



Staff Behaviour (Code of Conduct) Policy

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Section 1: Introduction

By virtue of their employment in education, all staff are legally considered to be in a *relationship of trust* with pupils, and care must therefore be taken to ensure that there is no *abuse of trust* as set out in law. The relationship between staff and pupils of St Christopher's The Hall is a professional one; it is not a personal relationship.

Safeguarding of our pupils is the responsibility of all staff, as well as ensuring that the pupils, and staff can work in an environment that respects and values differences and diversity.

Discrimination, bullying and harassment are not tolerated in the School and will be addressed as a serious matter.

Our Staff Behaviour (Code of Conduct) Policy includes advice on staff/pupil relationships and communications including the use of social media and with reference to statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education. This policy is also referenced in the E-Safety Policy.

Staff are expected to behave both inside and outside school at all times in a manner that will not bring the School into disrepute, including on social media.

The whole policy should be read in reference to the [Teacher Standards](#):

Aims

To establish expectations of standards that all staff must maintain when carrying out school business or representing the School in any circumstance.

To clarify the professional responsibility of all staff, teaching and non-teaching

To protect children The definition of a child under the *Children Act 1989* is a young person under the age of 18. This policy is thus linked to the School's Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy.

To protect staff against false or exaggerated claims or accusations by pupils. These may be malicious or mistaken, i.e. made in good faith by a pupil who has misinterpreted words or actions. For the protection of staff, the definition of a pupil for this policy is a young person of any age, up to 31st August of the academic year in which he or she is enrolled at the School. It also includes pupils up to the age of 18 enrolled in any other primary or secondary educational establishment at home or abroad who were at St Christopher's The Hall

To comply with all relevant legislation, in particular that dealing with the protection of children, including the *Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000* which created a new offence of abuse of trust.

To comply with all relevant guidelines on best practice issued by the DfES, the Home Office or others.

To ensure staff understand that safeguarding children from all risk of harm is an important part of a school's work and protecting them from extremism is one aspect of that.

Principles

The basic assumption in this policy and guidelines is that staff act professionally at all times, with each other, the pupils and the parents, and are trusted by the School and by parents.

All interactions between staff, pupils and parents are carried out in a professional manner and in a professional context. All staff and members of the school community have a right to their privacy.

Confidentiality is important for the smooth functioning of the school and preserving relationships of mutual trust.

Conversations with parents should always be strictly professional, other pupils or parents should not be discussed, nor should information private to the School be disclosed. Further information regarding privacy rights can be found in the school's privacy notices.

A personal relationship between staff and a pupil which includes any sexual activity, whether same or other sex, constitutes **gross misconduct**. It is also a criminal offence under the *Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000* for a person aged 18 or over who is in a position of trust in relation to another person under that age to engage in sexual activity with that person. Any such activity could thus result in summary dismissal under the school disciplinary procedures, and imprisonment and unlimited fine under the law.

The policy and guidelines apply in relation to all pupils, in all circumstances, and at all times including school holidays.

Section 2: Standards of Personal Behaviour

2.1 Equal Opportunity

The School seeks to promote inclusivity and values diversity. It also seeks to ensure that the work environment for its employees is supportive, and one where individual respect is shown to all. All members of staff and pupils, regardless of their gender, race, ethnic background, culture, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, age, religion, socio-economic status or any other factor will be supported and encouraged to perform to their potential.

2.2 Harassment and Bullying

To secure an environment in which pupils and members of staff are able to flourish and to achieve their full potential, the School is committed to ensuring that everyone is able to work and to participate in the life of the School without fear of harassment, bullying or intimidation. Everyone in the School has a part to play by ensuring that their own behaviour, whether intentional or unintentional, does not constitute harassment. The School will act against inappropriate behaviour that shows lack of respect for others or which leads people to feel threatened.

2.3 Health and Safety

The School places a high priority on providing a safe working and learning environment and will act positively to minimise the incidence of all workplace risks as required by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and other associated legislation. All activities should be carried out with the highest regard for the health and safety of employees, students, visitors and the public. Our aim is excellence in health and safety, by means of continuous improvement of standards, and the comprehensive use of risk assessments so as to systematically remove the causes of accidents/incidents and ill-health. This, together with more specific aims and objectives, reflects the School's commitment to promote employee wellbeing. See the Health and Safety Statement of Intent for further information.

2.4 Security

In the interests of security, employees must have their security pass as a means of identification whilst in school and produce it on request. The School reserves the right to search the outer clothing, bags, lockers etc. of staff members whilst on site. The staff member may have a colleague in attendance on such (rare) occasions.

2.5 Relationships with other members of staff and other clients and customers of the School

The School does not concern itself with the private lives of its staff unless they affect its effective operation or its reputation.

Members of staff who are relatives or who have a close personal relationship should not normally have a supervisory, assessing or authorising relationship with each other.

Employees must inform their line manager if they have a close personal relationship with another employee or the 'client or customer of the School' that could be considered by colleagues, pupils or others, as impacting on the way they conduct themselves at work.

All staff, irrespective of job role, should be polite, helpful and professional towards each other. They should seek to be considerate and courteous at all times, even on occasions when there may be differences of opinion or challenge.

Staff are expected to be professional with all staff members. We expect everyone to treat each other with respect, kindness, and always strive to be supportive of their ideas and actions. This includes sharing of professional good practice and encouragement of others' development in a non judgemental manner. We do not tolerate any forms of harassment, bullying or intimidation between members of staff.

These might include:

- spreading malicious rumours
- unfair treatment
- picking on or regularly undermining someone
- denying someone's training or promotion opportunities

2.5.1 Staff communication with parents

Best ways to avoid misunderstandings

- Communicate after emotions have settled. However, communicate in a timely manner.
- Restate what the parent says, rather than making assumptions.
- Begin every interaction with a positive compliment about the student. Then, follow up with your "areas of concern."
- Do not diagnose a child, unless you are medically qualified to do so.
- Always state facts. Differentiate between your feelings, opinions, and facts.
- Every criticism does not warrant a response.
- If you are respond by email, make sure a member of SLT has checked it, especially for longer emails which are responding to a parent issue

Explain how to keep in touch with parents

- Document all contacts and/or attempt to contact parents - anything important should be logged on CPOMS.
- Respond to parent communication within 24-48 hrs.
- Do not always make yourself readily available to parents, outside of school hours.

Don't feel pressured to make important decisions

- Do not force your opinions on parents.
- Allow parents to make decisions and provide support, as needed.

Let parents know they can trust you

- Build professional and trustworthy relationships with parents.
- Reassure parents that you can be trusted.
- Draw the line between teacher-parent relationships and inappropriate social relationships.

Assure parents you will let them know concerns immediately

2.6 Performance

The School expects individuals to follow all reasonable rules and instructions given by those supervising or managing their activities and/or work areas.

2.7 Attendance, Sickness and Timekeeping

Should a staff member need to be absent for any reason, he/she should email the Head officially and request this time off. This will be given at the Head's discretion and may be unpaid leave. The email should be sent as far in advance as possible.

Regarding sickness, all employees should be aware of the procedures for reporting sickness and other absences. For the management of sickness absence and incapability due to ill health - see Sickness and Absence Policy.

2.8 Use of Language

Staff must ensure that they use appropriate language at all times. Staff must:

- not use words or expressions that have any unnecessary sexual content or innuendo;
- not use language that could be considered racist, sexist or homophobic;
- not use language that promotes extreme political ideas or that promotes any form of radicalisation;
- avoid any words or actions that are over-familiar;
- not swear, blaspheme or use any sort of offensive language in front of pupils; and
- understand that the use of sarcasm or derogatory words should be avoided when punishing or disciplining pupils and unprofessional comments about anyone must also be avoided;

2.9 Smoking

The School is a non-smoking site and staff must observe the School's views on smoking, including e-cigarettes.

2.10 Misuse of drugs and alcohol

Staff must not drink alcohol during the normal school working day.

Drinking alcohol if pupils or parents are present, is only acceptable during formal, supervised and approved occasions, such as St Christopher's Association Events, or specific Staff events or other such social events where the Head has designated as so. The consumption of alcohol on residential trips is permitted only in moderation but at least one member of staff must not drink any alcohol in case of emergency. Drivers must not consume alcohol under any circumstances.

It is a disciplinary offence to be on the School premises and/or carrying out official duties when under the influence of alcohol/substance and non-medically prescribed drugs. The School may decide to test employees for drugs with the agreement of employees. This will be limited to testing to the employees that need to be tested to deal with the risk and would be genuinely random. Staff cannot be made to take a drugs test, but if you refuse when your employer has good grounds for testing you under a proper occupational health and safety policy, you may face disciplinary action. This could include being dismissed.

2.11 Gambling

Gambling activities must not be conducted on School premises; discretion may be used in relation to small raffles for charitable purposes, national lottery syndicates, occasional sweepstakes etc.

2.12 Conduct outside work

The School does not seek to dictate how employees conduct themselves in their personal lives outside work. However, unlawful, anti-social or other conduct by employees that may jeopardise the School's reputation or position will be dealt with through the Disciplinary Procedure. In particular, a member of staff accused of a criminal offence is expected to inform the School at the

earliest opportunity and failure to do so may be a disciplinary offence. In addition, Staff must also conduct themselves on social media in a professional manner.

Also, staff must notify the Head if their partner etc has a conviction(s)/caution(s) which is/are safeguarding related.

If behaviour is considered unprofessional and/or to the detriment of the School and those connected with the School, this may be subject to Disciplinary Procedure.

2.13 Dress code

The School does not operate a formal dress code for its employees, other than for those who are provided with uniform and/or protective clothing. However, employees must ensure that their dress is appropriate for the situation in which they are working and that they present a professional image and one that reflects sensitivity to customer perceptions. This may reflect their ethnicity and lifestyle, but should not be provocative or cause offence to those with whom they have contact.

2.14 Flexibility

Due to the demands and nature of the school, staff should be prepared to transfer upon request within Key Stages either temporarily or permanently, to undertake work of a different nature, providing it is reasonable and safe to do so and the staff member is adequately trained.

2.15 Emails and E-Safety

Employees must adhere to the School's E-Policy and the AUP policy which involves use of technology, and social media.

Staff should also read the Email Policy about our school rules governing email use, timing and retention.

2.15 Use of Mobile Phones and Cameras

Mobile phone calls (and texting) should be kept to a minimum and be made at break or lunch times (out of normal working hours) in the Staff Room. **They should never be made when members of staff are in the company of children.** Phones should not be displayed in the classroom and must be kept with their other personal belongings out of sight and reach of children. Mobile phones **should never** be taken into the playground when staff are on duty. Staff working in the EYFS setting, are required to leave their mobile phones locked away in a safe place out of reach of children.

Employees may use School telephone facilities to make occasional private calls for essential or emergency matters. Private international calls are not permitted without prior authorisation by the Head or Bursar.

Photographs will only be taken of children with their parents' permission (information regarding who can have photos is collected yearly). Where photographs are taken by staff to give evidence of children's progress, photos should only be taken on School cameras/iPads. They must then be downloaded onto School computers, where they will be monitored. Photos cannot be used or passed on outside the School unless there is SLT permission.

Neither staff nor children may use their own mobile phones to take photographs within our EYFS setting, Preschool and up to Reception year in our School. In accordance with our AUP if there is a cause for concern that a staff member has used their own phone to access inappropriate material or taken photographs of children not in accordance with our policy, they may be required to hand the phone over to be checked. For further clarification please see our AUP policy.

2.16 Low Level Concerns

A low-level concern may be reported if a member of staff has acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work. A low-level concern is a concern that doesn't meet the threshold of harm or is not considered serious enough for the school to refer to the local authority.

For further information see KCSIE 2023 Part 4, Section 2 and our separate Low Level Concerns Policy.

2.17 Right to Raise a Grievance

All staff members have the right to raise a grievance if they feel they have been treated unfairly or have concerns about their work, working conditions, or relationships with colleagues. A grievance is a formal way to express dissatisfaction or concern about any aspect of work that affects an employee's well-being, job satisfaction, or professional progress.

The grievance process is designed to:

1. Provide a clear and fair procedure for addressing workplace issues
2. Ensure that all employees are treated equitably and with respect
3. Resolve problems at the earliest possible stage
4. Maintain a positive and productive work environment

Staff members are encouraged to first attempt to resolve issues informally through discussion with their immediate supervisor or the relevant party. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, employees have the right to initiate a formal grievance procedure as outlined in the School's Staff Handbook.

The School is committed to handling all grievances promptly, confidentially, and without fear of retaliation. We value open communication and strive to create a workplace where all staff members feel comfortable voicing their concerns.

Section 3 Financial probity

3.1 Self-employment, other employment or consultancy work

The School understands that these types of opportunities can bring benefits to the School as well as to individual members of staff. All staff proposing to undertake self-employment, other employment or consultancy work must secure the approval from the Head/Bursar and ensure that the proposed work is not in conflict or detrimental to the School's aims and objectives.

3.2 Intellectual property

You are required to inform the School immediately of any invention, improvement, discovery, process, design or copyright which you create or obtain whilst in the School's employ or as a consequence of it. This will become the absolute property of the School except as otherwise stated by statute. You irrevocably waive all moral rights under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 in any existing or future works created by you.

3.3 Financial regulations

The School's financial regulations create a framework of financial controls within which the staff of the School must operate. These regulations are designed to protect the School and individual members of staff. Failure to comply with these regulations may lead to the loss of assets, significant delays in payments to employees and suppliers, and additional work for colleagues.

3.4 Anti-Bribery

All gifts from parents or pupils, including ex-pupils must be declared to the Head and Bursar in writing where the value is above £100 or more. If in doubt of the value, you are advised to declare. **There is no tax, financial or other implication to this declaration, it is merely to protect you from accusations of bribery, or improper conduct.** Please see Anti-Bribery Acceptable Gifts Policy.

3.5 Conflicts of interest

The highest standards of behaviour are also expected in all areas of school life, especially where individuals are in positions to make decisions that may have significant impact on others. In all such cases it is important that decisions are taken in a fair and balanced way that can withstand external scrutiny. Conflicts of interest should be identified so that individuals are not involved in decisions where their actions could be seen as biased.

3.6 Use of equipment for non-work purposes

The School will allow employees reasonable use of School equipment and facilities, provided that authorisation has been obtained from the Head or Bursar, that the use does not interfere or conflict with the work of the School, and that any costs are met by the individual.

Section 4: Staff Guidance with pupils

4.1 Introduction

Staff are trusted by the School and by parents, yet allegations of unprofessional conduct or improper contact or words can arise at any time. All members of staff are thus reminded that professionalism and vigilance are required, both to ensure the safety of pupils in our care and to reduce the risk of an allegation of impropriety against a member of staff.

Members of staff should take particular care when dealing with a pupil who:

- Appears to be emotionally distressed, or generally vulnerable
- Is seeking expressions of affection from a member of staff
- Appears to hold a grudge against a member of staff
- Acts in a sexually provocative way, or who is inclined to make exaggerated claims about herself and others, or to fantasise, or one whose manner with adults is over-familiar

The School trusts you to act professionally at all times, and within the spirit of the policy and guidelines on staff-pupil relationships.

Where staff have a personal relationship with a pupil out of school who is not their own child, (e.g. personal friends of parents, membership of an out-of-school club or organisation, etc.), then the Head should be informed of this so that this information may be kept on file for the protection of the member of staff.

In order to protect pupils, you must report to the Head any concerns that you may have yourself, or that may have been reported to you by a pupil or parent, about staff-pupil relationships.

FGM concerns should be reported immediately to the DSL, who will involve the LADO, as appropriate. If a member of staff discovers that FGM appears to have been carried out on a child, they should personally report this directly to the police. This is a mandatory duty for teachers.

Staff have a duty to uphold Fundamental British Values (FBV) and understand the prohibition on inviting extremist speakers (see Safeguarding Policy). All staff must have regard to the School's safer recruitment guidelines with regards to visiting speakers and will ensure that they are both suitable and appropriately supervised for the duration of their visit.

4.2 Key guidelines on staff conduct with pupils

1. Avoid sitting or standing in very close proximity to a child, except as necessary to check work. For practical subjects, see below.
2. Avoid all unnecessary physical contact and apologise immediately if there is accidental physical contact.
3. If you have to have physical contact with a child make sure that doors are open and others are in the immediate vicinity.
4. Do not verbally discipline a child unless another adult is present or within earshot.
5. Distance yourself kindly if children stroke, hug or touch you, and help them to learn what is and is not appropriate towards adults outside the family.
6. Never administer corporal punishment.

7. Never use any form of aggressive contact such as holding, pushing, pulling or hitting, which could amount to a criminal assault.
8. Avoid threatening words.
9. Retain at all times an appropriately warm and supportive yet detached professional relationship; **you are a teacher, not a friend.**
10. Avoid discussion of any very personal topics relating to yourself; your personal life is not relevant to your professional relationship with the pupil.
11. Avoid any words or actions that are over-familiar.
12. Avoid displays of affection either personally or in writing, including messages in greetings cards.
13. Always ensure that any written messages in any format are sent through the School Office and that copies are kept on the child's file.
14. Do not tell or suggest to a pupil that she/he is your friend, or a special person to you; your relationship is a professional one. Do not single out any pupil for special attention. **Avoid pupils interpreting your behaviour towards another child as favouritism or any suggestion that you have favourites.**
15. Avoid actions, words or expressions that could be interpreted as suggesting that you have an emotional relationship with any pupil.
16. No communication, in person or in writing, or meeting with pupils out of school hours and off school premises should take place without the knowledge and consent of school, parents or guardians.
17. Members of staff should not take a pupil in their own car at any time.
18. When working directly with children, staff must not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance which may affect their ability to care for children.
19. Staff taking medication which they believe may affect their ability to care for children should seek medical advice and only work directly with children if that advice is that the medication is unlikely to impair their ability to look after children.
20. **No medications are to be kept in handbags in classrooms** (See Administration of Medicines Policy)

4.3 Additional Guidance for Staff on Residential Field Trips

1. Never take a child into your room.
2. Wake up another adult at night if a child takes more than a few minutes to settle.
3. Keep careful records of medical aid administered.
4. Be careful when entering dormitories, shower rooms and bathrooms.
5. Do not take photos on your phone or contact parents using your personal mobile phone

4.4 One-to-one contact with pupils

1. Members of staff conducting a one-to-one meeting or lesson with a child, one should take particular care in the following ways:
2. Use a room which has vision panels in the door, or keep the door open, and ensure that a colleague knows that a meeting or lesson is taking place.
3. Arrange the meeting during normal school hours or immediately before or after school

when there are plenty of other people about.

4. Do not continue the meeting for any longer than is necessary to achieve its purposes.
5. Avoid sitting or standing in close proximity to the child, except as necessary.
6. Avoid all unnecessary physical contact and apologise immediately if there is accidental physical contact.
7. The School's expectation is that pupils are able to carry out personal hygiene, including going to the toilet independently from Reception. Caution must be exercised (Intimate Care Policy).
8. Report to the DSL or, in their absence, The Head, any incident that causes you concern, and make a written record (dated and signed). Any allegations against the Head should be raised with the Chair of Governors.

4.5 Physical Contact During The Teaching Of Practical Subjects

1. Physical contact between a member of staff and a pupil may be necessary and beneficial in order to demonstrate a required action, or a correct technique in, for example, Music lessons or during PE, sports and games, or during First Aid treatment. (Also see First Aid Policy)
2. Members of staff should observe the following guidelines:
3. Explain the intended action to the child e.g. "May I look in your eye?", "May I touch your arm?"
4. Do not proceed with the action if the pupil appears apprehensive or reluctant, or if you have other concerns about the pupil's likely reaction
5. Ensure that you can be seen by others through a viewing panel or by being in a public space. If you are in any doubt, ask a colleague or another pupil to be present during the demonstration
6. Staff supervising changing for PE, swimming or extra-curricular clubs must respect the privacy of pupils and caution should be exercised if pupils require help. When changing, girls are always supervised by female members of staff and boys are supervised by a male member of staff.
7. If you are at all concerned about anything which has occurred during the demonstration, inform the DSL or in their absence, The Head, and make a written record (dated and signed).
8. Any physical restraint is only permissible when a child is in imminent danger of inflicting an injury on himself/herself or on another, and then only as a last resort when all efforts to defuse 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/Head who will decide what to do next. Where this relates to the School's Nursery/EYFS setting, parents will be informed of any physical restraint used on their child the same day or as soon as reasonably practicable. **Please Refer to the Restraint Policy.**

4.6 Visits To Pupils' Homes And Meeting Socially Out Of School

1. Staff are sometimes asked to the homes of pupils for social occasions. Social invitations from parents (except those with whom staff have a declared relationship, see Staff

Guidelines paragraph 4 above) should not be accepted, including to pupils' birthday parties. **Remember that your relationship with parents and pupils is a professional one, even after you or the child have left St Christopher's The Hall.**

2. Equally, pupils should not visit staff unaccompanied unless specifically agreed in writing by the DSL or the Headteacher, or the home has been designated by the School or regulatory body as a work place e.g. childminders, foster carers.
3. Staff must not allow pupils to stay in their homes overnight unless there is a friendship between a pupil and the child of a member of staff. In these cases, all such arrangements must be made with full parental consent.
4. Staff must not offer to babysit or give 1-2-1 extra tuition, including 1-2-1 sports coaching. (NB it is a condition of employment that staff do not coach or tutor our pupils, this requirement continues after children have left the school). See also Policy on Staff Undertaking Non School Work.
5. Staff must never invite children to their home unless there is a friendship between a pupil and the child of a member of staff. In these cases, all such arrangements must be made with full parental consent.
6. It is not appropriate for staff to meet pupils out of school. No social meeting between staff/ex staff and pupils/ex pupils should take place without the knowledge and consent of the Head and parents or guardians. The School must be informed of any such meetings to protect yourself.

Section 5 Procedure on Matters of Concern

5.1 Allegations Made By Pupils Against Staff

Any complaint by a pupil against a member of staff will be investigated, following the School's procedure for investigating allegations against staff, which aims to protect both children and staff.

If the investigation shows that on a balance of probabilities the allegation is not justified, then pupil disciplinary or pastoral procedures will be invoked as appropriate.

If the investigation shows that on a balance of probabilities the allegation is justified, and it is of a sufficiently serious nature, then the procedures in our Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy will be carried out as appropriate, including notification to the LADO who may notify the police if they believe that there are grounds for thinking that a criminal offence has been committed.

If the investigation shows that on a balance of probabilities the allegation is justified, and it is of a sufficiently serious nature, then the Independent Schools Council, The Teaching Regulation Agency and The Disclosure and Barring Service will be notified.

5.2 Concerns About a Colleague (See also Whistleblowing Policy)

Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, without fear of repercussion.

All school staff have a duty to report any behaviour by a colleague which raises concern. Staff should refer to the School's Whistleblowing Policy for further guidance. This is particularly important where the welfare of pupils/students may be at risk.

5.3 Action if a pupil is missing

Please refer to St Christopher's the Hall's Pupil Supervision and Lost and Missing Children Policy. A record is kept by the School of any instances in which a pupil is missing from School without satisfactory permission and documentation, including the action taken and the pupil's explanation.

5.4 Complaints

Copies of the School's Complaints Procedure can be sent to any parent on request. Any complaint arising from the implementation of this policy will be considered under the School's Complaints Procedure.

5.5 Breaches of this code

This Code of Conduct has been drawn up to provide a source of guidance to the School's employees. It is not a contractual document and can be amended at any time by the School. All staff must comply with both the provisions of this code and the School's policies and procedures, breaches of which will be taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Staff are also reminded that this Code of Conduct is not exhaustive. The School's primary duty is towards the welfare of pupils and its staff. Individuals are encouraged to take a common sense approach towards their conduct. Any staff member who has a concern or is unsure about an event that has arisen should discuss the matter with a senior colleague as soon as possible.