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**Model Code of Conduct for Schools**

**Reviewed June 2021**

**Objective, Scope and Principles**

This Code of Conduct, which applies to all staff and volunteers, is designed to give guidance on the standards of behaviour which should be observed. School staff and volunteers are role models, in a unique position of influence and trust and their behaviour should set a good example to all the pupils within the school.

It does not form part of any employee’s contract of employment. It is merely for guidance and specific breaches of the Code must not be viewed as a disciplinary offence.

The Code includes sections on:

* Setting an Example
* Safeguarding Pupils/ Students
* Relationships and Attitudes
* Private Meetings with Pupils
* Physical Contact with Pupils
* Pupil/ Student Development
* Honesty and Integrity
* Conduct Outside of Work
* E-Safety and Internet Use
* Confidentiality
* Dress and Appearance

1. **Setting an Example**
   1. All staff and volunteers who work in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils/students. Staff and volunteers must therefore for example avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.
   2. All staff and volunteers must, therefore, demonstrate high standards of conduct which can be copied by our pupils/students.
   3. All staff and volunteers must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.
   4. All staff and volunteers are expected to familiarise themselves and comply with all school policies and procedures and to comply with these so as to set a good example to pupils.
   5. This Code helps all staff and volunteers to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable, regard should also be given to the disciplinary rules set out by the employing authority. Staff must always comply with statutory requirements in relation to such issues such as discrimination, health and safety and data protection.
2. **Safeguarding Pupils/Students**
   1. Staff and volunteers have a duty to safeguard pupils/students from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and exploitation.
   2. The duty to safeguard pupils/students includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil/student or colleague to a member of the school’s Safeguarding team (DT/DDT for Child Protection or the Principal).
   3. The school’s DT is Louise English and DDT are Karen Graham/ Olivia Graham. In their absence Mrs McGrath will take on the role of DDT.
   4. Staff and volunteers are provided with personal copies of the school’s Child Protection Policy and Whistleblowing Procedure and staff and volunteers must be familiar with these documents.
3. **Relationships and Attitudes**
   1. All staff and volunteers should treat pupils with respect and dignity and not in a manner which demeans or undermines them, their parents or carers, or colleagues. Staff and volunteers should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age and maturity of their pupils. They should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of pupils, embarrassing or humiliating pupils, discriminating against or favouring pupils. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require thought to ensure that conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Relationships with pupils must be professional at all times and sexual relationships with current pupils are not permitted and may lead to criminal conviction.
   2. Staff and volunteers may have less formal contact with pupils outside of school; perhaps through mutual membership of social groups, sporting organisations, or family connections. Staff and volunteers should not assume that the school would be aware of any such relationship and should therefore complete Appendix 1 ‘Relationships with pupils outside work declaration’.

3.3 Staff and volunteers should always behave in a professional manner, which within the context of this Code of Conduct includes such aspects as:

 acting in a fair, courteous and mature manner to pupils, colleagues and other stakeholders;

 co-operating and liaising with colleagues, as appropriate, to ensure pupils receive a coherent and comprehensive educational service;

 respect for school property;

 taking responsibility for the behaviour and conduct of pupils in the classroom and sharing such responsibility elsewhere on the premises;

 being familiar with communication channels and school procedures applicable to both pupils and staff and volunteers;

 respect for the rights and opinions of others.

1. **Private Meetings with Pupils**

4.1 It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews with individual pupils must take place. As far as possible, staff and volunteers should conduct interviews in a room with visual access or with an open door and ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place.

* 1. Where possible, another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview.

1. **Physical Contact with Pupils**
   1. To avoid misinterpretations, and so far as is practicable, staff and volunteers are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with a pupil.

5.2 Staff and volunteers should therefore be cognisant of the guidance issued by the Department on the use of reasonable force (Circular 1999/09 and guidance document ‘Towards a Model Policy in Schools on Use of Reasonable Force).

1. **Pupil/Student Development**
   1. Staff must comply with school policies and procedures that support the well-being and development of pupils/students.
   2. Staff must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of pupils/students.
   3. Staff must follow reasonable instructions that support the development of pupils/students.
2. **Honesty and Integrity**
   1. Staff and volunteers 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 Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school (eg a supplier of materials) must be declared to the Principal. A record should be kept of all such gifts received. This requirement does not apply to “one off” token gifts from pupils or parents, e.g. at Christmas or the end of the school year. Staff and volunteers should be mindful that gifts to individual pupils may be considered inappropriate and could be misinterpreted.

1. **Conduct outside of Work**
   1. Staff and volunteers must not engage in conduct outside work which could damage the reputation and standing of the school or the employee’s/volunteer’s own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.
   2. Staff and volunteers 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.
2. **E-Safety and Internet Use**

9.1 A staff member or volunteer’s off duty hours are their personal concern but all staff and volunteers should exercise caution when using information technology and be fully aware of the risks to themselves and others. For school-based activities, advice is contained in the school’s E-Safety and ICT Acceptable Use Policy.

9.2 Staff and volunteers should exercise particular caution in relation to making online associations/friendships with current pupils via social media and using texting/email facilities to communicate with them. Contact with students should only made via the use of school email accounts or telephone equipment when appropriate.

9.3 It is preferable that any contact with pupils is made via the use of school email accounts or telephone equipment when necessary. If using personal devices, staff and volunteers should take care their privacy setting are set appropriately.

9.4 **For your own protection and as part of your professional responsibility we advise that:**

* Ensure all electronic communication with students, parents, carers, staff and others is compatible with your professional role and in line with school policies.
* Do not talk about your professional role in any capacity when using social media such as Facebook and You Tube.
* Do not put online any text, image, sound or video that could upset or offend any member of the whole school community or be incompatible with your professional role.
* Use school ICT systems and resources for all school business. This includes your school email address, school mobile phone and school video camera.
* Do not disclose any passwords and ensure that personal data is kept secure and used appropriately.
* Only take images of students and/or staff for professional purposes, in accordance with school policy and with the knowledge of the Principal.
* Do not browse, download, upload or distribute any material that could be considered offensive, illegal or discriminatory.
* Ensure that your online activity, both in school and outside school, will not bring the school or professional role into disrepute.
* Staff emails should be checked daily, as a minimum on working days or every other day if one day is particularly busy.
* You have a duty to report any E safety incident which may impact on you, your professionalism or the school.

1. **Confidentiality**

10.1 Staff and volunteers may have access to confidential information about pupils including highly sensitive or private information. It should not be shared with any person other than on a need to know basis. In circumstances where the pupil’s identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.

10.2 There are some circumstances in which a member of staff or volunteer may be expected to share information about a pupil, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals should pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated child protection responsibilities.

10.3 If a member of staff or volunteer is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from a senior member of staff. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the Principal.

10.4Staff and volunteers need to be aware that although it is important to listen to and support pupils, they must not promise confidentiality or request pupils to do the same under any circumstances. Additionally, concerns and allegations about adults should be treated as confidential and passed to the Principal or a member of the safeguarding team without delay.

1. **Dress and Appearance**
   1. All staff must dress in a manner that is appropriate to a professional role and promoting a professional image.
   2. Staff should dress in a manner that is absent from political or other contentious slogans.
2. **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.

**Appendix 1**

**Relationships with students outside of work declaration**

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby employees of the school are known to students outside of work. Examples include membership of sports clubs, family connections, or private tutoring.

Staff must declare any relationship outside of school that they may have with students.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Employee Name** | ***Student Name*** | **Relationship** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

I can confirm that I am fully aware of the code of conduct relating to contact out of school with students in line with this policy.

If I am tutoring a student outside of school I am aware that the following must be adhered to:-

* I do not, at any point, teach the child in question as part of my daily timetable - this is a stipulation of such tutoring
* I emphasise to parents that this is done completely independently of the school
* No monies come through the school at any point, informally (e.g. via the child) or formally
* No private tutoring is to take place on the school premises

I confirm that if these circumstances change at any time I will complete a new form to ensure the school are aware of any relationships.

Signed ………………………………………….. Date ………………………………

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

**Appendix 2**

**Confirmation of compliance**

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with the school’s code of conduct.

Name …………………………………………..

Position/Post Held…………………………….

Signed ………………………………………….. Date ………………………………

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