' or communicate with current, or recent ex-pupils on social media sites (e.g. Facebook). Staff are advised not to 'connect' with recent OPs online until they have left the school for a minimum of two years and are over 18.

If staff have a professional need to email a pupil that has left the school then they must send the message from their own school email account. They may email the pupil on either or both of their

school email account or personal email address (if consent has been given to use in this way). School email accounts will remain open for leavers for one year following their departure.

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. Staff should also ensure that their own personal social networking sites are set as private and ensure pupils and parents are not approved contacts.

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 IT policy. Staff should report to SMT, any new and emerging technologies which may have a bearing on School practices and on the review of the Staff Acceptable Use of IT Policy. Local and national guidelines on acceptable user policies should be followed. Full information is provided in the Staff Acceptable Use of IT Policy.

Any data breaches must be reported to the Bursar immediately.

## **5. Reporting an allegation about another member of staff**

Staff are required to report any safeguarding concerns they are aware of.

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.

## **6. 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.

## **Other relevant Policies**

Safeguarding (child protection) Policy

Staff Acceptable Use of IT Policy

Behaviour policy

Taking, Storing and Using Images Policy [note that this policy is in draft stage]

## **Availability of this policy**

A copy of this policy may be downloaded from our website <http://spgs.org/school-policies/> or is available on request from the school office, St Paul's Girls' School, Brook Green, London, W6 7BS (tel: 0207 603 2288). This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.