



ASHBROOKE HOUSE SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL FOR BOYS AND GIRLS AGED 3 TO 11

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

This Code of Conduct applies to all full time and part time staff, teaching practice students, after school club supervisors, office staff, cleaners and volunteers.

This document should clarify what is expected in terms of professional behaviour; it gives clear advice about what constitutes illegal behaviour and what might be considered as misconduct. It also describes the safe practice and which behaviours should be avoided.

If a member of staff does not follow this code of conduct this may lead to disciplinary procedures.

Duty of Care

All staff, whether paid or voluntary, have a duty to keep young people safe and to protect them from physical and emotional harm. This duty is in part exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between staff and students and behaviour by staff that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement.

Confidentiality

Confidential information about students should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need to know basis. In circumstances where the student's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.

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

Members of staff must not use information obtained in the course of their duties to the detriment of the school or for personal gain or benefit, nor should they impart this information to others who might use it in such a way.

Property and Behaviour

All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of students. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their peers, students and parents.

Dress and Appearance

Staff should consider the manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role. We require students to be smart in their uniform. Smart and professional appearance is expected at all times for staff. Staff should ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake.

Gifts

Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.

There are occasions when students or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff for example at Christmas or as a thank-you, and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis of any significant value.

Communication

Staff should not communicate directly with a student on the student's mobile phone or use any form of technology to communicate with the student such as text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web cams, websites, social networking sites, online gaming and blogs.

Staff should not give their personal contact details to a student including e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers.

Social Contact

Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with students, or their families, for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship.

Staff should be extremely discreet and behave in a very professional manner if invited to any social function by a parent.

Physical Contact

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

When physical contact is made with students this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate, eg when administering first aid.

Staff should use their professional judgement at all times about the appropriateness of any physical contact.

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 made clear to senior staff.

Physical Education and other activities which require physical contact

Some staff, for example, those who teach PE and games, or who offer music tuition, will on occasions have to initiate physical contact with students in order to support a student so they can perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/ instrument or assist them with an exercise. This should be done with the student's agreement.

Contact under these circumstances should be for the minimum time necessary to complete the activity and take place in an open environment.

Students in Distress

There may be occasions when a distressed student needs comfort and reassurance. This may include age – appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

Care, Control and Physical Intervention

Staff may legitimately intervene to prevent a student from committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property, engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline. Staff should have regard to the health and safety of themselves and others.

Under no circumstances should physical force be used as a form of punishment. The use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence.

In all cases where physical intervention is deemed necessary, the incident and subsequent actions should be documented and reported.

Sexual Contact with Students

Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a student is both inappropriate and illegal. Students are protected by the same laws as adults in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour. They are additionally protected by specific legal provisions regardless of whether the child or young person consents or not. This includes the prohibition on adults in a position of trust.

The sexual activity referred to does not just involve physical contact including penetrative and non –penetrative acts. It may also include non-contact activities, such as causing children to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of pornographic material.

There are occasions when adults 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. Staff should be aware that conferring special attention and favour upon a child might be construed as being part of a ‘grooming’ process, which is an offence.

One to One Situations

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 such meetings accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure the safety and security needs of both staff and students are met.

Staff should not offer one to one reading or any other curricula help to students at break or lunchtime where they will be alone with the student in the classroom or any other room in the school.

The only exception to this is when a member of staff offers one to one private tuition after school to a student for which the permission of the directors will not be unreasonably withheld. The classroom door must remain open during these sessions.

Transporting Children

In certain situations, for example out of school activities, staff or volunteers may agree to transport children. A designated member of staff should be appointed to plan and provide oversight of all transporting arrangements and respond to any difficulties that may arise.

Wherever possible and practicable it is advisable that transport is undertaken other than in private vehicles, with at least one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort. **The driver must also have appropriate insurance.**

Staff should ensure that their behaviour is safe and that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. They should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.

Extra-curricular activities

Staff should take particular care when supervising students in the less formal atmosphere of a residential setting or after-school activity.

During school activities that take place off the school site or out of school hours, a more relaxed discipline or informal dress and language code may be acceptable. However, staff remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour cannot be interpreted as seeking to establish an inappropriate relationship or friendship.

Where out of school activities include overnight stays, careful consideration needs to be given to sleeping arrangements. Students, staff and parents should be informed of these prior to the start of the trip.

Health and Safety arrangements require members of staff to keep colleagues/ employers aware of their whereabouts, especially when involved in an out of school activity.

Curriculum

Many areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit, or of an otherwise sensitive nature. Care should be taken to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the learning outcomes identified by the lesson plan. This plan should highlight particular areas of risk and sensitivity.

The curriculum can sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussion about subject matter of a sexually explicit or otherwise sensitive nature. Responding

to students questions can require careful judgement and staff may wish to take guidance in these circumstances from a senior member of staff.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of any sex education provided (but not from the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction necessary under the science curriculum).

Photography, videos and other Creative Arts

Many school activities involve recording images. These may be undertaken as part of the curriculum, out of school activities, for publicity, or to celebrate achievement.

Staff need to be aware of the potential for these aspects of teaching to be misused for pornographic or 'grooming' purposes. Careful consideration should be given as to how these activities are organised and undertaken.

Using images of children for the schools publicity purposes has already had the consent of parents. Images should not be displayed on other websites, in publications or in a public place without additional consent.

Staff should not use mobile phones to take images of students. The school camera should be used in school and on trips.

Internet Use

Under no circumstances should adults in the school access inappropriate images. Accessing child pornography or indecent images of children on the internet, and making, storing or disseminating such material, is illegal and, if proven, will invariably lead to the individual being barred from work with children and young people.

Using school equipment to access inappropriate or indecent material, including adult pornography, would normally lead to disciplinary action, particularly if as a result students might be exposed to inappropriate or indecent material.

Sharing Concerns and Recording Incidents

All staff should be aware of the school's child protection procedures, including procedures for dealing with allegations against staff. Staff who are the subject of allegations are advised to contact their professional association.

In the event of an incident occurring, which may result in an action being misinterpreted and/ or an allegation being made against a member of staff, the relevant information should be clearly and promptly recorded and

reported to the Headteacher. Early discussion with a parent could avoid any misunderstanding.

Other Employment

If staff have another job particularly during holidays the job must not conflict with the schools interest or bring the school into disrepute. Staff must ensure they will effectively fulfill their contractual duties to the school and remain refreshed and fully capable of performing these duties.

Criminal Offences

Staff must inform the directors if they are to be charged or have been charged with a criminal offence after their appointment.

Honesty and Integrity

Staff 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.

Relations with parents

Staff should conduct themselves in a very professional manner in their dealings with parents. They should be honest and professionally sound when discussing a child and should demonstrate complete confidentiality when questioned about other staff or the operation of the school referring such questions to the Headteacher or directors.

Relations with other staff

Staff should always act in a professional and mutually respectful manner, showing co-operation and good team spirit. Any grievance should be addressed through the School Grievance Procedure to the Heateacher.

Timekeeping

Staff are expected to be punctual and to follow accurately the times set down on the timetable. Staff should try to give as much notice as possible before any absence, Staff using timesheets are expected to be honest in their completion.

Smoking

The school, its grounds and the grounds of the adjacent LDS Chapel are no smoking areas.

Security

Staff with keys to access the premises should always leave the premises secure by setting the alarm and ensuring the Yale and Chubb locks are locked.