



POLICY AND GUIDANCE OF CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL STAFF

Policy owner	RSSKL - Principal
Policy lead	Designated Safeguard Lead
Audience	All staff and volunteers and is available to parents on request
Legislation and regulation	
Formally endorsed by	SMT and the Board of Trustees
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Role	Name	In-year updates
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GUIDANCE AND CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL STAFF AT THE SCHOOL

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This guidance and Code of Conduct are intended to help staff to minimise the risk of being accused of improper conduct towards the pupils, parents or colleagues with whom they come into contact during their work. The subject will be covered in the school's induction procedures for all staff.

1.2 Education professionals recognise that they may sometimes be the victims of false or malicious allegations of child abuse by pupils or their parents. It is also the case that sometimes these allegations are genuine. All allegations of child abuse must be taken seriously, and this requires that each allegation will be investigated. Under child protection procedures this may involve the local authority, police and social services. It may be necessary to suspend the teacher or other employee concerned pending the outcome of any investigation, with all the inevitable consequences in terms of distress and disruption and adverse public perceptions of the school.

1.3 It is because the consequences of such allegations are so serious both for the individuals concerned and for the school that it is important for all staff to understand clearly the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their dealings with pupils. Teachers have always been vulnerable to this type of allegation and have generally adopted a professional, common-sense approach in order to minimise their vulnerability in day-to-day dealings with pupils. Nevertheless, experience has shown that our school is not immune from such allegations and that is why this guidance has been produced. It is intended to help staff reduce further the risk of any vulnerability to false or malicious allegations of misconduct or abuse towards pupils.

1.4 The purpose of these guidelines is to promote the highest standards of care for pupils and to keep children safe. The guidelines also aim to protect teachers and others from the potentially devastating consequences of false allegations. It is advisable for all teachers to examine their teaching styles and their approaches to individual pupils to ensure that these do not give any grounds for doubt or suspicion on the part of colleagues, parents or pupils. All members of staff and volunteers are urged to consider how they can safeguard their own position in the light of this

guidance without giving up important principles of care, trust and the warmth of teacher/pupil relationships that characterise our school.

1.5 Staff should familiarise themselves with the school's policies about: child protection; whistleblowing procedure; Safeguarding; the use of mobile phones and electronic media; physical contact with pupils; the use of reasonable force to control or restrain pupils; arrangements for class trips and the procedures that should be followed if a pupil needs first aid or medical attention. These can be found on the Hub.

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

1.7 This Code of Conduct provides support for managers and employers in setting clear expectations of behaviour for staff. The Code supports the school in giving a clear message that unlawful or unsafe behaviour is unacceptable and that where appropriate, disciplinary or legal action may be taken in response to such behaviour

1.8 This Code of Conduct also aims to reduce incidences of the abuse or misuse of positions of trust

1.9 There must be, by all staff, an adherence to the code and an awareness of its content is also essential in helping to protect the children at the School from coming to harm.

2. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR TEACHERS, STAFF, TRUSTEES AND VOLUNTEERS

2.1 Purpose, Scope and Principles

A Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour that all school staff, trustees and volunteers are expected to observe. 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 pupils within the school. As a member of a school community, each member of staff has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school.

This Code of Conduct applies to:

- All staff who are employed by the school
- Trustees
- Volunteers
- Self-employed staff who are based at the school
- Teacher Trainees

This Code of Conduct does not apply to employees of external contractors and providers of services, who are covered by the relevant Code of Conduct of their employing body.

2.2 Setting an example

2.2.1 Members of staff should always uphold the law and maintain standards of behaviour and conduct both inside and outside school which set examples for pupils to follow. Staff must therefore avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.

2.2.2 All staff must avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct. Members of staff should take care that their relationships with pupils reflect the age, sex and maturity of the pupil. It is particularly important to ensure that all aspects of demeanour,

language and attitudes, however conveyed, do not give rise to misunderstandings, especially when dealing with adolescent boys and girls. Ambiguous or ambivalent comment and conduct should be avoided.

2.2.3 All staff are expected to conduct themselves professionally at all times. Colleagues are expected to abide by the school's Equal Opportunities policy and not to bully or harass anyone, whether pupil, parent or colleague.

2.2.4 All staff should ensure that they are familiar with and comply with school policies and procedures.

2.2.5 Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school.

2.2.6 Staff must be mindful of working relationships and boundaries with parents who have children at the school and to maintain a healthy, professional and appropriate relationship.

2.2.7 Staff should inform the school if they intend to undertake work outside school to ensure that it does not conflict with the interests of the school nor be to a level which may affect their work performance within the school.

2.2.8 Staff are expected to be suitably dressed and well-presented. If in doubt, consult your mentor or another colleague.

2.3 Safeguarding pupils

2.3.1 All staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect

2.3.2 The duty to safeguard pupils includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil to the school's Designated Child Protection Officers.

2.3.3 Staff must ensure that they are familiar with and abide by the School's Child Protection Policy.

2.3.4 Staff must not demean or undermine pupils, their parents or carers, or colleagues. The use of name calling, sarcastic, demeaning or insensitive comments towards any student is not acceptable in any circumstances. In particular, students who require additional support must be responded to at all times with full consideration to their needs.

2.3.5 Staff must take reasonable care of pupils under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.

2.5 Pupil Development

2.5.1 Staff must comply with school policies and procedures that support the wellbeing and development of pupils.

2.5.2 Staff must cooperate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the wellbeing and development of pupils.

2.5.3 Staff must support the development of pupils.

2.6 Honesty and Integrity

2.6.1 Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.

2.6.2 All staff must comply with the Bribery Act of 2010. A person may be guilty of bribery under this act if they offer, promise or give financial advantage to someone; or if they request or agree to accept, or receive a bribe from another person. If a member of staff believes that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act, the Whistleblowing procedure should be referred to.

2.6.3 Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to Principal/School Management Team, with the exception of 'one off' token gifts from pupils or parents. Personal gifts from individual members of staff to students could be misinterpreted and should be avoided.

2.7 Confidentiality/Disclosure of Information

2.7.1 Staff should not at any time during their employment (except so far as is necessary and proper in the course of their employment), or at any time after employment has terminated, disclose to any person confidential information as to the practice, business dealings or affairs of the School, or any of the School's suppliers, clients, pupils or ex-pupils, or as to any other confidential matters that may come to their knowledge by reason of their employment.

2.7.2 Staff shall not use for their own purposes or profit or for any purposes other than those of the School, any information of a sensitive nature which may be acquired in relation to the School's affairs. The rules concerning disclosure of information shall apply both during and after employment with the School. Confidential information means **any** information or matter of a confidential nature (whether or not recorded in documentary form, or stored on any magnetic or optical disk or memory) relating to the School's business dealings, its affairs and finances which is not in the public domain.

2.7.3 The School has a media policy which staff are required to make themselves familiar with. Staff agree not to discuss any matters regarding the School with the press and acknowledge that the School has a Communication Manager who is permitted to speak to the press.

2.7.4 All staff may at some point witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a pupil is bullied by another pupil (or by a member of staff), this needs to be reported to an appropriate person. It must not be discussed outside the school, including with the pupil's parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the school except with a member of staff with an appropriate role in the school as well as a member of staff with authority to deal with the matter.

2.7.5 Staff have an obligation to share with a Designated Safeguarding Lead any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a pupil. Staff must **never** promise a pupil that they will not act on information that they are told by the pupil.

2.8 Private meetings and one-to-one meetings with pupils

2.8.1 Teachers should be aware that private meetings with individual pupils may give rise to concern. There will be occasions when a confidential interview or a one-to-one meeting is necessary (e.g. learning support lessons, curative eurythmy), but such meetings should always be conducted in a room with visual access, or with the door open, or in a room or area which is likely to be frequented by other people, and another pupil or adult should be present or nearby. Staff should also ensure that another adult knows that the meeting/discussion is taking place.

2.8.2 Meetings with individual pupils away from the school premises or after normal school hours (with the exception of home visits by class teachers) should only be arranged with the specific approval of the Principal, or one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads as appropriate. For Home Visits please see separate policy.

2.8.3 Never arrange a detention after school or on a Saturday morning that involves only one child. Detentions must always be recorded in the Detention Book.

2.8.4 No student should be invited into the home of an adult who works with them, unless the reason for this has been firmly established and agreed with parents/ carers and the Principal/School Management Team.

2.9 Physical contact

2.9.1 Physical contact may be misconstrued by a pupil, parent or observer. Touching pupils, including well-intentioned informal and formal gestures such as putting a hand on the shoulder or arm, can, if repeated regularly, lead to questions being raised. Staff must not make gratuitous physical contact with pupils and should avoid attributing 'touching' to their teaching style as a way of relating to pupils.

2.9.2 There are of course occasions when physical contact is acceptable or necessary. These usually fall into one of four categories:

1. Action to prevent harm or injury to the pupil or to others

If it is necessary to prevent a pupil causing injury to him/herself to others or to prevent the pupil causing serious damage to property or in what would reasonably be regarded as exceptional circumstances, the use of minimum force and contact necessary to prevent harm is acceptable and justifiable. In any such circumstance there would be a written record of the incident and the parents of the young person involved should be informed the same day. Any such incident must always be reported to one of the Designated Child Protection Officers in the school immediately.

Source – Dept of Education's publication - Use of Reasonable Force in Schools July 2013

What is reasonable force?

1. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.
2. Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
3. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
4. As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.
5. Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.
6. School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil.

2. *Comforting a pupil in distress*

Generally any physical contact between a member of staff and a pupil should only be when absolutely necessary, in response to the needs of the child and not the adult and should only be for the minimum duration of time necessary. Consider how others might perceive your action and ensure that it does not develop into unnecessary contact. Particular care must be taken in situations which involve the same pupil over a period of time. Always consider alternatives to physical contact where possible in order to avoid speculation. You might ask another student to provide comfort and/or offer the child a chair or somewhere quiet to sit accompanied by a friend.

3. *Unavoidable contact*

This is a particularly sensitive issue in subjects such as Eurythmy, Gymnastics and Drama and in some forms of skills coaching. All teachers must be alert to the possibilities of pupils misinterpreting any contact. To avoid such misunderstanding, all planned contact must be demonstrably unavoidable. Generally speaking, it is unwise and unacceptable for physical contact to take place between adolescent pupils and teachers. If considered necessary for learning, the teacher should seek the permission of the child and explain the nature of the intended contact and its purpose.

4. *Other physical contact*

One of the strengths of our school is a notable quality of warmth and mutual respect between staff and pupils and it is vital to retain this. Throughout the school, the daily handshake between staff and pupils is an important part of our rhythm and routine.

2.9.3 A document called "Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings (March 2009) is an excellent document which offers advice on a wide range of safe working practice within a school/education environment. A copy can be obtained from the Bursar.

3.00 Corporal Punishment

Any form of physical punishment is unlawful in schools. It is not under any circumstances allowable under the school's own disciplinary procedures and is actionable in law and applies to any adult who works with children in any setting. This also applies to any form of physical response to misbehaviour, with the exception noted in 2.9.2 (1) above.

3.1 First Aid and caring for pupils with particular problems

3.1.1 Staff who have to administer first aid should ensure wherever possible that other children or another adult are present if they are in any doubt as to whether necessary physical contact could be misconstrued.

3.1.2 Wherever possible, staff who have to help children with toileting difficulties should be accompanied by another adult, and pupils should, wherever possible, be encouraged to change themselves. It is accepted that there will be some situations where pupils will present particular problems for staff and the emphasis must therefore be on what is reasonable in all the circumstances.

3.1.3 In situations where regular physical assistance is necessary it is advisable that parents and staff formally acknowledge this in writing.

3.2 Discussions with pupils, comments by teachers

3.2.1 As with physical contact, comments by staff to pupils, either individually or in groups, can be misconstrued. As a general principle therefore, staff must not make unnecessary comments to and/or about pupils which could be construed to have a sexual connotation. It is also unacceptable for staff to introduce or to encourage debate amongst pupils in class, or elsewhere, which could be construed as having a sexual connotation that is unnecessary given the context of the lesson, or the circumstances. In particular, the use of inappropriate sexual language must not take place. At the same time it is recognised that a topic raised by a pupil is best addressed rather than ignored.

3.2. Systematic use of insensitive, disparaging or sarcastic comments is also unacceptable.

3.4 Relationships and attitudes

3.4.1 All staff should understand the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their dealings with pupils. Intimate or sexual relationships between a member of staff and a pupil are now regarded in law as a breach of trust. It is a criminal offence for a teacher or other persons who work with children to breach this trust, punishable on conviction by a fine and/or a term of imprisonment of currently up to 5 years. This legislation includes all children under the age of 18.

3.4.2 All staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age and gender of the pupils, and take care that their language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when members of staff of either sex are dealing with adolescent boys and girls.

3.4.3 From time to time teachers may encounter pupils who display attention-seeking behaviour, or develop infatuations towards them. Staff should aim to deal with those situations sensitively and appropriately, but must ensure that their behaviour cannot be misinterpreted. If a member of staff becomes aware of such an infatuation, they must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead in order to ensure their own safeguarding.

3.4.4 Professional standards should always be maintained when dealing with both staff and students regardless of culture disability, gender, language, race, religion, learning ability and/or sexual identity. You must treat all children equally and with respect. Staff must not show favouritism to pupils. In particular, the use of punishment must be consistent with the school's behaviour policy and must have regard for individual needs.

3.4.5 All staff should ensure that their behaviour does not give rise to speculation about grooming. The NSPCC website advises:

“Grooming happens both online and in person. Groomers will hide their true intentions and may spend a long time gaining a child's trust. They may also try to gain the trust of the whole family so they can be alone with the child.”

Groomers do this by:

- pretending to be someone they are not, for example saying they are the same age online
- offering advice or understanding

- buying gifts
- giving the child special attention and/or showing favouritism
- using their professional position or reputation to establish a close relationship
- taking them on trips, outings or holidays.
- Spend increasing amounts of time alone with a child
- Engaging in unnecessary physical contact
- Engaging a child in conversation of a sexually explicit nature

3.5 Pastoral Care and situations where conversations of a sensitive nature may be appropriate

3.5.1 A number of teachers have a pastoral responsibility for pupils and in order to fulfil that role effectively there will be occasions where conversations will cover particularly sensitive matters. Staff must, in these circumstances, use their discretion to ensure that, for example, any probing for details cannot be construed as unjustified intrusion.

3.5.2 Other staff may, from time to time, be approached by pupils for advice. For example, a pupil may appear distressed and you may feel the need to ask if all is well. In such cases you must judge whether it is appropriate for you to offer counselling and advice or whether to refer the pupil to their class teacher or class sponsor, or to the Pastoral Care Group.

3.6 Extra-curricular activities, class trips etc

Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in extra-curricular activities, or in a residential setting during a class trip, outdoor education centre or extended visit away from home. Typically, a less formal approach than usual is appropriate in these settings, but that can be open to misinterpretation by pupils and the standard of behaviour expected of staff will be no different from the behaviour expected within school. Class Trip leaders should instruct all helpers and parent-volunteers on what is appropriate behaviour for the situation. All trips should be planned using appropriate paperwork, be fully risk assessed and submitted to the EVC not later than two weeks in advance of the trip. Residential trips must be six weeks in advance.

3.7 Information technology

Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Do not give your home email address or mobile phone number to any pupil. For email, always use your school email address or Parent Mail. For class trips, take one of the school mobile phones and if for any reason the school mobile is not available, do not be tempted to give out your own number. Use only the school mobile if it is necessary to a text to a pupil. Do not use your own.

3.8 Social networking sites

As a teacher, you are of course entitled to a social life just like anyone else, but it should be borne in mind that to pupils, parents and colleagues you will always be a teacher linked to the school. Staff

should always remember that information published on social networking sites such as Facebook or My Space may be read by colleagues, parents or pupils and must ensure that their online presence does not bring the school into disrepute. It is inappropriate to have a pupil as a 'friend' on Facebook.

3.9 Reporting incidents

Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued he/she should discuss the matter with one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads. Where it is agreed with a DSL, the member of staff or volunteer should provide a written report of the incident. A detailed written report should always be made if a member of staff has been obliged to restrain a pupil physically, or where a complaint has been made by a pupil, parent or other adult.

Where a member of staff is witness to behaviour by another member of staff that causes concern, this should be reported straight away to the DSL. All staff have responsibility to take such action whenever such a situation arises. The priority is to safeguard the welfare of the child in all such circumstances. If a member of staff has concerns about the Principal the report should be made to the Trustee with special responsibility for Safeguarding. Staff should refer to the Whistleblowing Policy for guidance. Staff should report behaviour that might indicate that a member of staff has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm to children (Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016)

For further advice and guidance on reporting incidents, please refer to the school's Whistleblowing Policy.

Reminder: All concerns over the well-being of a pupil or concerning any child protection type issue should be addressed in confidence to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible. Teachers can also approach the member of staff responsible for organising Counselling for access to confidential counselling services on behalf of themselves or a pupil.

3.10 Staff are expected to strive for 100% attendance and punctuality including INSET days, except for sickness, approved compassionate grounds, or where punctuality is concerned, unforeseen or circumstances outside of the individual's control. Staff absence is to be notified by 7.30 a.m. on the first day of absence. Holidays are to be taken as per the school's published term dates. Staff leaving the site during their working hours must sign out and must inform the Principal or a member of the School Management Team, explaining their reasons for doing so.

4.0 Disciplinary Action

4.1 All staff need to recognise that failure to meet these standards of behaviour and conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

I have read and agree to abide by the Policy and Guidance of Code of Conduct for all teachers and other staff:

Signed:
.....

Date:

Name
.....

(Print):