



Staff Code of Conduct

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Objective, Scope and Principles

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school employees are expected to observe. School employees 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/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, whether inside or outside working hours.

The staff at Katherine Warrington School are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for both students and their colleagues. Staff, however, in the past have expressed concern about their vulnerability and have requested clear advice and/or support at times when incidents / situations have occurred that could be or have been misinterpreted by students or colleagues.

This document has been produced in response to these concerns and is a brief summary on what is expected and is considered safe practice by staff.

A lot of situations are covered in these guidelines but it would be impossible to cover all eventualities so I would urge all staff if in doubt to consult their line manager or member of SLT. This summary does highlight behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable.

This Code of Conduct applies to all employees of the school. This Code of Conduct does not form part of any employees' contract of employment.

In addition to this Code of Conduct, all employees engaged to work 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.

Underpinning Principles:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- Staff should work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way.
- Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from their line manager or another senior member of staff over any incident, which may give rise to concern.
- Records should be made of any such incident and/or decisions made and further actions agreed. Records to be stored confidentially in the personnel files.
- Staff should apply the same professional standards regardless of gender or sexuality.
- All staff should know the name of their designated person for child protection, be familiar with local child protection arrangements and understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect students.
- Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.

1. Setting an Example

- 1.1 All staff who work in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils/students. Staff must therefore for example avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.
- 1.2 All staff must, therefore, demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils/students to do the same.
- 1.3 All staff must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.
- 1.4 This Code helps all staff to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable, regard should also be given to the disciplinary rules set out in the Schools' Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
- 1.5 All staff are expected to familiarise themselves and comply with all school policies and procedures.

2. Safeguarding Students

- 2.1 Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils/students from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect
- 2.2 The duty to safeguard pupils/students includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil/student or colleague to the school's Designated Senior Person (DSP) for Child Protection.
- 2.3 Staff are regularly directed to the school's Child Protection Policy and Whistleblowing Procedure and staff must be familiar with these documents.
- 2.4 Staff should treat children with respect and dignity and must not seriously demean or undermine pupils, their parents or carers, or colleagues.

- 2.5 Staff should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of students, embarrassing or humiliating students, discriminating against or favouring students.
- 2.6 Staff must take reasonable care of pupils/students under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.

3. Relationships with Offenders

- 3.1 There is a duty to disclose all relationships which may create an enhanced risk to children – cohabitation with a person convicted of a serious offence, irrespective of whether the childcare disqualification by association regulations apply, could create potential for enhanced risk which when disclosed can be risk assessed against.

4. Relationships with Students

- 4.1 Relationships with students must be professional at all times; physical relationships with students are not permitted and may lead to a criminal conviction. Encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which may lead to a sexual relationship or any other inappropriate relationship will be viewed as a grave breach of trust.
- 4.2 Contact with students must be via school-authorized mechanisms and solely for educational purposes. At no time should personal telephone numbers, text, email addresses or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with students.
- 4.3 If contacted by a student by an inappropriate route, staff should report the contact to the Headteacher immediately.
- 4.4 Behaviour giving rise to concern should also be reported which includes pupils seeking affection, being sexually provocative or exhibiting overly familiar behaviour.
- 4.5 All staff working with young people are in positions of trust, a relationship between a member of staff and a student cannot be a relationship of equals
- 4.6 Staff need to be aware that it is not uncommon for students to be strongly attracted to a member of staff and/or develop a sexual infatuation. A member of staff who becomes aware that a student may be infatuated with themselves or a colleague should discuss this at the earliest opportunity with a senior member of staff
- 4.7 Staff need to consider the way in which they offer comfort to a distressed student and always tell a colleague when and how you offered comfort. Report and record any situations which may give rise to concern to a senior member of staff
- 4.8 Because of “grooming” allegations staff should be aware that conferring special attention and favour upon a student might be construed as being part of a grooming process which is an offence
- 4.9 Avoid meetings with students in remote secluded areas of the school. Ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in one to one situations. Inform other staff of the meeting beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by. Avoid use of “Engaged” or equivalent signs wherever possible. Always report any situation where a student becomes distressed or angry to a senior colleague. Pre-arranged one to one meetings with students away from the school are not permitted without the approval of a member of the SLT

5. Physical Contact

- 5.1 Staff need to be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the student, an observer or by anyone to whom the action is described.
- 5.2 Never touch a student in a way which may be considered indecent. Always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact will be open to scrutiny. Never indulge in horseplay, tickling, arm wrestling, fun fights etc. or encourage students to do so!
- 5.3 If you believe you have been involved in physical contact that could be misinterpreted it needs to be reported to a member of SLT at the earliest convenience.
- 5.4 Staff may legitimately intervene to prevent a student from committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property, engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline; under no circumstance should physical force be used as a form of punishment. Support staff should never be involved in the use of physical force without the written permission of the Headteacher. In all incidences where

physical intervention is deemed necessary the incident and subsequent actions should be documented and reported

- 5.5 Those who teach PE or who offer music tuition for example, will on occasions have to initiate physical contact with students in order to support a child so they can perform a task safely, demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument, etc. This should be done with the student's consent, for the minimum time necessary and take place in an open environment. Staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the student.
- 5.6 Young people are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes or taking a shower, however, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision. The supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the young people concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment

6. Student Development

- 6.1 Staff must comply with school policies and procedures that support the well-being and development of pupils/students.
- 6.2 Staff must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of pupils/students.
- 6.3 Staff must follow reasonable instructions that support the development of pupils/students.

7. Honesty and Integrity

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to the Headteacher, with the exception of "one off" token gifts from students or parents. Personal gifts from individual members of staff to students are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted and may lead to disciplinary action. A record will be kept of all gifts received.

8. Conduct outside Work

- 8.1 Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.
- 8.2 In particular, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable
- 8.3 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 in the school. We would recommend that permission is sought in advance.
- 8.4 Forming inappropriate relationships or friendships with children or young people who are pupils or students under the age of 18 at another school/college will be viewed as inappropriate and impact upon the school's ability to trust the member of staff to maintain professional boundaries with pupils at the school.
- 8.5 Staff should be particularly careful when socialising in public areas where students and / or parents may be present. For example, being seen under the influence of alcohol, being seen in the company of students (however innocent your motives) or being overheard discussing

students or staff can lead to accusations of unprofessional conduct. There is also the risk that inappropriate images of staff could be placed on the internet.

9. e-Safety and Internet Use

- 9.1 Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Regard should be given to the schools' E-Safety and ICT Acceptable Use Policy at all times both inside and outside of work.
- 9.2 Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute. Staff should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have.
- 9.3 Staff should exercise caution in their use of all social media or any other web based presence that they may have, including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts established by others. This may also include the use of dating websites where staff could encounter students either with their own profile or acting covertly.
- 9.4 Contact with students should only made via the use of school email accounts or telephone equipment when appropriate and strictly for educational reasons.
- 9.5 Photographs/stills or video footage of students should only be taken using school equipment, for purposes authorised by the school. Any such use should always be transparent and only occur where parental consent has been given. The resultant files from such recording or taking of photographs must be stored in accordance with the school's procedures on school equipment.

10. Transporting Students

Wherever practical when transporting an individual student in a private vehicle there should be an additional adult acting as an escort. The vehicle should meet all legal requirements, be roadworthy and appropriately insured.

11. Educational Visits

Staff should take particular care when supervising students in the less formal atmosphere. Staff are reminded they are in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour cannot be interpreted as seeking to establish an inappropriate relationship or friendship. Staff should read the school visits procedures and guidelines before embarking on any school visit.

12. Confidentiality

- 12.1 Where staff have access to confidential information about pupils/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 pupil/student.
- 12.2 All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a pupil/student is bullied by another pupil/student (or by a member of staff), 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 pupil's/student's parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the school except with a senior member of staff with the appropriate authority to deal with the matter.
- 12.3 However, staff have an obligation to share with their manager or the school's Designated Senior Person any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a pupil/student. Staff must **never** promise a pupil/student that they will not act on information that they are told by the pupil/student.

12.4 Staff are not allowed to make any comment to the media about the school, its performance, governance, pupils or parents without written approval. Any media queries should be directed to the Headteacher.

13. Dress and Appearance

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, staff should consider the manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role and that it is commensurate with the high standards the school has set for student dress

14. Disciplinary Action

Staff should be aware that a failure to comply with the following Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including but not limited to dismissal.

15. Compliance

All staff must complete the form in appendix 2 to confirm they have read, understood and agreed to comply with the code of conduct. This form should then be signed and dated.

Confirmation of compliance

I confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with the school's Code of Conduct.

Name

Signed

Date

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Headteacher