



St John's Priory School
Banbury

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

Legal Status:

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

- the Independent School Standards (the standards) . These are contained in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSR), as amended, made under section 94 of the Education and Skills Act 2008; Part 3 Paragraph 14.
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004 along with Section 157/175, Education Act (2002)
- Childcare Act 2006 Employment Rights Act 1996

This policy also has due regard to the following statutory guidance:

- DfE (2024) 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'
- DfE (2023) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- Teachers' Standards (Guidance for school leaders, school staff and governing bodies)

Applies to:

- Whole School, including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), along with all activities provided by the school, inclusive of those outside of the normal school hours;
- All staff (teaching and support staff), pupils on placement, the Proprietors and volunteers working in the school.

Availability:

This policy is provided to staff on appointment and is provided in the staff handbook.

Monitoring and Review:

- This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Headmistress.
- The Proprietors undertake a formal review of this policy for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than two years from the date shown below, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

Signed:



Michelle Jenkin, Headmistress

Date: 16th February 2024



Giorgio Mystkowski, Proprietor

Date: 16th February 2024

Review: September 2024

Related Documents:

- Contract of Employment
- Employment Policies
- Safeguarding Policies (including E-Safety Policy)
- Anti Bullying, Supervision of Children and Behaviour and Discipline Policies
- Whistleblowing Policy

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INTRODUCTION

A Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all staff are expected to observe. School staff working with and around children are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example and acts as a role model to children of all ages.

Underpinning Principles

- the welfare of the child is paramount;
- staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivations and intentions;
- staff should work and be seen to work in an open and transparent way;
- staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from a member of the Senior Leadership Team over any incident which may give rise to concern;
- records should be made of any such incident and of decisions made or actions agreed;
- staff should apply the same professional standards regardless of gender or sexuality; and
- all staff should apprise themselves of the names of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and be familiar with the School's Safeguarding Policy

Definitions used in this Code of Conduct are as follows:

'Fundamental British values' is taken from the definition of extremism as articulated in the new Prevent Strategy, which was launched in June 2011. It includes 'democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs'.

'Parents' is intended to include carers, guardians and other adults acting *in loco parentis*.

'Pupils' is used throughout the standards but should be taken to include references to children of all ages who are taught by qualified teachers, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

'School' means St John's Priory School.

'Special educational needs', as defined by the Department for Education.

'Statutory frameworks' includes all legal requirements, including but not limited to the requirement to promote equal opportunities and to provide reasonable adjustments for those with disabilities, as provided for in the Equality Act 2010.

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

At St John's Priory School, it is incumbent on all staff including volunteers to comply with the following Professional Code of Conduct inclusive of implementing the anti-bullying, supervision of children and behavioural policies inclusive of their associated documents. All staff are required to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct.

The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes, which set the required standard for conduct throughout their time at St John's Priory School. We have a duty to uphold public trust in us as professionals and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:

- Treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position;
- Having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others;
- Not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
- Ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways, which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.

All staff must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality. Also, they must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks, which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

Requirements on teachers

Teachers make the education of their pupils their first concern and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. Teachers act with honesty and integrity; have strong subject knowledge, keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up-to-date and are self-critical; forge positive professional relationships; and work with parents in the best interests of their pupils. We must:

Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils:

- Establish a safe and stimulating environment for pupils, rooted in mutual respect;
- Set goals that stretch and challenge pupils of all backgrounds, abilities and dispositions;
- Demonstrate consistently the positive attitudes, values and behaviour, which are expected of pupils.

Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils:

- Be accountable for pupils' attainment, progress and outcomes;
- Be aware of pupils' capabilities and their prior knowledge, and plan teaching to build on these;
- Guide pupils to reflect on the progress they have made and their emerging needs;
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn and how this impacts on teaching;
- Encourage pupils to take a responsible and conscientious attitude to their own work and study.

Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge:

- Have a secure knowledge of the relevant subject(s) and curriculum areas, foster and maintain pupils' interest in the subject, and address misunderstandings;
- Demonstrate a critical understanding of developments in the subject and curriculum areas, and promote the value of scholarship;
- Demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of standard English, whatever the teacher's specialist subject;
- If teaching early reading, demonstrate a clear understanding of systematic synthetic phonics;
- If teaching early mathematics, demonstrate a clear understanding of appropriate teaching strategies.

Plan and teach well-structured lessons

- Impart knowledge and develop understanding through effective use of lesson time;
- Promote a love of learning and children's intellectual curiosity;
- Set homework and plan other out-of-class activities to consolidate and extend the knowledge and understanding pupils have acquired;
- Reflect systematically on the effectiveness of lessons and approaches to teaching;
- Contribute to the design and provision of an engaging curriculum within the relevant subject area(s).

Adapt the teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils

- Know when and how to differentiate appropriately, using approaches which enable pupils to be taught effectively;
- Have a secure understanding of how a range of factors can inhibit pupils' ability to learn, and how best to overcome these;
- Demonstrate an awareness of the physical, social and intellectual development of children, and know how to adapt teaching to support pupils' education at different stages of development;
- Have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities; those of high ability; those with English as an additional language; those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them

Make accurate and productive use of assessment

- Knowing and understanding how to assess the relevant subject, therapy and curriculum areas, including statutory assessment requirements;
- Making use of formative and summative assessment to secure pupils' progress;
- Using relevant data to monitor progress, set targets, and plan subsequent lessons;
- Giving pupils regular feedback, both orally and through accurate marking, and encourage pupils to respond to the feedback.

Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment

- Having clear rules and routines for behaviour in classrooms, and take responsibility for promoting good and courteous behaviour both in classrooms and around the school, in accordance with the school's behaviour policy; praise, sanctions and rewards consistently and fairly;
- Managing classes effectively, using approaches which are appropriate to pupils' needs in order to involve and motivate them;
- Maintaining good relationships with pupils, exercise appropriate authority, and act decisively when necessary.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

At St John's Priory School, we comply with the following guidelines, which are designed to encourage an atmosphere of trust in which all colleagues can conduct their professional lives with confidence. The School recognises the need for, and the desirability of, friendly and respectful social and professional rapport between staff and children. Happy relations in the school are essential. Staff must conduct themselves professionally in their relationships with pupils, parents and staff and must not behave in a way that could bring the school into disrepute. Members of staff and volunteers need to be aware that unwary actions can be misconstrued as unprofessional conduct, with potentially damaging effects on careers.

To avoid misunderstandings the following should be adhered to carefully:

- One-to-one meetings should, wherever possible, take place in public or semi-public places such as classrooms or offices. If in classrooms, ensure you are seated so that you and the child can be seen through the visibility panel in the door;
- When in a private meeting with a child or one-to-one session as occurs with Therapists, ensure furniture is positioned to allow easy access into or out of the room and that the glass panel in the door is not obscured;
- Staff will at no time travel unaccompanied outside of the school with children;
- Members of staff should exercise particular caution and sensitivity before visiting lavatories or changing areas. Male members of staff should never be in girls' changing areas unless accompanied by a female member of the staff;
- No member of staff should ever be behind a locked door with a child;
- Outward displays of affection are only appropriate in the case of comforting a distressed child, and should never occur unless there is another adult present;
- Staff should take great care that relationships with individual children are kept on a professional level. It is important that all children are treated the same and that discipline is friendly, fair, consistent and impartial. Staff should take care that "joking comments" cannot be misconstrued to give offence;
- Staff must not be party to gossip about colleagues or children;
- The highest level of confidentiality should be maintained at all times in relationships with both adults and children. Staff, however, should make it clear that there are certain circumstances (e.g. where a child is suffering or is likely to suffer harm) when other people will need to be told so that the community or the child can be protected. If a child asks to tell a member of staff something in confidence, they should always be told that this will depend upon the circumstances and absolute confidence cannot be guaranteed;
- If a child behaves inappropriately or makes an inappropriate advance to a member of staff, it is essential that the child be immediately informed that the language or behaviour is unacceptable. The incident, and what has been done and said, should be recorded, and reported to the Headmistress immediately.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

Unacceptable behaviour is dealt with firmly whilst leaving the inner self of the child untouched, i.e. by avoiding sarcasm or words that might humiliate the child.

The following sanctions / punishments will *never* be used:

- Any form of hitting of a child (including hitting a child in anger or retaliation)
- Deprivation of food or drink.
- Enforced eating or drinking.
- Prevention of contact by telephone parents or any appropriate independent listener or helpline.
- Requirement to wear distinctive clothing.
- Withholding of any aids or equipment needed by a child.
- Verbal belittling or humiliation of a child

Corporal punishment

Please note that **Corporal Punishment is not used or threatened** or deemed to be acceptable at any time at St John's Priory School. However, teachers and other school staff are entitled to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils in certain circumstances including disruptive behaviour when safety is paramount. Further guidance is available.

Under section 131 of the School Standards and Framework 1998, corporal punishment is prohibited for all pupils in independent and maintained schools. The prohibition includes the administration of corporal punishment to a pupil during any activity whether or not within the school premises. The prohibition applies to all 'members of staff'. These include all those acting *in loco parentis*, such as unpaid, volunteer supervisors. Under subsection 548(5) of the Education Act 1996, teachers may use 'physical intervention' to avert 'an immediate danger of personal injury to, or an immediate danger to the property of, a person (including the child himself)'. Teachers' powers under section 4 of the 1997 Act to restrain pupils from engaging in certain activities remain. The school policy is that under no circumstances will corporal punishment ever be used. Guidance is given to all 'members of staff' (as defined above) on the circumstances in which 'physical intervention' is allowable.

Physical restraint

All members of staff are aware of the regulations regarding the use of force by teachers, as set out in DfE Circular 10/98, relating to section 550A of the Education Act 1996: *The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Children*. Teachers in St John's Priory School do not hit, push or slap children. Staff only intervene physically to restrain children or to prevent injury to a child, or if a child is in danger of hurting him/herself. The actions that we take are in line with government guidelines on the restraint of children. We use physical restraint, such as holding, only to prevent physical injury to children or adults and/or serious damage to property.

Details of such an event (what happened, what action was taken and by whom, and the names of witnesses) are brought to the attention of the Headmistress and recorded in the child's personal file. The child's parents are informed on the same day.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

Whilst it would be unrealistic and undesirable to preclude all physical contact between adults and children, staff are expected to exercise caution and avoid placing themselves in a position where their actions might be open to criticism or misinterpretation. Staff should exercise care with physical contact; possibly needed in Games, Music, Drama to support learning, but always ask for permission from pupils in advance and ensure not to be seen as indecent.

TRUST AND ETHICAL CONDUCT

As a result of our knowledge, position, and/or the authority invested in their role, all our staff are in positions of trust. A member of staff can be described as in a position of power or influence because of their role. It is vital for all staff to understand the power this can give them over those they care for and the responsibility they must exercise as a consequence of this relationship.

Staff are expected to ensure that while there is an unequal balance of power, staff have a responsibility to ensure that this is not used for personal advantage or gratification. Staff will always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour, which could be misinterpreted by others. We expect all staff to report and record any incident with the potential to contravene these expectations.

Relationships and contact with children

It is an offence for a member of staff in a position of trust with a child under 18 to engage in sexual activity with, or in the presence of that child, to cause or incite that child to engage in or watch sexual activity. Any sexual activity between a member of staff and a child or young person with whom they work may be regarded as a criminal offence and will always be a matter for disciplinary action.

Staff must clearly understand the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their contact with children. Allowing or encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which might lead to a sexual relationship is unacceptable conduct. *Working Together to Safeguard Children* defines sexual abuse as forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

Discussion of the procedures set out in this document forms a vital part of our induction procedures. The model code of conduct provides guidance for teachers and other members of staff when faced with handling any issue relating to child abuse. It is not intended to be a substitute for proper training. The Headmistress should always be informed if a member of staff has any concerns in order to ensure the activation of appropriate procedures; this includes procedures for reporting of a low-level concern.

For their own safety and protection, staff should exercise caution in situations where they are alone with pupils. These may include musical instrument tuition, 1:1 coaching, pupil counselling, conveying a pupil by car, engaging in inappropriate electronic communication with a pupil and so on. In a 1:1 situation, the door should be left open, or the viewing panel not obstructed.

Where incidents occur which might otherwise be misconstrued, or in the exceptional circumstances where it becomes necessary physically to restrain a pupil for their own protection or others' safety, this will be appropriately recorded and reported to the Headmistress and parents on the same day. St John's Priory school has in place a Physical Intervention (Use of Reasonable Force) Policy, which complies with DfE and Local Authority guidance.

Grooming embodies the sole purpose of gaining the trust of a child or young person and manipulating that relationship so that sexual abuse can take place. Staff are aware that constantly conferring inappropriate special attention and favour upon a child can be construed as being part of grooming behaviour; to which the disciplinary procedure will be considered accordingly.

School staff should also be alert to the possible risks that might arise from social contact with pupils outside of St John's Priory School. Home visits to pupils or private tuition of pupils should only take place with the knowledge and approval of the Headmistress. Visits/telephone calls, texts or emails by pupils to the homes of staff members should only occur in exceptional circumstances and with the prior knowledge and approval of the Headmistress.

Personal living space

No child will be invited into the home of an adult, unless the reason has been firmly established and agreed with parent/carer(s) and senior managers. It is not appropriate for other organisations to expect or request that private living space is used for work with children, including for counselling. Under no circumstances will children or young people help with chores of tasks in the home of staff. Nor will they be asked to do so by the friends of family of the staff member.

Gifts, rewards or favouritism

All giving of gifts or rewards are part of our behaviour policy for supporting positive behaviour or recognising particular achievements. There may be specific occasions when staff may wish to give a child a personal gift. This is only acceptable practice where, in line with the agreed policy, senior manager and parent/carer(s) have discussed the reasons for it and the action is recorded. Any gift should be openly given and not based on favouritism. Staff remain alert at all times to the fact that the giving of gifts can be misconstrued as a gesture to either bribe or groom a child.

Staff will take care in selecting children for specific activities or privileges to avoid perceptions of favouritism or unfairness. Methods and criteria for selection will always be transparent and subject to scrutiny. Care is taken to ensure that no member of staff accepts any gifts that might be construed as a bribe by others or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.

There are always occasions in school when children or parents wish to pass on a small token of appreciation such as a thank you. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis, or of any significant value.

Infatuations

Any unplanned contact of this nature or suspected infatuations or "crushes" will be reported to the Headmistress. Staff are actively discouraged from disclosing their personal telephone numbers, email address and so on to pupils. Occasionally a child or young person may develop an infatuation with a member of staff who works with them. Staff are required to deal sensitively with these situations and to maintain the dignity and safety of all concerned. Such situations carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and they must ensure that their own behaviour is

beyond reproach. A member of staff who becomes aware that a child or young person is developing an infatuation must discuss this with their senior manager and alert the Headmistress at the earliest opportunity so that appropriate action can be taken to avoid any hurt, distress or embarrassment from the child, family or staff's perspective.

Intimate care

Helping young children with toileting, or care of children with disabilities may involve intimate physical contact. Such activities must be part of a formally agreed care plan and procedures such as the Intimate Care Policy. Any emotional response to intimate care is recorded and carefully and sensitively observed, including the escalation to senior managers and/or parent/carer(s).

All our children have the right to privacy, safety and dignity when contact of a physical nature is required. Children should be expected to act as independently as possible, depending on their age, abilities and maturity. The views of the child will always be sought, wherever possible, when drawing up procedural arrangements with parent/carer(s) and fully recorded.

Whistleblowing

All employees have a responsibility to carry out their duties to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability and to come forward when they have serious concerns about malpractice or wrongdoing in the work of the School.

The School's Whistleblowing Policy and Procedures is available in the staffroom and available in electronic form on the school shared drive. **It is a requirement that all staff have read and understood this policy (KCSIE Sept 2023)**

PERSONAL APPEARANCE

Dress code

The School requires staff and pupils to have high standards of presentation, and staff must set a good example. The Headmistress has the authority to set rules relating to modest, conventional and appropriate professional dress, jewellery, tattoos, make-up, footwear and other aspects, as these can critically affect the image of the School that we seek.

Please remember that you are always on show. We regularly receive visits from parents, potential parents and others, and naturally wish to convey an impression of efficiency and organisation. Therefore, whilst not wishing to impose unreasonable obligations. Staff are, nonetheless, required to look smart in appearance and have good personal hygiene. For example, if you are a classroom teacher and timetabled to teach a PE lesson and require sports clothing you should change into this for your lesson and change back after the lesson or at the most convenient time.

We expect the children to be clean and smart and therefore we need to set a good example. Staff may wear trousers, but they should be smart; not jeans, denim or cropped trousers. Low cut tops or short skirts i.e. above the knee are not appropriate in a Prep School setting. Shirts and ties should be worn, and a jacket should be available in school, although this need not be worn constantly. Members of staff teaching PE should wear tracksuits and suitable footwear.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

To ensure that members of staff are fully aware of their professional responsibilities when using information systems and when communicating with pupils, they are required to sign this code of conduct. Members of staff should consult the School's E-safety Policy and ICT Acceptable Use Policies for further information and clarification.

Appropriate Use of Email

Content of Email:

- Email should always be written carefully and politely.
- It should be treated as a public medium – for example it may be forwarded or printed and left lying around. Treat emails you write as though they may be made public.
- Sending email containing offensive, defamatory or harassing material is strictly forbidden.
- If you receive unsolicited, disturbing, offensive or harassing email you must inform a member of the SLT
- The creation or forwarding of chain letters is prohibited.

Security of Email:

- The School will provide email accounts for staff requiring them for legitimate purposes.
- Staff may only use approved e-mail accounts on the school system.
- The School uses antivirus software to detect viruses in emails and will continue to investigate suitable software to filter unsuitable or unsolicited email entering the school's mail system.
- The school reserves the right to scan all incoming and outgoing email for the purpose of verifying the performance of filtering/security software and adherence to the school's policies.
- Do not open or read email unless you recognise the sender or are sure it is from a legitimate source.
- Never open or save an email attachment unless you are sure of the sender and the source and purpose of the attachment.
- Do not automatically assume that the person it says it is from has sent received email.
- Do not click on web links inside an email unless you are sure of the source of the email.

Recreational Use of Email:

Use of email is provided to support the curriculum, support school administration and for staff professional development only. Recreational or personal use of the school's email system is not permitted except with the prior written approval of the Headmistress.

Electronic Devices

Where available as an option on the device, any electronic device must be locked with a pin code, or other means as enabled on the device, such as fingerprint recognition) to prevent anybody being able to access the device or the internet without authorisation.

Personal Mobile Electronic Devices (e.g. Phones, Laptops, iPads and Tablets)

In line with the School's E-Safety Policy, the following rules apply to all members of staff, contractors, visitors and volunteers, with the exception of the School's Marketing Manager and the Headmistress, who are both permitted to use mobile devices (both School owned and personal) for photography and social media purposes.

The School allows staff to bring in personal mobile devices for their own personal use. Personal devices, which enable access to the Internet via mobile data or a mobile network, must be locked with a security pin/face or fingerprint recognition so that in the event of a child coming across the device, they would be unable to access content or services. Devices must be turned onto silent mode during working hours and should be stored in a drawer or bag.

The use of personal mobile devices is prohibited during working hours, save for during designated breaks or non-teaching times. At no time may personal mobile devices be used in the presence of children and, as such, devices used during breaks / non-teaching time may only be used in the staffroom, in school office areas or in an empty classroom. Personal mobile devices must not be used in classrooms where children are present or in the play areas at any time.

EYFS

With the exception of mobile devices belonging to the School, which are used to upload content to the Tapestry portal, School 's secure shared networks or for social media purposes, no mobile devices are to be used in the EYFS setting during the teaching day. Once photos / videos recorded on a School device have been uploaded to the approved locations, they should be deleted from the device.

General

Under no circumstances must devices of any kind be taken into the pupil toilets (this includes any device with photographic or video capabilities).

Staff must ensure that there is no inappropriate or illegal content on their mobile devices. Should any member of staff become aware of inappropriate or non-essential use of a mobile device, this should be reported to a member of the SLT and may be subject to disciplinary action. Staff should remind parents regularly of school policy with regard to mobile phone use.

Failure to comply with these requirements will result in disciplinary action being taken in accordance with the School's Disciplinary Policy.

CONDUCT OUTSIDE WORK

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

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

CONFIDENTIALITY

Members of staff may have access to confidential information about pupils in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities. In some circumstances staff may be given additional highly sensitive or private information. They should never use confidential or personal information about a child or their family for their own, or others' advantage. Confidential information about pupils should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need-to-know basis. In circumstances where the pupil's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously. Confidential information about pupils must be held securely.