

Stretford High School

Staff Code of Conduct

Ratified by the Board of Governors on:	15 October 2015
Review date:	July 2018

Introduction

The board of governors is required to set out a Code of Conduct for all school employees. The school will foster a culture of the highest professional standards. This code of conduct sets out the standards expected and the duty upon staff to abide by it.

Staff should be aware that this code of conduct forms part of the school's disciplinary policy, therefore failure to comply could result in disciplinary action.

Role of the school

Everyone who comes into contact with young people and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. School staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early and provide help for young people. Schools and their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for young people.

Role of school staff

The Teacher Standards 2012 state that teachers, including Headteachers, should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.

All school staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.

All school staff have a responsibility to read and understand the Child Protection Policy and to identify children who may be in need of extra help or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer significant harm. All staff then have a responsibility to take appropriate action.

Purpose, Scope and Principles

This code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school staff are expected to observe. School staff are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the students within the school.

This Code of Conduct applies to :

- All staff who are employed by the school, including the Headteacher
- All governors and volunteers

Principles of Professional Practice

All staff as appropriate to their role, must:

- Place the well-being and learning of students at the centre of their professional practice
- Have high expectations for all students, be committed to addressing underachievement, and work to help pupils progress regardless of their background and personal circumstances;
- Treat pupils fairly and with respect, take their knowledge, views, opinions and feelings seriously, and value diversity and individuality;

- Model the characteristics they are trying to inspire in students, including enthusiasm for learning, a spirit of enquiry, honesty, tolerance, social responsibility, patience and a genuine concern for other people;
- Respond sensitively to the differences in the home backgrounds and circumstances of students, recognising the key role that parents and carers play in students' education;
- Seek to work in partnership with parents and carers, respecting their views and promoting understanding and co-operation to support the young person's learning and well-being in and out of school.
- Reflect on their own practice, develop their skills, knowledge and expertise, and adapt appropriately to learn with, and from colleagues.

Setting an example

All staff who work in the school set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by students. All staff must, therefore, demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our students to do the same. All staff must avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

Safeguarding students

Staff have a duty to safeguard students from:

- Physical harm
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Domestic abuse
- Neglect
- Child sexual exploitation
- Female genital mutilation
- Radicalisation

The duty to safeguard students included the duty to report concerns about a student to the school's Designated Lead Person for Child Protection (DPCP): Lindsay Brindley, Deputy Headteacher.

It is the responsibility of all at Stretford High School to ensure they are up to date on all relevant policies and procedures.

Conduct in relation to students

The law recognises that staff act in loco parentis in respect of students in their care and must act in the role of reasonable parent in the school context. Through their actions staff must act in accordance with this duty of care to ensure at all times that the safety and welfare of pupils is accorded the highest priority. In this and other ways staff should always maintain standards of conduct which sustain their professional standing and that of the school.

Interaction with students should always be appropriate to their age and gender. Staff should not touch pupils, however casually, in ways or on parts of the body that might be considered indecent, unnecessary or familiar, or use inappropriate language. Particular care may be necessary when supervising pupils in out of school activities.

Teaching materials should be appropriate to the age and gender of pupils. Particular care should be taken that sex or health education materials are appropriate and consistent with the school's policies.

When holding meetings with students on sensitive issues, staff should exercise proper professional judgement over the arrangements for the meeting. They should safeguard their own position by, for instance, considering the need for a second adult to be present or leaving the door open.

Corporal punishment, defined as any intentional application of force as punishment, is illegal and may render a member of staff liable to criminal action as well as action under the school's disciplinary procedures. Corporal punishment includes any form of physical chastisement.

Physical intervention will not constitute corporal punishment where its purpose is to avert an immediate danger of injury to, or an immediate danger to the property or, any person including a pupil. In such circumstances, the element of restraint should be the minimum necessary to prevent injury to remove the risk of harm.

Where physical contact is necessary (e.g. in teaching PE) that contact should be the minimum necessary for the purpose and comply with accepted good practice. Particular care should be taken in helping pupils with physical or other disabilities (e.g. in lifting).

Stretford High School has sufficient members of staff appropriately trained in first aid. School procedures require any incidents or accidents to be recorded; which is linked to the School's Health and Safety Policy.

Following any incident where a member of staff has reason to believe that their actions may be open to misinterpretation, the Head teacher or the DPCP should be immediately notified.

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.

Conduct outside work

Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.

In particular, criminal offences that involve violence, or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are to be regarded as unacceptable.

Any member of staff who is the subject of an allegation of 'gross misconduct' by any organisation, must immediately report the matter to the Headteacher.

Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others.

Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interest of the school nor be to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance/

Confidentiality

Where staff have access to confidential information about students or their parents or carers, staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the student.

All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential.

All communication with the media must have the approval of the Headteacher or Chair of Governors.

Transporting students

In certain situations e.g. out of school activities, staff may agree to transport students. Transport arrangements should, if possible, be made in advance by a designated member of staff. Wherever possible and practicable, transport should be provided other than in private vehicles, with at least one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort. Adults should ensure that their behaviour is safe and that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. They must ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.

Educational visits and school clubs

Staff should take particular care when supervising students in the less formal atmosphere of an educational visit, or after-school activity. Staff remain in a position of trust and the same standards of conduct apply.

Social networking

There is an ever developing series of social media applications designed to allow people to keep in touch electronically. Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook are just a few of these examples. The guidance contained within the code of conduct is a summary and does not replace the e-safety policy which all staff must read and adhere to.

Staff must always consider carefully any action they take when engaging in social media activities. Staff must not engage in any social media activity which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.

For example, Stretford High School staff must not accept friend invitations or become friends with any student of Stretford High School. Personal Facebook accounts and similar should not be used to discuss any matters relating to your professional role at Stretford High School. When using Twitter, both your personal and professional account, you must not follow the Twitter accounts of parents or students. No matter how good your intentions, following a parent or student's Twitter account can give the appearance of favouritism.

Technology

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

The Data Protection Act 1998 affects the use of photography. An image of a child is personal data and it is therefore a requirement under the Act that consent is obtained from the parent of a child of any images made, such as those used for school web sites, productions or other purposes.

Staff should remain sensitive to any student who appears uncomfortable and should recognise the potential for misinterpretation. It is also important to take into account the wishes of the child, remembering that some children do not wish to have their photograph taken.

Using images of pupils for publicity purposes will require the age-appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their legal guardians. Images must not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without such consent. The definition of a public place includes where visitors to the school have access.

Staff or students must not take any image without consent or management permission; this includes the use of covert cameras and phones.

When using a photograph the following guidance must be followed:

- If the photograph is used, avoid naming the student
- If the student is named, avoid using the photograph
- Images must be securely stored and used only by those authorised to do so
- Be clear about the purpose of the activity and about what will happen to the photographs when the lesson/activity is concluded
- Ensure that a senior member of staff is aware that the photograph/image equipment is being used and for what purpose
- Ensure that images are not stored on any personal equipment

Financial Regulations

All staff with financial responsibilities should comply with the powers delegated by the board of governors.

Materials and equipment provided by the school should not be used for purposes unconnected with employment. Staff should always use public funds to the best advantage of the school and community and adhere to high standards of probity in their use.

There is a requirement to report to the Headteacher or other relevant person any indirect or direct financial interest in any contract or other matter involving the school. This is particularly relevant in cases of tendering or in the selling of surplus equipment or property. The Headteacher should disclose any such interest to the Chair of Governors.

Staff should not accept any gift, fee, hospitality or other reward which influences the way in which they carry out their duties.

Care should be taken to avoid any conflict of interest between activities outside the school and professional responsibilities. In no case should outside activities bring the school into disrepute.

Behaviour, Reputation and Appearance

Staff and governors must be careful to ensure that nothing they say, or do, brings the school's name into disrepute. Gossip in our communities can be very damaging. Staff should not gossip, or speak inappropriately about the school, students, parents, staff or governors, including discussing incidents. The reputation of our school is very precious. It takes a long time to build and can be knocked down in a moment.

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 the public in general. An individual's behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, should not compromise her/his position within the work setting or bring the school into disrepute.

All staff are expected to dress in a professional way. Your clothes should represent a positive and professional image of the school and not cause offence to others. Our students follow a strict uniform code and we believe that staff dress should support this. The following items do not portray a professional image and should not be worn at work:

- Jeans of any colour or type
- Trainers (unless a member of PE staff) or flip-flops
- Extremes of fashion; includes hairstyles, makeup, visible body piercings (with the exception of ear and nose piercing) as well as clothes.

Personal property of a sexually explicit nature such as books, magazines, DVDs or such material on any electronic media must not be brought into or stored on the school's premises.

Social networking sites and blogging are extremely popular. Staff must not post material which damages the reputation of the school or which causes concern about their suitability to work with children and young people. Those who post material which could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations of misconduct.

The school strongly advises that the involvement of students in any form of social networking, email or texting must be approached with extreme caution. If there is any doubt about whether communication with students is appropriate, advice should be sought from a member of the senior management team.

This code of conduct will serve to confirm the current very good practice of staff working at Stretford High School.