

Staff Code of Conduct Policy

Staff Code of Conduct Policy

THIS POLICY REFERS TO ALL STAFF INCLUDING THOSE IN EYFS

TO BE READ ALONGSIDE THE CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AT NHS POLICY

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Key Principles

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- Staff should understand their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of students
- 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 acknowledge that deliberately invented/malicious allegations are extremely rare and that all concerns should be reported and recorded
- Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from their line manager if they have acted in a way which may give rise to concern
- Staff should apply the same professional standards regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and sexual orientation (please also refer to the School Equal Opportunities Policy)
- Staff should not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or any substance, including prescribed medication, which may affect their ability to care for children (please also refer to the School Off-Site Visits Policy on residential trips)
- Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in disciplinary action being taken against them, criminal action and/or other proceedings including barring by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) from working in regulated activity, or for acts of serious misconduct prohibition from teaching by the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA)
- Staff and managers should continually monitor and review practice to ensure this guidance is followed
- Staff should be aware of and understand their establishment's child protection policy, arrangements for managing allegations against staff, staff behaviour policy, whistle blowing procedure and the procedures of the relevant Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSP)
- Staff should be aware of and consider their personal Social Media profile and activity and ensure they maintain professional standards at all times.

Aims of this document:

- This policy aims to provide clear guidance about conduct, behaviour and actions so as not to place students or staff at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a student.
- To remind staff of professional boundaries both in their professional and personal life given their unique position of trust
- To remind staff of the location of key policy documentation
- To draw attention to areas of risk and offer guidance on prudent conduct
- To help protect staff from allegations

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This guidance does not provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for staff. It does highlight, however, behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable. There will be occasions when staff have to make decisions in the best interests of children and young people where no guidance exists.

Responsibilities:

- Staff are accountable for the way in which they:
 - exercise authority;
 - manage risk;
 - use resources;
 - and safeguard children.
- All staff have a responsibility to keep students safe and to protect them from abuse (sexual, physical and emotional), neglect and contextual safeguarding concerns. Students have a right to be safe and to be treated with respect and dignity. It follows that trusted adults are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure their safety and well-being. Failure to do so may be regarded as professional misconduct.
- School has duties towards its employees and 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 child's best interests
 - avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions
 - take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour
- School should:
 - promote a culture of openness and support
 - ensure that systems are in place for concerns to be raised
 - ensure that adults are not placed in situations which render them particularly vulnerable
 - ensure that all adults are aware of expectations, policies and procedures.

Making Professional Judgements and Boundaries

This guidance cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for staff. It does highlight however, behaviour which is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable. There will be rare occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or take action in the best interest of a student which could contravene this guidance or where no guidance exists. Individuals are expected to make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the students in their charge and, in so doing, will be seen to be acting reasonably. These judgements must always be recorded and shared with a manager.

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Staff should always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably. This means that where no specific guidance exists staff should:

- discuss the circumstances that informed their action, or their proposed action, with their line manager or, where appropriate, the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead. This will help to ensure that the safest practices are employed and reduce the risk of actions being misinterpreted
- always discuss any misunderstanding, accidents or threats with the Headmaster or designated safeguarding lead
- always record discussions and actions taken with their justifications

Staff working in School are in a position of trust in relation to all students. Staff should not:

- use their position to gain access to information for their own advantage and/or a student's or family's detriment
- use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine students
- use their status and standing to form or promote relationships with students or any other child(ren) which are of a sexual nature, or which may become so.
- have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where the staff member is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if, in the case of those over 16, the relationship is consensual.

Staff working in one-to-one situations with children and young people are more vulnerable to allegations. Teachers and others should recognise this possibility and plan and conduct meetings accordingly. Treat all students with respect and try, as far as possible, not to be alone with a child or young person. Where this is not possible, for example, in an instrumental music lesson, or sports coaching lesson, it is good practice to ensure that others are within earshot or have the door to the room open. Where possible, a gap or barrier should be maintained between teacher and child at all times. Any physical contact should be the minimum required for care, instruction or restraint.

When there is a need for an adult to be present when children are changing, such as in the Infant Department, staff should ensure that they are not alone with the children and that another member of staff is present or that the door is left ajar or has a vision panel. If it is necessary to change a child who has soiled themselves, staff must again ensure that another member of staff is present or that doors are left ajar while modesty is preserved. Staff members must ensure that they have informed a colleague before they supervise changing a child who has soiled.

Staff must ensure the language they use in any School context is appropriate and any conversations with any parents, students or colleagues must be within professional appropriate boundaries.

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Infatuations and ‘crushes’

All staff need to recognise that it is not uncommon for students to be strongly attracted to a member of staff and/or develop a ‘crush’ or infatuation. They should make every effort to ensure that their own behaviour cannot be brought into question, does not appear to encourage this and be aware that such infatuations may carry a risk of their words or actions being misinterpreted. Any member of staff who receives a report, overhears something, or otherwise notices any sign, however small or seemingly insignificant, that a young person has become or may be becoming infatuated with either themselves or a colleague, should immediately report this to the Headmaster.

This means that staff should:

- report any indications (verbal, written or physical) that suggest a student may be infatuated with a member of staff
- always maintain professional boundaries

Contact outside of the workplace

It is acknowledged that staff may have genuine friendships and social contact with parents of students, independent of the professional relationship. Transparency is key to ensuring school manages staff/student/parent relationships professionally.

Whilst employed at school staff should:

- advise senior management of any regular social contact they have with a student which could give rise to concern
- refrain from sending personal communication to students unless agreed with senior managers
- inform Senior Management of any relationship with a parent where this extends beyond the usual parent/professional relationship
- inform Senior Management of any requests or arrangements where parents wish to use their services outside of the workplace e.g. music lessons, babysitting, tutoring.

Confidentiality

The storing and processing of personal information is governed by the General Data Protection Regulations 2017 (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018. Staff should be aware of and adhere to the school Data Protection Policy and the Retention Policy.

Staff will have access to special category personal data about students and their families which must be kept confidential at all times and only shared when legally permissible and in the interest of the child. Records should only be shared with those who have a legitimate professional need to see them. Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a student or her/his family for their own, or others advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other organisations).

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Confidential information should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need-to-know basis. Staff therefore:-

- need to know the name of their Designated Safeguarding Lead and be familiar with child protection procedures and guidance.
- are expected to treat information they receive about students and families in a discreet and confidential manner
- should seek advice from a senior member of staff, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, if they are in any doubt about sharing information they hold or which has been requested of them need to be clear about when information can/ must be shared and in what circumstances
- need to know the procedures for responding to allegations against staff and to whom any concerns or allegations should be reported
- need to ensure that where personal information is recorded electronically that systems and devices are kept secure.

Communications with Students including use of social media

The School has been developing systems such as Google Classroom to facilitate communications about matters such as homework, access to remote learning and recognising that students need opportunities to use and explore the digital world.

Online risks are posed more by behaviours and values than the technology itself. Staff should ensure that they establish safe and responsible online behaviours both in their professional and personal life, working to local and national guidelines and school acceptable use policies.

Communication with children both in the 'real' world and through web based and telecommunication interactions should take place within explicit professional boundaries. This includes the use of computers, tablets, phones, texts, e-mails, instant messages, social media such as Facebook and Twitter, chat-rooms, forums, blogs, websites, gaming sites, digital cameras, videos, web-cams and other hand-held devices. (This list gives examples only and is not exhaustive.)

Staff should:-

- not seek to communicate/make contact or respond to contact with students outside of the purposes of their work
- not give out their personal details
- only use internet-enabled personal devices in line with the School acceptable use policies (Internet and Email Policy) when working in the School context
- ensure that their use of all types of technologies and social media platforms could not bring the School into disrepute
- not discuss or share data relating to children/ parents / carers in staff social media groups.

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If staff need to speak to a student by telephone, they are advised to use one of the School's telephones. The Group Leader on all trips and visits involving an overnight stay should take a school mobile phone with him/her, and may ask the students for their mobile numbers before allowing them out in small, unsupervised groups. The School mobile should be used for any contact with pupils that may be necessary. The Group leader should delete any record of students' mobile phone numbers at the end of the trip or visit. Other Staff may borrow a school phone from IT Services at other times, if the need arises.

Staff can

- Take photos on any school device of our students
- Store the photos on the school network
- Use the photos for school promotions
- Take photos on their own device but must then delete them from the personal device and the cloud once used

Staff cannot

- Keep photos unnecessarily on personal tablets or mobile phones
- Download photos to personal computers or devices at home
- Store any photos of our students that have been obtained from elsewhere on personal computers, eg Twitter
- Name students by surname or forename on any social media platform, not both

By following the above procedures, staff minimise their risk of being exposed to inappropriate images as contact is kept within professional boundaries.

Staff working in the EYFS setting must ensure they adhere to sector specific guidance in respect of the use of mobile phones and digital resources.

Standards of Behaviour

All staff have a responsibility to maintain the confidence of our parents and carers in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children. There may be times where an individual's actions in their personal life come under scrutiny from the community, the media or public authorities, including with regard to their own children, or children or adults in the community. Staff should be aware that their behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, could compromise their position within school in relation to the protection of children, loss of trust and confidence, or bringing the school into disrepute. Such behaviour may also result in prohibition from teaching by the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) a bar from engaging in regulated activity, or action by another relevant regulatory body.

Schools are prohibited from employing a disqualified person in respect of relevant early or later years childcare. This means that staff should not:

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- behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or to act as an appropriate role model
- make, or encourage others to make sexual remarks to, or about, a student or any other child
- use inappropriate language to or in the presence of student
- discuss their personal or sexual relationships with or in the presence of students
- make (or encourage others to make) unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean, discriminate or humiliate, or might be interpreted as such.

This means that staff should:

- inform the Headmaster or Director of Finance and Operations of any cautions, convictions, or relevant orders accrued during their employment, and / or if they are charged with a criminal offence
- be aware that behaviour by themselves, those with whom they have a relationship or association, or others in their personal lives, may impact on their work with children.

Unless otherwise notified in your Contract or Statements of Particulars of Employment, personal mobile telephones must be switched to silent at all times during normal working hours. Personal calls and text messages should be made during normal break times or free periods only, and phone calls should not be made or taken during lessons or normal work time except in an emergency.

Dress and Appearance

Members of staff act as role models to the students and, when at work during time-time, should therefore be dressed in clothing that is appropriate for their role in a formal business environment or that which would be worn at a professional job interview. During school holidays smart casual clothing may be worn unless a uniform is required for your duties.

The School dress code applies on all days when teaching or that parents and students are in school during term-time. On INSET days if working directly with students the term-time guidance applies.

Given that we are working in a school setting we expect the same standards of modesty and smartness for staff as we would expect from our students. As examples of this, we expect that male staff will keep the top buttons of their shirts done up in any situation where students are present. Similarly, skirts and dresses should be of an appropriate length (covering at least the top half of the thigh when seated).

Smart casual clothing may only be worn in school holiday times.

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Staff Participating in Sport

PE and Games Staff are expected to wear the relevant NHS staff kit provided for practical activities.

Shorts and leggings are not appropriate for classroom teaching, assemblies or pastoral time. They may be worn in the Sports hall, swimming hall and at any outdoor sports venue.

All PE staff are expected to wear business dress for formal occasions, assemblies (unless teaching period 1 when a tracksuit should be worn), including the beginning and end of term, parent meetings and concerts etc.

Teaching staff taking games should change wherever practical immediately prior to their games session – where this is not practical they may wear the relevant NHS kit, to include a tracksuit.

School Trips, Non-Uniform Days & INSET Days

For school trips, non-uniform days and INSET days appropriate casual clothing may be worn as long as it is suitable for wearing in a school environment in terms of modesty.

Exceptions

There may be instances where injury precludes the wearing of, for example, appropriate footwear. In these cases, staff should liaise with the Deputy Head Individuals (Senior School) or the Deputy Head Pastoral (Infant and Junior School), who have responsibility for staff welfare, to discuss the appropriate adjustments to the dress code depending on the specific circumstances.

Some support staff will have uniform or appropriate PPE for their role and will be required to wear clothing issued to them.

Ultimate responsibility for the interpretation of the dress code lies with the Head.

Gifts and Rewards

Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. There are occasions when students or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff e.g. at Christmas or as a thank-you and this is usually acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value. Similarly, it is inadvisable to give such personal gifts to students or their families.

Staff should:

- be aware of and understand the School's behaviour policies for students
- ensure that gifts received or given in situations which may be misconstrued are declared and recorded

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- where giving gifts other than as above, ensure that these are of insignificant value and given to all students equally
- ensure that all selection processes of students are fair and these are undertaken and agreed by more than one member of staff
- ensure that they do not behave in a manner which is either favourable or unfavourable to individual students
- Staff should exercise care when selecting children for specific activities, jobs or privileges in order to avoid perceptions of favouritism or injustice. Similar care should be exercised when students are excluded from an activity. Methods of selection and exclusion should always be subject to clear, fair, agreed criteria.

Physical Contact and Restraint

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with children, however, it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role and in relation to the student's individual needs. Not all children feel comfortable about certain types of physical contact; this should be recognised and, wherever possible, adults should seek the student's permission before initiating contact and be sensitive to any signs that they may be uncomfortable or embarrassed.

This means that staff should:

- be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the student, an observer or any person to whom this action is described
- never touch a student in a way which may be considered indecent
- always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny
- never indulge in horseplay or fun fights
- always allow/encourage student, where able, to undertake self-care tasks independently
- ensure the way they offer comfort to a distressed student is age appropriate
- always tell a colleague when and how they offered comfort to a distressed student
- establish the preferences of students
- consider alternatives, where it is anticipated that a student might misinterpret or be uncomfortable with physical contact
- always explain to the student the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take
- report and record situations which may give rise to concern to a senior manager
- be aware of cultural or religious views about touching and be sensitive to issues of gender

Any physical restraint is only permissible when a child is in imminent danger of

(a) committing any offence,

(b) causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the student), or

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(c) engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the School or among any of its students, whether that behaviour occurs during a teaching session or otherwise. Physical restraint is only to be used a last resort, when all efforts to diffuse the situation have failed. Another member of staff should, if possible, be present to act as a witness. All incidents of the use of physical restraint should be recorded in writing and reported immediately to the DSL or Headmaster, who will decide what to do next.

In addition, staff must not use Corporal Punishment at all at Nottingham High School.

Alcohol and Medication

All Staff (Including those in an EYFS setting) must not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance which may affect their ability to care for children. If staff are taking medication which may affect their ability to care for children, those staff should seek medical advice and ensure Operations/HR are aware of any medical advice in respect of suitability to work. Individual risk assessments may be necessary depending on the role of the individual.

The Head of the Infant and Junior School will ensure that those practitioners only work directly with children if medical advice confirms that the medication is unlikely to impair that staff member's ability to look after children properly. Staff medication on the Lovell House premises must be securely stored, and out of reach of children, at all times.

Transporting Students

Wherever possible and practicable it is advisable that transport is undertaken other than in private vehicles. Individual Staff should avoid taking one student on his/her own in a car. Staff should ensure their behaviour is safe, students are suitably supervised and the transport arrangements and vehicle meet all legal requirements including with regard to appropriate insurances.

Troubled Students

In general, students should be encouraged to discuss issues that are troubling them with a parent or guardian. It may be appropriate to suggest that a student talks to their Tutor, the School Counsellor or Nurse. Staff are advised not to back away if it is clear that a student wishes to speak to them – it may have taken a lot of courage for them to take the initiative, but staff must follow the guidelines below ('If a student reports abuse').

NSPCC – 0800 800 5000 www.nspcc.org.uk

ChildLine – 0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk

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Safeguarding

Please refer to the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which can be found on the School website.

Whistleblowing

Please refer to the School's Whistleblowing Policy in the Employee Handbook, found on SharePoint.

Other Relevant Policies

- *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies can be found on the School website [here](#).*
- *Key Government Statutory and Non-Statutory Guidance can be found [here](#): Keeping Children Safe in Education, Jan 2021*
- *Academic Staff Handbook [here](#)*
- *Whistleblowing Procedure [here](#)*
- *Internet and Email Policy for Staff [here](#) (All staff sign this prior to starting work with school)*
- *Equal Opportunities Policy [here](#)*