



STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

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1. Aims, Scope and Principles

Willow Park School expects all of its pupils to receive the highest possible quality of education and care within a positive and respectful environment. We expect all support staff, governors and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others. This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow. By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect. **This policy should be read in conjunction with OFG Code of Conduct and Ethics.**

Employees at the school should understand that their own behaviour, and the manner in which they conduct themselves with their colleagues, pupils, parents/carers and other stakeholders, sets an example. Many of the principles in this code of conduct are based on the Teachers' Standards. School staff have an influential position in the school and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour. We expect that all school staff will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours.

Willow Park School recognises that the majority of staff members act appropriately and treat each other with dignity and respect; however, we consider it important to clarify the expected standards. This document forms part of a staff member's contract of employment and failure to comply with it, and with the associated school policies, may result in disciplinary action being taken, including legal action where this is warranted.

This document applies to all staff members who are:

- Employed by the school, including the Headteacher;
- Employed in units or bases that are attached to the school.

This document does not apply to:

- Peripatetic staff members who are centrally employed by the LA;
- Employees of external contractors.

These employees are governed by their employment contracts and any relevant laws pertaining to their activities within the school, for example, the Data Protection Act 1998.

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils.

2. Legislation and Guidance

We are required to set out a staff code of conduct under regulation 7 of [The School Staffing \(England\) Regulations 2009](#).

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance '[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)', we should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Data Protection Act 1998;
- The Education Act 2002;
- The Children Act 1989;
- The Working Time Regulations 1998 (as amended).

This policy also has due regard to statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2022;
- DfE 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2018.

This Staff Code of Conduct has due regard to the following school policies and procedures:

- Safeguarding Policy;
- Health and Safety Policy;
- Data Protection Policy;
- Equal Opportunities Policy;
- Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy;
- Online Safety Policy;
- OFG Social Media Policy;
- Acceptable Use Agreement.

3. General Obligations

Staff set an example to pupils. They will:

- Attendance:
 - Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality;
 - Attend work in accordance with their contract of employment and associate terms and conditions in relation to hours, days of work and holidays;
 - Make routine medical and dental appointments outside of their working hours or during holidays, where possible;
 - Follow the School's absence reporting procedure when they are absent from work due to illness or injury.
- Professional Behaviour and Conduct:
 - Staff members are expected to treat other colleagues, pupils, parents/carers, and external contacts with dignity and respect;
 - Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school, the use of foul and abusive language will not be tolerated;
 - Discrimination, bullying, harassment or intimidation, including physical, sexual and verbal abuse, will not be tolerated;
 - Staff members will not misuse or misrepresent their position, qualifications or experience, or bring the school into disrepute;
 - Staff members will inform the Headteacher if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution.
- Treat pupils and others with dignity and respect;
- Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others;
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
- Express personal beliefs in a way that will not overly influence pupils, and will not exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law;
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within.
- Smoking, Alcohol and other Substances:
 - Staff will not smoke on, or within a five mile radius of, the school premises;
 - Staff will not smoke whilst working with or supervising pupils off-site, such as when on educational visits and trips;

- The taking of illegal drugs or alcohol during working hours is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Staff members must never attend work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;
- If alcohol or drug usage impacts on a staff member's performance, the school has the right to discuss the matter with the employee and take appropriate action in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedures, including referral to the police.

Health & Safety, staff members will:

- Be familiar with and adhere to the school's Health and Safety Policy, and ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and everyone in the school environment safe and well;
 - Comply with health and safety regulations and use any safety equipment and protective clothing which is supplied to them;
 - Comply with hygiene requirements;
 - Comply with accident reporting requirements;
 - When it is necessary to transport pupils off-site, staff will ensure that they comply with the Transport Policy. When using their personal vehicle, staff will ensure that the transport arrangements of the vehicle meet all legal requirements, they have an appropriate license, and the vehicle is roadworthy, has a valid MOT certificate and is insured;
 - Inform the Headteacher of any paid work, which is undertaken elsewhere, for compliance with The Working Time Regulations 1998 (as amended).
- Declaration of Interests:
 - Staff members are required to declare their interests, both personal and financial, where the group or organisation they are affiliated with would be considered to be in conflict with the ethos of the school;
 - For the purpose of this policy, a financial conflict of interest is one where there is, or appears to be, opportunity for personal financial gain, financial gain for close relatives or friends, or where it may be reasonable for a third party to take the view that financial benefits may affect an individual's actions;
 - The term 'financial interest' means anything of monetary value, including:
 - Payments for services
 - Equity interests
 - Intellectual property rights
 - Hospitality or gifts

- Examples of financial interest that must be declared include, but are not limited to, equity interests in services considered for use by the school;
- Non-financial conflicts of interest can also come into conflict, or be perceived to come into conflict, with an individual's obligations or commitments to the school. These interests may include any benefit or advantage, including but not limited to, direct or indirect enhancement of an individual's career, or gain for immediate family or someone with whom the individual has a close relationship;
- Examples of situations that could give rise to non-financial conflicts of interest include the following:
 - Pressure or temptation to accept gifts, inducements or hospitality;
 - Participating in the appointment, hiring, promotion, supervision or evaluation of a person with whom the individual has a close personal relationship;
 - Where a member of staff has or develops a close personal relationship with a colleague.
- Membership to a trade union or staff representative group does not need to be declared;
- Staff members will also carefully consider whether they need to declare their relationship with any individual where this might cause a conflict with school activities;
- Failure to make a relevant declaration of interests is a very serious breach of trust and, therefore, if employees are in doubt about a declaration, they are advised to contact the school or trade union.
- All declarations, including nil returns, will be submitted in writing to the Headteacher for inclusion on the Register of Business Interests.

4. Safeguarding

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, or neglect.

Staff will familiarise themselves with our safeguarding policy and procedures, in addition to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2022, DfE 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2018 and the Prevent initiative, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

Any staff member that has concerns about a staff member's actions or intent that may lead to a pupil being put at risk of harm will report this in line with the Safeguarding Policy to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors immediately so appropriate action can be taken.

Our safeguarding policy and procedures are available in the Staff Library (Education Drive) at all times.

5. Staff/Pupil Relationships

Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so. The school expects that staff will:

- Maintain professional boundaries and relationships with pupils at all times, and will consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and necessary;
- Ensure that they do not establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship, or to pursue or strengthen a relationship;
- Ensure that they do not develop personal or sexual relationships with pupils; this includes sexual remarks and discussing their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of, pupils;
- Only contact pupils via the School's established mechanisms; personal phone numbers, email addresses or social media platforms will not be used to contact pupils.

If staff members and pupils must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

- This takes place in a public place that others can access;
- Others can see in to the room;
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place.

The School understands that there are circumstances in which it is entirely necessary for staff to have physical contact with pupils, e.g. when applying first aid, assisting with intimate care and Safety Intervention, but staff will only do so in a professional and appropriate manner in line with relevant School policies. The following should be considered:

- When physical contact is made with pupils, it is imperative that it is conducted in a way which is responsive to the pupil's needs, is of limited duration and is appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background;

- Staff will seek the pupil's permission, where possible, before initiating contact;
- Staff will always use their professional judgement when determining what physical contact is appropriate, as this may differ between pupils. As such, the pupil's feelings and wishes will always be taken into account, in addition to consideration for their PSP;
- Staff will never touch a pupil in a way which is indecent, and will always be prepared to explain their actions;
- Staff will be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by a pupil, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described and, therefore, will be prepared to justify their actions;
- Staff will not engage in rough play, tickling or fun fights with pupils;
- Extra caution will be taken where it is known that a pupil has previously suffered from abuse or neglect;
- Physical contact will never be secretive; if a member of staff believes an action could be misinterpreted, this will be reported to the Headteacher and appropriate procedures will be followed;
- Where it is necessary in PE classes for teachers to demonstrate use of equipment, this will be conducted with another member of staff if possible; if a pupil is required to participate, their consent will be given before doing so;
- If a child is in distress and in need of comfort as reassurance, staff may use age-appropriate physical contact, such as placing their hand on the pupil's shoulder. Staff will remain self-aware of their actions at all times and ensure that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation;
- Staff may also use reasonable force as a means of physical contact with pupils for restraint purposes; such instances will always be in accordance with the school's Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy.

Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes social media profiles.

While we are aware many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to pupils are not acceptable.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, this should be reported to their line manager or the Headteacher.

6. Communication and Social Media

School staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name, as pupils may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead, and set public profiles to private. Staff are required to employ the highest security settings on any personal profiles they may have.

Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship. They will not make any efforts to find pupils' or parents' social media profiles.

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at the school without their consent. All Staff should be aware of the Online Safety policy.

7. Acceptable Use of Technology/ E-Safety

Staff will not use technology in school to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.

School equipment and systems are available only for school-related activities and will not be used for the fulfilment of another job or for personal use, unless specifically authorised by the Headteacher.

Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school equipment for personal use, in school hours or in front of pupils. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.

The school reserves the right to monitor emails, phone calls, internet activity or document production, principally in order to avoid offensive or nuisance material and to protect systems from viruses, but also to ensure proper and effective use of systems.

All Staff will adhere to the procedures outlined in the School's E-Safety and Acceptable Use Policy.

8. Data Protection and Confidentiality

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the school, staff, pupils and their parents. This information will never be:

- Disclosed to anyone without the relevant authority;
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others;
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for.

This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child is at risk of harm.

Staff members are required, under the Data Protection Act 1998, to collect, maintain and dispose of sensitive or personal data in a responsible manner. Staff will ensure they have completed the relevant GDPR Training and comply with this.

Staff members have the right to request access to data that is held about them; such requests will be made to the Headteacher in writing, in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy.

9. Honesty and Integrity

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities. Staff will not accept bribes. Staff will ensure that all information given to the school about their qualifications and professional experience is correct.

10. Dress Code

The dress code is Professional. Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner and remember that they are role models for pupils, and that their dress appearance should reflect this. Staff's appearance should be clean and neat when at work or representing the School. Outfits will not be overly revealing, display any form of undergarments and we ask that tattoos are covered up. Clothes will not display any offensive or political slogans.

11. Conduct Outside of Work

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school, or the teaching profession into disrepute. This covers relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school on social media.

12. Probity of Records

The deliberate falsification of documents, such as references, academic qualifications or legal documents, is unacceptable. Where a staff member falsifies records or other documents, including those held electronically, this will be regarded as a serious disciplinary matter and potentially a criminal offence.

13. Contacts

Staff members shall not use school business contacts for acquiring materials or services at trade/discount prices for non-school activities, unless participating in concessionary schemes arranged by trade unions or other such groups.

14. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually, but can be revised as needed. Any changes made will be communicated to all members of staff.