



Staff Code of Conduct

Applicable from 3rd December 2021

Signed: 

Chair of Governors

Introduction

The governing body is required to set out a Code of Conduct for all school employees.

In addition to this policy, all staff employed under Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Employment have a statutory obligation to adhere to the 'Teachers' Standards 2012' and in relation to this policy, Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct.

Employees should be aware that a failure to comply with the following Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including dismissal.

All employees must be aware of the contents of this Code. The school will make every effort to ensure that staff will know and understand the Code, by the following means:

- Every employee is given a copy, both during induction and each time the Code is republished after a review.

Ignorance of this Code will not be accepted as a mitigating circumstance.

1. Aims, Scope and Principles

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow. By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

Many of the principles in this code of conduct are based on the Teachers' Standards. School staff have an influential position in the school, and will act as role models for students by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour. We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards.

We expect all support staff, governors and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in our staff disciplinary procedures.

A Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school staff are expected to observe, and the school should notify staff of this code and the expectations therein. School staff are role models and are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the students within the school. As a member of a school community, each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, both inside and outside working hours.

This Code of Conduct applies to:

- all staff who are employed by the school, including the Head Teacher;

The Code of Conduct does not apply to:

- peripatetic staff who are centrally employed by the Local Authority;
- ICT, canteen and cleaning staff employed by external contractors and providers of services. Such staff are covered by the relevant Code of Conduct of their employing body.

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its students.

2. Legislation and Guidance

We are required to set out a staff code of conduct under regulation 7 of 'The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009'.

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', we should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

3. General obligations

Staff set an example to students. They will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality. This includes being on time for lessons and duties.
- Report their absence by telephone between 07.00 and 07.30 using the established procedure.
- Ensure they are up-to-date with information and should check their emails and pigeonholes at least once a day as well as reading the weekly staff bulletin on a Friday.
- Ensure that notices are given to students in registration and that letters are distributed on time.
- In accordance with directed time attend all meetings relevant to their role and play their part in the wider professional life of the school.
- Observe all school policies.
- Meet the requirements as specified by examination bodies.
- Follow the correct procedures for dealing with all matters relating to finance.
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school.
- Treat students and others with dignity and respect.
- Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others.
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Express personal beliefs in a way that will not overly influence students, and will not exploit students' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within.
- Adhere to the Teachers' Standards.

4. Safeguarding

Staff have a duty to safeguard students from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, or neglect.

Staff will familiarise themselves with our safeguarding policy and procedures, Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2021, Part 1 and the Prevent Duty, and ensure they are aware of the

processes to follow if they have concerns about a child. Staff will also complete the prescribed EduCare & National College online training each year.

Our Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and procedures are available in staff handbooks and google drive. New staff will also be given copies on arrival.

Photography and Videos: these need to be conducted in accordance with the school policy and an explicit disclaimer on the part of the student/parents/carer is essential.

We strongly recommend that all staff become a member of a professional organisation.

5. Staff/Student Relationships

Staff will observe proper boundaries with students that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so.

One to One Situations: these occur regularly for all staff and every effort must be made to avoid either the member of staff or the student starting to feel ill at ease or vulnerable. When a member of staff feels that one to one situations are inappropriate with a particular student, it is the member of staff's responsibility to ensure that they are not alone with the student. Please ensure you request assistance from your Line Manager. If staff members and students must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

- This takes place in a public place that others can access
- Others can see in to the room
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

Staff should avoid contact with students outside of school hours if possible. Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and students. This includes social media profiles.

While we are aware many students and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to students are only acceptable when their giving has been discussed with a line manager and they are small and of little monetary value.

There are occasions when students or their parents wish to pass on some token of appreciation to a member of staff and this is acceptable provided that the value of the gift does not exceed £50. Receiving gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value is, however, unacceptable.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a student may be misinterpreted, this should be reported to their line manager or the Head Teacher.

Any relationship of a romantic or sexual nature between a member of staff and a student under the age of 18 is illegal and is a grave breach of trust. Such a relationship could cause very serious disruption and result in legal action being taken against the member of staff concerned and/or the school. The school will fully assist the Police or other relevant authorities with any enquiries pertaining to the school or members thereof. Infatuations do occur occasionally on the part of a student towards a member of staff. In such situations, the member of staff concerned must make every effort to remain above reproach and must discuss the situation with a member of the leadership team as soon as possible. It may become necessary to discuss matters with the student's parents or carer in order to avoid any hurt, distress or embarrassment. The member of staff should

ensure that they never allow themselves to be alone with the student concerned. The school also has in place a comprehensive Safeguarding Policy. If you have concerns about how a member of staff is acting in relation to a child, young person or adult at risk, please refer to that policy on how to deal with your concerns.

If you are in any doubt about an incident which could possibly create a conflict of interests or lead to a potential challenge to your professionalism, you should report this to the Headteacher in order to safeguard you at a later date.

6. Home Visits, Educational Visits & Transporting Students

Risk assessments should take place before a home visit is made. Ideally the parents/carers must be aware of the visit although it is acknowledged that in some cases this may not be possible. The visiting member of staff must have the permission of their line manager for the visit, the reason for which must be clear and evident and they must be accompanied by another member of staff. No staff should undertake home visits alone.

Transporting Young People: there may be occasions where a young person requires transport in an emergency situation or where not to give a lift places a young person at risk. Such exceptional circumstances staff must always record and report this need to a member of the Leadership Team and parent/carer. Staff must ensure that their insurance covers them for business use, take another member of staff with them unless it is a serious emergency and seat the student in the back of the car where possible.

Educational Visits: these need to be conducted in accordance with the school policy, ensuring that risk assessments are carried out in line with that policy.

7. Physical Contact

Certain jobs within the school and certain specific situations may require entirely appropriate physical contact between a member of staff and a student e.g. First Aiders, sports staff or physical support by the SEND/Inclusion team being obvious examples. However, it is crucial that in all circumstances, adults should only touch young people in ways which are appropriate to their professional or agreed role and responsibilities.

Professional judgement is key in every situation and being specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact is difficult as circumstances change according to age, gender, cultural background. When trying to calm a distressed student, a member of staff should comfort the student in an age and gender-appropriate manner.

Where frequent physical contact is necessary, e.g. with certain disabled students, the prerequisite protocols will be included in the Medical Protocol or Education, Health and Care Plan and the member of staff concerned will have received the appropriate training. Staff administering First Aid need to be sensitive to the privacy and feelings of the student concerned. Another adult should be made aware of the administration of any First Aid. For students under 18, parents must be informed of the administration of First Aid.

Behaviour Management and Physical Contact: students have a right to be treated with respect and dignity even in those circumstances where they display difficult or challenging behaviour. Staff should not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a student. The use of demeaning or insensitive comments towards a student is not acceptable in any situation. Any physical contact is prohibited unless there is a direct and present danger to someone in the vicinity. Even in these circumstances restraint must be measured. Corporal punishment is illegal. Where a member of staff suspects that a student is in possession of a weapon or an illegal substance, a member of the Leadership Team should be called who will then take control of the situation.

8. Communication and Social Media

School staff's social media profiles should not be available to students. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name, as students may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead, and set public profiles to private.

Staff should not attempt to contact students or their parents via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship. They will not make any efforts to find students' or parents' social media profiles.

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are students at the school without their consent.

Staff should be aware of the school's Online Policy and staff ICT Acceptable Use Guidelines.

9. Acceptable use of Technology

Staff will not use technology in school to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.

Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school equipment for personal use, in school hours or in front of students. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of students.

Communication with students and the use of new technologies: the development of new technologies has created many new possibilities for communication. However, all communication between staff and students must take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. Outside the classroom situation this covers:

- School email system (in accordance with the school policy).
- Phone calls home or to parent's mobile phone as per contact details.
- Letters (on headed school paper and approved by the Head Teacher).
- Officially authorised online areas such as Google Classroom.

No other form of communication is acceptable, including the use of personal mobiles (except where the use of these is necessary for giving and receiving information for work related purposes) and email addresses, internet based/social media websites and chat rooms. Staff must not become friends with students within social networking or other virtual environments, and must not share personal information with students. Any personal details should only be given to a student at the school following agreement with a member of the Leadership Team (see also ICT Acceptable Use Guidelines).

We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system.

10. Confidentiality

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the school, staff, students and their parents.

This information will never be:

- Disclosed to anyone without the relevant authority.
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others.
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for.

This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child is at risk of harm.

Where staff have access to confidential information about students or their parents or carers, staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the student.

All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a student is bullied by another student, this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate school procedure. It must not be discussed outside the school, including with the student's parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the school except with a senior member of staff with the appropriate role and authority to deal with the matter.

However, staff have an obligation to share with their line manager or the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, Safeguarding Officers, Head Teacher or Leadership Team member any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a student. Staff must never promise a student that they will not act on information that they are told by the student.

11. Honesty and integrity

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with students, handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities.

Staff will not accept bribes. All staff must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or if they request, agree or accept or receive a bribe from another person. If you believe that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act, you should refer to the Whistleblowing procedure for schools.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the school about their qualifications and professional experience is correct.

12. Dress Code

Staff should dress in a professional manner appropriate to their role and this may need to be different to how they dress when not at work. This usually means business dress for all teaching, classroom based support and administrative staff. Outfits should not be overly revealing and clothes should not display any offensive or overtly political slogans.

13. Conduct Outside of Work

Social Contact: situations arise where members of staff find themselves in social situations with students, e.g. on residential or day visits. It is important to maintain the usual accepted standards of behaviour between staff and students and to abide by any relevant legal framework. In all cases, staff should maintain a “professional distance” and avoid social interaction which could become misconstrued. Where social contact is an integral part of work duties, care should be taken to maintain appropriate personal and professional boundaries.

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school, or the teaching profession into disrepute. This covers relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school on social media. In particular, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are unacceptable.

Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others.

Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school nor be to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance.

14. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every three years or as necessary due to legislative, framework or standard change. It will be ratified by the full governing board.

15. Links with other policies

This policy links with our policies on:

- Staff disciplinary procedures, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct. It also sets out examples of what we will deem as misconduct and gross misconduct
- Staff Safer Working Practices
- Child Protection & Safeguarding
- Online & Acceptable Use Guidelines
- Staff Grievance Procedures