



Staff Code of CONDUCT

2025/2026

Nourishing the Human Potential



Staff Code of Conduct 2024/2025

Staff Code of Conduct

1. Purpose

All employees and volunteers working at our school should adhere to the school's values and follow safeguarding and child protection procedures and commit to the school's values:

- Respect yourself, your colleagues and the working environment.
- Be welcoming, honest and open.
- Promote a safe and supportive culture.
- Always promote a positive and dynamic attitude.
- Be proactive in supporting right action, and reporting harmful action or intention.

Many staff work extremely hard establishing excellent relationships with pupils and parents/guardians, providing high levels of pastoral care whilst being sensitive to professional boundaries. However, a failure to understand professional boundaries can lead to a member of staff making serious mistakes, including career threatening ones. Even an unfounded allegation of professional misconduct can be permanently damaging to any member of staff, their family and the profession.

All staff are responsible for recognising when they are at risk of crossing professional boundaries and if they are, of addressing the issue immediately. Although teaching staff are most at risk, all employees need to recognise the importance of maintaining appropriate professional boundaries when dealing with pupils. All staff whatever their position, roles and responsibilities have a critical role to play in shaping the lives of young people.

This Code of Conduct is designed to ensure that our school is the safest possible learning and working environment for pupils and employees. The clarification of professional boundaries together with appropriate support and training is designed to ensure all staff and volunteers do not place themselves at risk. Wherever a staff member is in doubt, they should always seek the guidance of their line manager.

2. Accountability

The Head of School is responsible for ensuring that the staff professional Code of Conduct Policy is regularly reviewed and updated. This will happen every academic year. All staff are accountable in the way in which they exercise authority, manage risk, use resources and protect learners and themselves from discrimination and avoidable harm. All staff have a duty to keep young people, learners and pupils with special needs and disabilities, safe and to protect them from harm.

3. Pupil Involvement in the Code of Conduct

Pupils are the focus of this code. The pupil's interaction with all staff and the school community at large is the essence of his/her school experience. Pupils are made aware of their responsibilities through the Behaviour Policy and agreed class rules. Pupils are expected to exercise appropriate behaviour in their interactions with all staff. This includes all communication through social networking sites, emails and phone calls.



Staff Code of Conduct 2024/2025

4. Duty of Care

All staff, whether paid or voluntary, have a duty to keep pupils safe and protect them from sexual, physical, emotional or any aspect of harm. Pupils have the right to be treated with respect and dignity. It follows that trusted adults are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils. Failure to do so may be regarded as professional neglect. The duty of care is exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between staff and pupils and staff behaviour that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgment.

This means that staff should:

- Understand the responsibilities, which are part of their employment or role, and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached.
- Always act, and be seen to act, in the pupils' best interests.
- Avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question your motives and intentions.
- Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour.

This means that the school should:

- Foster a culture of openness and support.
- Ensure that systems are in place for concerns to be raised.
- Ensure that there is in place effective recording systems which confirm discussions, decisions and the outcomes of any actions taken.
- Ensure that staff are not placed in situations which render them particularly vulnerable.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of expectations, policies and procedures.

5. Confidentiality

Members of staff will have access to confidential information about pupils. Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil and/or his/her family for their own, or to others' advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other external services). Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate or embarrass the pupil.

Confidential information about a pupil should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any other person other than on a 'need to know' basis. In circumstances where the pupils' identity does not need to be disclosed, the information should remain anonymous.

In some circumstances a member of staff may be expected to share information about a learner, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a duty to pass on information without delay, but only to those with designated child protection responsibilities (The Designated Safeguarding Leads [DSL]).

If a member of staff is in doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential, he/she should seek guidance from a designated senior person. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the Head of School.

This means that all staff should:

- Know what information can be shared and in what circumstances it is appropriate to do so.
- Treat information they receive about pupils in a discreet and confidential manner.
- Seek advice from the Administrative Team if they are in doubt about sharing information they hold which has been requested.
- Know to whom concerns or allegations should be reported.



Staff Code of Conduct 2024/2025

6. Making a Professional Judgment

No guidance can provide a complete definitive list of what is appropriate behaviour for staff in all circumstances. There may be occasions in which staff have to make decisions or act in the best interest of pupils which could contravene this guidance or where no guidance exists. Individuals are expected to make judgments about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the pupils in their charge.

This means that where there is no specific guidance staff should:

- Discuss the circumstances that informed their action or their proposed action with a member of the Administrative Team.

7. Whistle Blowing (also see separate EMC Whistle Blowing Policy)

Whistle Blowing is the practice of reporting on a matter of concern, especially where it relates to the physical, mental or emotional safety of pupils or staff, freely, responsibly and without fear of repercussion.

8. Propriety and Behaviour

All staff in contact with pupils should understand and be aware that safe practice also involves using judgment and integrity about behaviours in places other than the work setting. The behaviour of an adult's partner or other family member may raise similar concerns and require careful consideration as to whether there may be a potential risk to pupils in the workplace.

This means that staff should not:

- Behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with pupils or act as a poor role model.
- Make, or encourage others to make, unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate, or which might be interpreted as such.

9. Dress and Appearance

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, adults should always dress in ways appropriate to their role and this may need to be different to how they dress when not at work. All staff who work with pupils should ensure they are dressed appropriately for the tasks and the work they undertake. Those who dress in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations. This means that staff should wear clothing which:

- Is appropriate to their role.
- Is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative.
- Does not distract, cause embarrassment, or give rise to misunderstanding.
- Does not show political or otherwise contentious slogans.
- Is not considered to be discriminatory and is culturally sensitive.



Staff Code of Conduct 2024/2025

10. The Use of Personal Living Space

No pupil should be in or invited into the home of an adult who works with them. Members of staff with children in school should take care with social events involving their children's friends from the school. It is not appropriate for any employee to expect or request that private living space be used for work with pupils. Neither is it appropriate for the school to expect or request that private living space be used to see pupil for, e.g. discussion of reports, academic reviews, tutorials, pastoral care or counselling. Under no circumstances should pupils assist with chores or tasks in the home of a member of staff who works with them. Neither should they be asked to do so by friends or family of that adult.

This means that staff should:

- Be vigilant in maintaining their privacy and mindful of the need to avoid placing themselves in vulnerable situations.
- Challenge any request for their accommodation to be used as an additional resource for the school.
- Be mindful of the need to maintain professional boundaries.
- Not ask pupils to undertake personal jobs or errands.

11. Gifts, Rewards, Favouritism

The giving of gifts or rewards to pupil should be part of an agreed policy for supporting positive behaviour or recognising achievements. In some situations, the giving of gifts as rewards may be accepted practice for a group of pupils whilst in other situations the giving of a gift to an individual pupil will be part of an agreed plan and discussed with the Leadership Team and the parent/guardian.

There may be specific occasions when staff working with pupils may consider it appropriate to give the pupils a small personal gift of insignificant value. This is only acceptable practice where, in line with the agreed policy, the staff member first discusses the giving of the gift with their Leadership Team and the parent/guardian.

Any gifts should be given openly and not be based on favouritism. Adults need to be aware however, that the giving of gifts can be misinterpreted by others as a gesture either to bribe or groom a pupil.

All staff should exercise particular care when selecting pupils for school teams, productions, educational visits and, or specific tasks in order to avoid perceptions of favouritism or injustice. Similar care should be exercised when pupils are excluded from an activity. Methods of selection and exclusion should always be subject to clear, agreed criteria.

12. Infatuations

Occasionally a pupil may develop an infatuation for a member of staff who works with them. All staff should deal with these situations sensitively and appropriately to maintain the dignity and safety of all concerned. They should remain aware, however, that such infatuations carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and should therefore make every effort to ensure that their own behaviour is above reproach.



Staff Code of Conduct 2024/2025

A member of staff, who becomes aware that a pupil who is developing an infatuation, should discuss this at the earliest opportunity with a Senior Manager. On their advice the appropriate action can be taken to avoid any hurt, distress or embarrassment.

This means that staff should:

- Report and record any incidents or indications (verbal, written or physical) that suggest a pupil may have developed an infatuation with a member of staff.
- Always acknowledge and maintain professional boundaries.

13. Communication with pupils, including the use of technology

In order to make the best use of the many educational and social benefits of new technologies, pupils need opportunities to use and explore the digital world, using multiple devices from multiple locations. It is now recognized that e-safety risks are posed more by behaviours and values than the technology itself. All staff working in this area must therefore ensure they establish safe and responsible online behaviours.

Communications between pupils and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, webcams, websites and blogs.

Staff should not share personal information with a pupil. They should not request, or respond to, any personal information from the pupils, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. Staff should ensure all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.

Staff should be circumspect in their communications with pupils to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming. They should not give their personal contact details to pupils, including e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers.

E-mail or text communications between a member of staff and a pupil outside the agreed policy may lead to disciplinary and, or criminal investigations. This includes communications through internet-based websites.

This means that staff should:

- Ensure that personal social networking sites are set at private and pupils are never listed as contacts.
- Never use or access the social networking sites of pupils.
- Not give personal contact details to pupils, including their mobile telephone number.
- Only contact pupils for professional reasons and in accordance with school policies and procedures.
- Not use the internet or web-based communication channels to send personal messages to a pupil.



Staff Code of Conduct 2024/2025

14. Social Contact

Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. If a parent or pupil seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise his/her professional judgment in making a response. There will be occasions when there are social contacts between staff and pupils, where for example members of staff are part of the same social circle, through their children's friendships. These contacts, however, will be easily recognised and openly acknowledged.

Nevertheless, there must be awareness on the part of those working with pupils that some social contacts, especially where they are not common knowledge can be misconstrued as being part of a grooming process. This can also apply to social contact made through outside interests or through the staff member's own family.

This means that staff should:

- Have no secret social contact with pupils or their parents/guardians.
- Consider the appropriateness of the social contact according to their role and nature of their work.
- Always approve any planned social contact with the pupil or parents/guardians with the Leadership Team.
- Report and record any situation which may place a pupil at risk or which may compromise the school or their own professional standing.
- Be aware that the sending of birthday or faith cards should always be recorded and/or discussed with a Line Manager.
- Understand that some communications may be called into question and need to be justified.

15. Sexual Contact

Any sexual activity between an adult and pupil with whom they work may be regarded as a criminal offence and will always be a matter for disciplinary action, usually instant dismissal. Sexual activity does not simply mean to physical contact. It may also include noncontact activities, such as causing under 18s to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of pornographic material.

Keeping Children Safe In Education September 2020 defines sexual abuse as “forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the individual is aware of what is happening”.

Adults sometimes embark on a course of behaviour known as ‘grooming’ where the sole purpose is to gain the trust of a child, and manipulate that relationship so sexual abuse can take place. All staff must be aware that consistently conferring inappropriate special attention and favour upon a pupil might be construed as being part of a ‘grooming’ process and as such will give rise to concerns about their behaviour.

This means that staff should not:

- Have sexual relationships with pupils.
- Have any form of communication with a pupil which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative i.e. verbal comments, letters, notes, emails, phone calls, texts, physical contact.
- Make sexual remarks to, or about a pupil.
- Discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of pupils.



Staff Code of Conduct 2024/2025

16. Physical Contact

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role.

A 'no touch' approach is impractical for all staff and will in some circumstances be inappropriate. When physical contact is made with pupils this should be in response to their needs and course requirements at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Appropriate physical contact in school may occur depending on the area of activity and may be appropriate for the activity/subject involved i.e. sports training activity.

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact since an action that is appropriate with one learner in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different individual. Staff should therefore use their professional judgment at other times.

Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported as soon as possible to the Leadership Team.

Pupils with special needs may require more physical contact to assist their everyday learning. The arrangements should be understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the individual's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny.

Some pupils may seek inappropriate physical contact. All staff should be particularly aware of this especially when it is known that a pupil has suffered previous abuse or neglect. In the pupil's view, physical contact might be associated with some experiences and lead to some action being misinterpreted. In all circumstances where a pupil initiates inappropriate physical contact, it is the responsibility of the member of staff to sensitively deter the pupil and help them to understand the importance of personal boundaries. Such circumstances must always be reported and discussed with the Leadership Team.

17. Behaviour Management

All pupils have the 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 pupil. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards pupils is not acceptable in any situation. Any sanctions or rewards used should be part of the school's Behaviour Policy.

Corporal punishment in any form is not acceptable.

When a pupil displays difficult or challenging behaviour, adults must follow the Behaviour Policy and use strategies appropriate to the circumstance and situation. The use of physical intervention can only be justified in exceptional circumstances and must be used as a last resort when other behaviour management strategies have failed.

This means that staff should:

- Not use any form of physical punishment.
- Try to diffuse situations before they escalate.



Staff Code of Conduct 2024/2025

- Inform parents/guardians of any behaviour management techniques used.
- Adhere to the school's Behaviour Policy.
- Be mindful of factors which may impact on a pupil's behaviour e.g. bullying, abuse, and where necessary take appropriate action.

18. Educational Visits and After School Activities

Staff should take particular care when supervising pupils on educational visits and outings where the setting is less formal than the usual workplace. Adults remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour always remains professional.

Where out of school activities include overnight stays, careful consideration needs to be given to sleeping arrangements. Pupils, staff and parents/guardians should be informed of these arrangements prior to the start of the visit. In all circumstances, those organising visits and outings must pay careful attention to ensuring safe staff/pupil ratios and to the gender mix of staff especially on overnight stays.

Staff must keep colleagues/employers aware of their whereabouts, especially when involved in activities outside the usual workplace.

This means that staff should:

- Always have another adult present in out of workplace activities unless otherwise agreed with the administrative team.
- Undertake risk assessments in line with the school policy where applicable.
- Have parental consent for the activity.
- Ensure that their behaviour always remains professional.

19. Photography and Videos

Working with pupils may involve the taking or recording of images. Any such work should take place with due regard to the law and the need to safeguard the privacy, dignity, safety and well-being of individuals. Informed consent from parents/guardians and agreement, where possible, from the pupil, should always be sought before an image is taken for any purpose and the guidelines of external awarding body guidelines should be followed in relation to the use of photographic evidence for portfolio work etc.

Careful consideration should be given as to how activities involving the taking of images are organised and undertaken. Care should be taken to ensure that all parties understand the implications of the image being taken especially if it is to be used for any publicity purpose or published in the media or on the internet. There also needs to be an agreement as to whether the images will be destroyed or retained for further use, where these will be stored and who will have access to them.

Adults need to remain sensitive to any pupils who appear uncomfortable, for whatever reason and should recognize the potential for such activities to raise concerns or lead to misunderstandings. Staff must not take photographs of pupils for their personal use.

When using a photograph, the following guidance should be followed:

- If the photograph is used, avoid naming the pupil.
- Establish whether the image will be retained for further use.
- Images should be securely stored and used only by those authorized to do so.



Staff Code of Conduct 2024/2025

This means that staff should:

- Be clear about the purpose of the activity and about what will happen to the images when the activity is concluded.
- Transfer the images to the school professional drive/platforms, and immediately delete them from their personal device.
- Ensure the pupil understands why the images are being taken and has agreed to the activity and that they are appropriately dressed.
- Only use equipment provided or authorised by the school.
- Report any concerns about any inappropriate or intrusive photographs found.

This means that staff should not:

- Display or distribute images of pupils.
- Use images which may cause distress.
- Take images 'in secret' or take images in situations that may be construed as being secretive.

20. Sanctions

All staff members are expected to adhere to the staff code of conduct policy as explicitly outlined in this document.

Firstly, an investigation will be conducted, where necessary to ascertain all the facts surrounding the nature of the breach of the code of conduct. In the event that a staff member breaches any of the protocols outlined, given the seriousness of the situation as determined by the Head of School, the following sanctions will be enforced:

- The staff member will be warned verbally by the Head of School, and the minutes of verbal interactions will be documented in the staff member's file.
- The staff member will be warned via written communication by the Head of School and a copy of the written warning will be added to the staff member's file.
- The staff member will be reassigned to another role or campus.
- The staff member will be suspended with or without pay.
- The staff member will be relieved of their position.