

# 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	HR Director	March 2022	✓
Reported	Education Committee	10 May 2022	✓
Approved	Board of Governors	22 June 2022	✓

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



## 1. Introduction

1.1 All staff have a role to play in safeguarding and ensuring that the school's students 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.

1.2 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 students 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 students and the school. Staff are also required to adhere to the Safeguarding (child protection) policy, Staff Acceptable Use policy (AUP).

1.3 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.

1.4 Breaches of the Code of Conduct may result in the school initiating disciplinary procedures and, if appropriate refer to the local authority and the police.

1.5 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 2021) together with *Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales* (2019)

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

### **To be read in conjunction with the following school documents:**

- Safeguarding (child protection) policy
- Low Level Concerns policy
- Staff Acceptable Use policy (AUP)
- Behaviour policy
- Taking, Storing and Using Images Policy

## 2. Key principles

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

- taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students under their supervision
- using professional expertise and judgment for the best interests of students in their care
- demonstrating self-awareness and taking responsibility for their own actions and for providing help and support to students
- raising concerns about the practices of teachers or other professionals where these may have a negative impact on students' learning or progress, or may put students at risk
- being familiar with St Paul's Girls' School's Safeguarding (child protection) 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 student 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 students.

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 students, 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 students 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.

## **2.1 Additional principles for teachers**

2.1.1 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 students 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 of Conduct.

2.1.2 Staff 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, including online
- maintaining an effective learning environment (teachers)
- adhering to the staff acceptable use policy.

## **2.2 Lone working**

2.2.1 When lone working with students 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 student (e.g., counselling sessions).
- If 'lone working' is a regular occurrence, such as individual music lessons or one-to-one tuition, the DSL and 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 student'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 Safeguarding Lead (DSL) (Lizzie Beesley) immediately.

- Teachers should not offer additional tuition to students at their own home (whether in groups or for one-to-one tuition, in school staff accommodation or in a private home).

### **2.3 Inappropriate relationships**

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

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

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

2.3.4 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.

2.3.5 Any sexual relationship with a student at the school is unacceptable.

2.3.6 A sexual relationship with a student 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.

### **2.4 Physical contact with students**

2.4.1 There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with students, e.g., shaking hands at a formal prize giving, to stop a student running in the road or breaking up a physical fight between students, 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.

2.4.2 Where exercises or procedures need to be demonstrated, caution should be used if the demonstration involves contact with students, 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 students in order to support a student 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 student'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 student.

2.4.3 Where a student 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.

### **2.5 Physical intervention**

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

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

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

2.5.4 Where, exceptionally, it is necessary to restrain a student, 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 student.

2.5.5 Any such events should be recorded in writing (and where possible signed by a witness) and passed to the Senior Deputy Director of Studies 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 students in independent and maintained schools.**

## **2.6 Trips**

2.6.1 For all trips and activities, staff should consult the Deputy Head, Director of Co-Curriculum to agree appropriate supervision arrangements.

2.6.2 Staff should not travel alone in a car with a student. Staff should notify the Senior Management Team (SMT) emergency contact if there are exceptional circumstances that require them to transport a student 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.

2.6.2 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 students and parents.

2.6.3 Guidance for staff on the taking and use of photographs and images is set out in the Staff Acceptable Use Policy and the Taking, Using and Storing images of Students Policy. Photos of students 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.

2.6.4 Staff should take particular care when supervising students in the less formal atmosphere of an educational visit. 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.

## **2.7 Other activities away from school**

2.7.1 Staff should be particularly mindful of their conduct in situations where alcohol is available. Staff on a residential school trip are recommended not to drink alcohol, but if they do choose to do so it must only be in moderation and only after work commitments and activities on the day have finished. If alcohol is consumed at the end of the working day, it is imperative that there are always two staff members of the trip who do not drink at all in order to deal with any emergencies that may arise such as taking a student to hospital or dealing with an emerging safeguarding issue.

2.7.2 Caution should be exercised when meeting recent OPs in a social environment.

2.7.3 Staff should not invite current students 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.

2.7.4 Staff should not accept invitations to a student's house.

2.7.5 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 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.

2.7.6 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 student or if a member of staff's actions have brought the school into disrepute.

2.7.7 Situations with students and recent former students where one's behaviour might be considered unprofessional should therefore be avoided.

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

### **3. General Conduct**

#### **3.1 Alcohol, Smoking and Drugs**

##### **Alcohol**

3.1.1 It is strictly forbidden to work or to remain at work under the influence of alcohol. If the school considers that you are under the influence of alcohol you may be sent home immediately and disciplinary action will be taken.

3.1.2 There may be alcoholic drinks at some formal pre-arranged school social functions only and the school expects a high standard of behaviour from all staff. Staff are not permitted to drink their own alcohol at school at any time. Whilst you are responsible for your own travel arrangements to and from such functions, the school advises that you do not drive a vehicle after consuming any amount of alcohol.

##### **Drugs and substances**

3.1.3 For the purposes of this policy "drugs" covers controlled drugs and the paraphernalia of drugs, psychoactive substances or substances intended to resemble drugs, or "legal" drugs which can be obtained from a chemist shop, performance enhancing drugs, anabolic steroids, glue and other substances held or supplied in each case for purposes of misuse.

##### **Controlled substances**

3.1.4 It is a criminal offence to use, possess or deal in any controlled substances and anyone found through the disciplinary procedure to be involved in any of these activities, whether during or outside working hours, will normally be dismissed for gross misconduct. The school will notify the police where appropriate.

##### **At work**

3.1.5 The School does not permit drugs (other than prescribed drugs) to be used or stored on School premises. Under no circumstances is the sale of drugs (prescribed or not) permitted.

##### **Under the influence**

3.1.6 It is strictly forbidden to come to work or to remain at work under the influence of any drug. If you have been prescribed drugs whose side effects could have an impact on your work or behaviour, you should report this immediately to your line manager/HR. If the School considers that you are under the influence of any drug (including prescribed drugs which have or could have affected your work or behaviour and of which you have failed to notify your line manager, disciplinary action will be taken.

3.1.2 St Paul's Girls' School is a no smoking/vaping site. Smoking/vaping is not permitted on or immediately outside any school premises and should not take place within sight of students during visits or expeditions.

3.1.3 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.

#### **3.2 Confidentiality**

3.2.1 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 students 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.

## **4. Language and Appearance**

### **4.1 Appearance**

4.1.1 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.

### **4.2 Language**

4.2.1 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.

## **5. Safety Online**

### **5.1 Acceptable Use**

5.1.1 In accordance with the Staff Acceptable Use policy, except for school managed accounts staff should not 'connect' or communicate with current, or recent ex-students 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.

5.1.2 If staff have a professional need to email a student that has left the school, they must send the message from their own school email account. They may email the student 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.

5.1.3 Staff should always avoid giving out their personal contact details to students 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 students and parents are not approved contacts.

5.1.4 If staff are required to communicate with students using their own portable device, communication should be via the school email system and must adhere to the Staff Acceptable Use policy (AUP).

5.1.5 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 policy (AUP).

5.1.6 Local and national guidelines on acceptable user policies should be followed. Full information is provided in the Staff Acceptable Use policy (AUP).

5.1.7 Any data breaches must be reported to the Bursar immediately.

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

6.1 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.

6.2 Staff are required to report low level concerns to the High Mistress, or DSL or Senior Deputy Head verbally, or by submitting a Low-level Concern Reporting Form (see the Low-Level concerns policy).

## **7. Reporting a concern about safeguarding practice**

7.1 All staff should feel able to raise concerns about any element of the school's practice or activities that they genuinely feel may place students 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).

7.2 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.

### **Availability of this policy**

A copy of this policy may be downloaded from our [website](#) or is available on request from the school office, St Paul's Girls' School, Brook Green, London, W6 7BS (tel: 020 7603 2288). This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.