

# Code of Conduct Policy

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# Code of Conduct Policy

## *1. Rationale*

- i. As part of induction and Safer Recruitment processes, it is now an expectation that schools should have a Code of Conduct, incorporating child protection issues amongst others.
- ii. The Code of Conduct will form part of our Safer Recruitment procedures; the new staff induction programme has also been amended to reflect these changes.
- iii. Although some aspects of the Code are appropriate for teachers only, all members of the school staff will be expected to abide by its expectations, particularly regarding issues of child protection, relationships with students, colleagues and parents & carers, and other stakeholders.
- iv. This Code of Conduct is in addition to our expectation that all teachers will demonstrate the professional attributes listed for QTS and 'Core' in the TDA's publication
- v. Please note staff are addressed as Teacher within this policy. However, this code of conduct applies to all staff employed across the Federation of St Cuthbert's, St Sebastian's, Extended School and the Field of Dreams Nursery.
- vi. This policy should support health and wellbeing for all members of our community eg. Staff, parents, pupils and all stakeholders.

## *2. Demeanour and Dress*

- We must maintain the highest professional standards in our conduct towards students, colleagues, parents, carers, other visitors and any external agencies with whom we have dealings.
- In addition, all staff are expected to dress in a formal, professional manner, which is appropriate for the kinds of activities undertaken, and with due regard to health and safety issues. We must model to our students that business wear is the appropriate dress, and as our student's uniform is conservative, staff are asked to reflect this in their dress. All dresses and skirts must be at least knee length. Items of denim, flip flips, vest tops and strappy dresses are inappropriate. Staff must have no visible tattoos or piercings (other than a set of pierced earrings). Staff must wear their I.D. badge at all times.
- When staff are representing the school in any capacity, they must ensure their demeanor remains appropriate and professional at all times.

## *3. Professionalism and maintaining trust in the profession*

- We should have knowledge of and maintain the key principles contained in the Professional Standards (if appropriate).
- We must maintain appropriate professional boundaries, avoid improper contact or relationships with students and respect our unique position of trust as members of staff in a school.

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- We should avoid situations both within and beyond the classroom, which could be in breach of the criminal law, or may call into question our suitability to be teachers.
- We must uphold standards of personal and professional conduct, honesty and integrity so that the public can have confidence in us as teachers (school staff) and in teaching as a profession.
- We should always be honest and accurate when providing professional information about colleagues or ourselves, particularly when applying for posts.
- We should maintain awareness that as teachers, and adults in school, we are role models to our students.
- If we have any concerns about a colleague's behaviour towards students, we must report it to the Child Protection Officer. We must expect that colleagues will report us if they have any such concerns about our behaviour.
- We must ensure all expressions of concern/frustration are shared in a professional appropriate environment.
- Staff whose conduct is related to misuse of alcohol or misuse of any substance will be disciplined using the Discipline Policy.

## 4. Children and young people

With regard to inappropriate relationships with students, we must:

- Appreciate fully that the onus is upon us as adults to distance ourselves from any potentially inappropriate situation.
- Avoid contact with or remarks towards a student regardless of the age of the student or apparent consent of the student which could be deemed as inappropriate.
- Not attempt to establish an inappropriate relationship with the student by means, which might include (but are not limited to):
  - -communication of a personal nature.
  - -engaging in inappropriate dialogue through the internet with students.
  - -sending emails or text messages to students of an inappropriate or personal nature.
  - -giving gifts to students unless part of the school's rewards system without the express approval of the Head Teacher.
  - -inviting students to our home.
- Not discuss our own private and personal relationships with students and remain mindful to maintain an appropriate balance between formality and informality when dealing with students.
- Take care to avoid becoming personally involved in students' personal affairs be aware of the potential dangers of being alone with a student in a private or isolated situation, avoiding circumstances which are or could be perceived to be of an inappropriate nature. This also is the case in connection with social networking websites.
- Avoid physical contact with students, including cuddling or touching unless in the context of the Physical Restraint/Team Teach Policy.

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- Not by any means or in any circumstances, make, view or access illegal or inappropriate images of children.
- Only take photographs of students involved in school activities with others, and only after checking that parents/carers have given their permission for photographs to be taken of their child.
- Exercise extreme caution in connection with contact/web cam internet sites (for example chat rooms, message boards and newsgroups) and avoid inappropriate communication with individuals under 18 or with whom you may be in a position of trust.
- Report any colleague whom we believe to be involved in any form of inappropriate behaviour with students.

## 5. School visits

On school visits, we must:

- ❖ Not overstep professional boundaries on school trips, which are less formal in nature.
- ❖ Have a full knowledge of and comply with, the procedures and guidelines laid down for these activities.
- ❖ Remain mindful of the need to maintain a healthy and appropriate balance between formality and informality and avoid situations which are or could be perceived to be of an inappropriate nature.

## 6. Honesty and integrity

As staff, we must:

- Not engage in criminal behaviour of any kind.
- Be honest and trustworthy, especially avoiding offences such as theft, dishonesty, extortion, fraud or misuse of drugs.
- Act with integrity when writing references, making declarations or conducting tasks in connection with students' examinations and/or assessments.
- Be conscious that we are role models and that young people may be strongly influenced by things we may do or say both within and beyond the school.

The following extract is taken from the Trips and Visits Policy

## 7. Car Transportation

You may only use your car to transport students if:

- ✓ You have the relevant insurance (check with your company) - which is highlighted on your insurance certificate.
- ✓ You have valid MOT declaration that your car is mechanically sound.

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- ✓ If transporting 1 child you must have 2 adults. If there is only 1 adult travelling you must have 2 or more children.
- ✓ In the case of a student requiring emergency transport, please speak to a member of the SLT.

## 8. Professional responsibilities towards students

- We must treat students equally and with respect, in line with the law and without discrimination.
- We should treat sensitive, personal information about students with respect and confidentiality and not disclose it unless required by the law or the Head Teacher or with the written permission of the student and/or her or his family (see below).
- We should aim to be positive role models to students and motivate and inspire every student to realise her or his full potential.
- We must maintain an up to date knowledge and understanding of current child protection procedures, and implement and comply with them.
- We must be truthful, honest and fair in relation to information we provide about students.
- We should display a sensitive and positive attitude towards differences among students and identify and respond appropriately to students with difficulties in, or barriers to, learning. When necessary, we should seek advice in relation to their special educational needs/vulnerabilities.
- We should identify and respond appropriately to evidence of students' wellbeing and welfare, including bullying, and ensure that students' initiative and independent learning are encouraged and nurtured.
- We should have high expectations of and provide realistic challenges for students, ensuring that learning tasks are varied in form, differentiated and devised to build confidence in and promote self-worth for all our students.
- We play a pivotal role in child protection and are well placed to see the symptoms and signs of abuse. We must therefore keep up to date with current procedures.
- Information about a student's background or history should not be shared with other adults without reference to the CPO and the Child Protection Policy; however, any concerns a colleague has about the student should be shared with the Head of Year and/or CPO as outlined in the Child Protection Policy.

## 9. Professional Competence

- We should maintain and develop our professional practice to ensure we continue to meet the required professional standards.
- We must fully contribute to Performance Management with Line Manager.
- We must develop our own Professional knowledge and understanding.
- We must be active regarding new initiatives.
- We must adhere to the standards expected of our pay grade.

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- We must refresh and develop our knowledge and skills through CPD and maintenance of good practice.
- We should have a detailed knowledge and understanding of the relevant areas of the school curriculum and also an understanding of curriculum development. This should include a broad, critical understanding of the principal features of the education system, policy and practice and a detailed knowledge of professional responsibilities within these Professional skills and abilities.
- plan coherent and progressive teaching programmes to match students' needs and abilities and be able to communicate clearly using a variety of media to interact with students.
- Individually and collectively set and maintain the expectations and pace of learning of students.
- Use a range of teaching strategies and resources to evaluate the needs and abilities of students.
- Manage student behaviour in a fair and consistent manner, and in line with the school's policies.
- Understand and apply principles of assessment, recording and reporting.
- Use the results of assessment to evaluate and improve our teaching and the learning of our students.
- Reflect on and act to improve our own professional practice, contribute to our professional development and engage in the process of curriculum development.

## *10. Professional values and commitment*

As staff, we should be able to show in our day-to-day practice a commitment to social justice and inclusion, take responsibility for our own professional learning and development and be an active partner in the areas in which we work.

## *11. Professionalism towards colleagues and parents*

- ❖ We must work in a collegiate and cooperative manner with colleagues and members of other relevant professions.
- ❖ We must treat all colleagues fairly and with respect, and without unlawful discrimination.
- ❖ We must not make malicious or unfounded criticism of or accusations about colleagues that may undermine them professionally or in the professional judgements they make.
- ❖ We must promote good relationships between home and school, respecting the role of parents and carers in the education of children.
- ❖ Our school environment must be free of discrimination and harassment. We should work in a collegiate way, treating all colleagues professionally.
- ❖ Not allow professional relationships with colleagues to be prejudiced by views about their lifestyle, culture, disability, beliefs, ethnicity, gender, language, sexuality or age.

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- ❖ Avoid undermining a colleague by remarks which are or could be perceived as being malicious, unfounded or unprofessional. This is of particular importance when in contact with parents, carers or students.
- ❖ Guard against inappropriate workplace banter or practical jokes, which are or could be perceived as being behaviour of an unprofessional, discriminatory or harassing nature

## 12. Unacceptable professional conduct

- a) This is defined as 'conduct which falls short of the standard expected of a registered teacher...and is behaviour which involves a breach of the standards of propriety expected of the profession.' Whether a teacher is guilty of unacceptable conduct is a matter for a hearing committee to decide in relation to the facts of the given case.
- b) Staff may be found guilty of unacceptable professional conduct where they:
  - Seriously demean or undermine our colleagues, students, their parents or carers, or act towards them in a manner, which is discriminatory in relation to gender, marital status, religion, belief, ethnicity, race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, disability or age. Where they fail to:
    - Take reasonable care of students under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.
    - Comply with relevant statutory provisions, which support the wellbeing and development of students, including where these require cooperation and collaboration with a range of agencies as well as teacher colleagues and other adults.
    - Observe confidentiality in a manner consistent with legal requirements
    - Comply with the requirements of statutory bodies relating to the examination, assessment and evaluation of student achievement and attainment
- c) Unacceptable professional conduct also relates to workplace bullying and harassment. The governors of the federation will treat all matters seriously and will use the discipline procedure to manage the process.

## 13. Other conduct

Registered teachers may be found guilty of unacceptable professional conduct  
Where they fail to:

- ✓ Maintain appropriate standards of honesty and integrity in management and administrative duties, including in the use of school property and finance.
- ✓ Misuse or misrepresent their professional position, qualifications or experience otherwise, bring the reputation and standing of the profession into serious disrepute

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## *14. Serious professional incompetence*

- Staff may be found guilty of serious professional incompetence where they demonstrate 'a level of competence which falls seriously short of that expected of a registered teacher, taking into account the relevant circumstances'.
- In assessing whether a registered teacher has demonstrated serious professional
- incompetence, hearing committees will take into account the extent to which a registered teacher has failed to maintain a level of professional competence consistent with the standards for QTS, the Induction Standards and the nature of their professional responsibilities.
- The determination of serious professional incompetence includes failings relating to leadership and management.

## *15. Summary*

This policy will be regularly evaluated and updated in the changes of legislation, school requirements and statutory policies. There will be a rolling programme of monitoring and review.

For the purposes of this policy, "staff" refers to any member of staff, whether permanent or part-time, teaching or non-teaching, visiting or invited into the school in any capacity where they will be in contact with students, unless a specific group is named.

This policy should be read in conjunction with all other policies.

## *16. Policy Written:*

Approved by Governors: September July 2019

Committee Responsible: Personnel

Next Review: September 2020

Staff Responsible: Lorraine Fay

Statutory Review as per DfE: Governors have determined this to be annually