



Code of Conduct

September 2022

This guidance is not exhaustive and is designed to set out principles rather than give detailed and specific advice. Clearly, the circumstances in which staff work vary (eg. working with very young children, boarding staff, sports staff, etc.); this guidance is meant to give general principles only. Indeed, for staff working with very young children in the EYFS or KS1, it is expected that they will have necessary physical contact and display affection to properly fulfil their role to nurture, support and care for those children.

All adults working within schools relate to students during the course of their duties; the general principles apply equally to all who are involved in the school:

1. The relationship between staff and students is a professional one. It is fully expected that staff in the school have a friendly and caring relationship with students; nevertheless, the basis of that relationship is professional not personal. A good test to apply is to reflect on whether the child's parents would be happy with the relationship if they were standing with you.
2. A personal relationship between staff and a student is inappropriate. Circumstances in which such a personal relationship may arise might be when your own children are friends with those in the school or when you have a personal relationship with parents of children in the school. It is not appropriate for a member of staff to meet with a student out of school hours or off school premises except with the prior knowledge and consent of parents and a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
3. Unnecessary physical contact with students must be avoided. In some circumstances, physical contact between a member of staff and a student is necessary and beneficial; it might be, for example, that a Reception teacher might need to pick up a 5 year old who has fallen over in the playground, a sports coach may need to demonstrate to a student how to hold a racket or a music teacher may show a pupil how to hold an instrument in a particular way. In rare circumstances it may be appropriate for members of staff to use reasonable restraint in circumstances where a student is behaving in a manner which endangers him or herself or other people. In these situations, staff are advised to be very sensitive to the student's likely reaction and to watch out for signs that the student is apprehensive or uncomfortable. Everyone has their own sense of personal space that needs to be protected. Any incident involving physical intervention must be in line with the Schools Policy on the Restraint of Students.
4. Over-familiar words and actions, displays of affection, discussion of one's personal life or the personal life of the student are almost always inappropriate. Sexual innuendo is wrong in all circumstances. Staff must avoid actions, words or expressions that could be interpreted as suggesting that they have an emotional relationship with any student.



In the professional staff-student relationship it is not appropriate to single a student out for favours or to suggest to a student that they are a special friend.

5. Please see 'Anti-Corruption & Bribery Policy' regarding the procedure for receiving gifts from pupils or parents.
6. Occasionally it is necessary for professional academic reasons for staff to communicate with students out of school. Except in an emergency, personal email addresses, home or mobile phone numbers must not be given, asked for, or used. For educational visits; where possible, one of the School's mobile phones should be used as the primary contact device. Pastoral matters should not be dealt with by personal email or using personal phone contacts. Only in the most exceptional circumstances, for instance, where there is well- founded concern over the unexplained whereabouts of a student, should pastoral matters be dealt with by personal email or using personal phone contact. In any event, records of all contacts must be kept on the student file so that if it is necessary to use email or personal contact, the reason why will be specified in the written record. It is very difficult to envisage circumstances under which individual texting is appropriate except through official school channels.
7. It is not normally appropriate for students to visit a member of staff in their own home. Such a visit might be more likely within a boarding context where staff live on site and so might invite a group of students- say, a tutorial group - to their house for a meeting or for a celebration. Where such a visit does take place it must be with the full knowledge and consent of the SLT and parents or guardians. More than one adult should be present on such an occasion.
8. With older students, where a gathering is held as part of a celebration, it is generally advisable if that is held on school premises. It is essential that professional criteria (eg. all the students in a particular teaching or tutorial group) rather than personal criteria (e.g. selected students only) are used for inviting students, that the event is held openly, and that senior colleagues are aware of it. Staff on such an occasion have a particular duty to ensure that the supply and consumption of alcohol are appropriate and responsible and fall within the law and the school's guidelines on alcohol. As a rule, staff should not consume alcohol whilst in the company of children. This includes educational visits and celebratory functions. There will be occasional situations where alcohol can be served at a meal and in these instances should be approved by the Head in advance.
9. Wherever possible when working with students, other people (adults, colleagues or students) should be present or the door should be open. All members of staff who in the course of their professional duties need to work on a one-to-one basis with a student (eg. a piano lesson, a maths tutorial, etc), must take care to ensure that the circumstances of the meeting or lesson are always entirely professional. Staff are advised to use a room which has vision panels in the door or keep the door open and ensure that colleagues know that the meeting or lesson is taking place. It is helpful if the meeting or lesson can be arranged during normal school hours or immediately before or after school when there are plenty of other people about.
10. Only in an emergency or in exceptional circumstances can members of staff drive students in their own vehicles. Full details can be found on the School's Vehicle Policy.



11. Staff must avoid threatening words, raised voices and any aggressive contact such as holding, pushing, pulling or hitting, which could amount to or which could be interpreted as a criminal assault.
12. Members of staff do have the right to use reasonable physical force to restrain students. Full details can be found on the School's Policy on the Restraint of Pupils.
13. Social networking sites used for personal use, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other social media, pose risks for all staff in terms of professional integrity and the welfare of students.
 - 13.1 Staff must not use these sites to contact or communicate with students or students who have recently left. Ex-students under the age of 18 or who are still in full time education, should not be communicated with via social media. Employees wishing to befriend students who are over 18 and who have left school should do so with extreme caution and with the knowledge that any content posted on either the ex- students or their own social network, may not only compromise their own position but that of any colleagues with whom they are also friends and who may not want their content to be seen by any ex- student. Unfortunately some students post information on their social networking sites which is inappropriate in language or visuals. To view such pages may alter your judgement of students, to be known to be viewing them may alter a student's view of you, and to comment to students about what you have seen is likely to have an impact on your professional reputation as well as possibly causing distress to students concerned.
 - 13.2 Caution should also be taken when staff become friends with parents of children at the school, or staff with children at the school, when posting or commenting on posts within social media and ensure that they do not put themselves at risk of any accusations or bring their school into disrepute.
 - 13.3 Should you become aware of material about yourself, the school, a student, a colleague or the Group, which is inappropriate, the SLT must be informed and they will instruct a member of staff to check the allegations and inform the appropriate authorities.
14. Social networking sites used for professional use, such as LinkedIN, Twitter, YouTube, and other social media, pose risks for all staff in terms of professional integrity and the welfare of pupils.
 - 14.1 Before using social media for professional purposes, or as part of their teaching, staff should seek guidance and training on the risks associated with using social media.
 - 14.2 Staff should not follow students' personal twitter feeds even though it is likely that students will be following them. It may be appropriate to follow students if done as part of an educational activity but this should be properly risk assessed and not using students' personal accounts.
 - 14.3 Staff are advised not to accept connection requests on sites such as LinkedIN from students. Accepting requests from ex-pupils post 18 should be used with care and thought given to how much information is visible to connections – phone numbers, email addresses, etc.



- 14.4 All content posted will be linked to you and your employer. Should you become aware of material about yourself, the school, a pupil, a colleague or the Group, which is inappropriate, the SLT must be informed and they will instruct a member of staff to check the allegations and inform the appropriate authorities. You must not check it out yourself.
15. If you are at all concerned about anything which has occurred or which has made you uncomfortable, you must discuss the matter with a senior colleague at the earliest opportunity even if it turns out that nothing untoward has happened. You must make a written record, dated and signed, of any such incident.
16. Where any allegation of abuse is made against a teacher, other member of staff or volunteer, the School is committed to dealing with the allegation fairly, quickly and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.
17. Staff will also find information relevant to staff-student relationships in the policies and procedures which they should make themselves familiar with and cover the following:
 - 17.1 Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
 - 17.2 Behaviour Policy
 - 17.3 IT Acceptable Use Policy
 - 17.4 Whistleblowing Policy
 - 17.5 Policy on the Restraint of Pupils
 - 17.6 Vehicle Policy

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