



SAINT NICHOLAS SCHOOL

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

Note: This Code of Conduct applies to all sections of the School including EYFS

Reviewed October 2021

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Introduction

At Saint Nicholas School we believe in creating a whole school culture that is safe and inclusive. Our aims underpin the culture: principles of respect, understanding rights and responsibilities, fairness, tolerance and understanding for all. This code of conduct for all staff directly employed by Saint Nicholas School sets out key principles for the creation and maintenance of a safe school culture.

Objectives of a safe school culture:

- To safeguard pupils and protect staff
- To minimise opportunities for abuse
- For all staff to have confidence to report concerns with full confidentiality
- To respond promptly to concerns: we always investigate and address issues
- To exercise appropriate sanctions
- To make explicit expectations of performance and conduct
- To create and maintain an ethos of mutual respect, openness and fairness

Our Code of Conduct

1. All staff are expected to follow the School's policies including Behaviour; School Rules; Anti-bullying; Rewards and Sanctions.

Pupils and staff are expected to work together to build a school whose relationships are characterised by mutual and appropriate respect and promoting British Values. Praise and building on the positive should always come first. The School's Behaviour Policy and associated documents establish expectations and approved sanctions. All new staff are made aware of these policies, and any behaviour concerns should be dealt with in line with them.

Where a member of staff is having difficulties managing pupil behaviour, they should discuss this matter with their Head of Section or the Headmaster at the earliest opportunity.

2. All staff should be aware of what physical contact with pupils is appropriate

Staff should only exercise physical restraint as a last resort to prevent injury or significant damage. Corporal Punishment is not used or threatened at Saint Nicholas School.

There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force may be appropriate but every care should be taken so that this contact is not misconstrued. Staff should not initiate any physical contact unnecessarily and there should be clear boundaries. For example, staff may comfort a child who is hurt/distressed in a manner appropriate to the age of the child. Where possible any demonstration of comfort should be given in a public place and/or in the presence of other colleagues. A member of staff should never speak to or touch a pupil in a manner that could be construed as having sexual overtones or that could be interpreted as physical assault.

Examples where physical contact may be appropriate:

- holding the hand of a younger child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly;
- when comforting a distressed pupil;
- when a pupil is being congratulated or praised;
- to demonstrate how to use a musical instrument;
- to demonstrate exercises or techniques during drama, including contact relevant to the exercise such as hand-holding;
- to demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching, including contact relevant to the activity such as supporting a pupil in gymnastics and supporting young swimmers in the pool; and
- to give first aid.

Staff should be aware that under section 16 of The Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over (e.g. teacher, youth worker) to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18, where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual. A situation where a person is in a position of trust could arise where the child is in full-time education and the person looks after children under 18 in the same establishment as the child, even if s/he does not teach the child.

The use of reasonable force

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to use reasonable force to safeguard children and young people. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a young person needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is needed'. The use of reasonable force may involve either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of the classroom.

The decision on whether or not to use reasonable force to control or restrain a child is down to the professional judgement of the staff concerned and should always depend on individual circumstances. The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force can and cannot be used. Schools can use reasonable force to:

- remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;
- prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;
- prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground; and
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

When using reasonable force in response to risks presented by incidents involving children with SEN/D or with medical conditions, staff should recognise the additional vulnerability of these groups. They should also consider making reasonable adjustments and agreeing them with parents and carers in order to reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviour and the need to use reasonable force. Any member of staff involved in physically restraining a child should report it to the Headmaster immediately, who will inform the parents the same day or as soon as reasonably practicable.

3. Developing appropriate professional working relationships with pupils

Staff should be aware at all times of the need to develop and maintaining appropriate professional working relationships with pupils. Relationships between staff and pupils should be characterised by fairness, openness and respect. Politeness and respect are essential ingredients: where differences occur they should be dealt with calmly and fairly. Staff should recognise that they are the models for the pupils. Deliberately seeking to humiliate a pupil or the use of foul language is unacceptable.

In general, staff should avoid being in a room alone with a child where the door is closed and does not allow visual access e.g. through a built-in window. Where one-to-one teaching takes place, e.g. peripatetic music lessons, every effort should be made to develop clear boundaries and a culture of professional practice.

If staff need to talk to a child alone they must take common sense steps to protect themselves, and either leave a door open, position themselves within sight of the door or window or ask another adult to be present. In the event of an unforeseen situation, appropriate actions might include phoning a colleague to make them aware (and able to interrupt) or sitting behind a desk and agreeing to take notes as the interview progresses.

Conveying an individual child by car should be avoided if possible. In a situation where it is necessary, ensure that the Headmaster or Deputy Head are aware, preferably beforehand or failing that, as soon after the event as is practicable.

Particular care should be taken to maintain professional standards and integrity away from the School and in particular away from other colleagues for example during an overseas study visit or a field trip.

4. Supervision in the Changing Rooms.

A judgement about what is appropriate supervision in the changing rooms will be based on the age and developmental needs of the pupils. However, there should not be an assumption that adults will always be present in the changing room. The need to maintain good behaviour can also be achieved by being in close proximity and pupils being aware of it. Pupils should know that adults will enter the room periodically and if necessary - in response to a disturbance for example. In these cases, the following guidance should be followed:

- If there is a need for adults to enter the room it is recommended they should let pupils know by announcing it, so as to give them the opportunity to cover up if they want to;
- All adults should avoid just standing in the changing room 'watching pupils', or repeatedly going in and out without good reason;
- A code of behaviour should be established with all pupils so they are clear about expectations about their conduct whilst they are unsupervised.

5. All staff are expected to treat one another with respect and model the highest standards for pupils

Relationships between staff should be characterised by fairness, openness and respect. This means valuing all contributions, acknowledging difference, and working together to build a climate of continuous improvement. Politeness and respect are essential ingredients: where differences occur between colleagues they should be dealt with calmly and fairly. Staff should recognise that they are the model for behaviour for the pupils. Staff must also be aware that any conduct outside of school that brings the School into disrepute, may result in disciplinary action being taken.

6. All staff should treat resources responsibly and exercise due financial care

All staff have a responsibility to look after the resources of the School. This includes: not wasting resources unnecessarily (including physical resources and those such as heat/electricity); following the principles of 'reduce, re-use, recycle' where appropriate.

All money handled on school business should be sent as soon as practicable to the School office.

7. Confiscation of pupils' property

Where the property of a pupil is confiscated it should be treated with reasonable care and returned to the pupil or parent in reasonable time. Whilst the property is confiscated it is the responsibility of the member of staff to keep it safe.

Where the confiscated material is contraband or an item which in any case is not allowed in school the incident should be reported to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

8. All staff are expected to behave professionally and exercise confidentiality

All staff are expected to behave thoughtfully and responsibly. Staff should be punctual and well-prepared, and should carry out tasks to the best of their ability, taking pride in their work. All absence should be genuine.

Staff are expected to dress appropriately and should set a good example in what they wear. They are expected to maintain a smart, professional appearance and to wear appropriate clothing at all times. Shorts and very short skirts (except when required for sporting activities) and revealing garments are not considered appropriate, nor is denim acceptable. Male staff are required to wear a tie.

Staff should exercise due confidentiality towards matters that are either discussed or overheard.

9. All staff should be aware of the acceptable and appropriate use of digital and emerging technologies.

Staff are aware of the need to maintain professionalism on social media sites, where all information is potentially in the public domain and pupils or parents may gain access to information and comments posted.

Staff should not establish relationships on social media with current pupils in the school and should be cautious of any electronic communication with pupils. If staff do communicate electronically with pupils they should ensure that the communication is necessary, appropriate and that it cannot be misconstrued. If using email, staff should use school email rather than any private email account.

Staff should take considerable care when photographing and videoing children to ensure that these images are only used for appropriate and agreed purposes. There is a record, updated each year, of pupils whose parents have not given permission for the School to take photographs of their children. Please ensure that you consult this list prior to capturing images of children. Under no circumstances should staff post photographs of pupils on any social media site with the exception of the School's official sites.

Staff should not use their personal mobile phones or cameras to store pictures of children. If there is a need to capture an image, then these images must be transferred to the secure staff drive as soon as possible and deleted from the camera or phone.

Please be aware that staff visiting or working in the EYFS setting may not carry mobile phones.

Staff are subject to the Acceptable Use Policy pertaining to IT and emerging technologies.

10. Staff should seek to establish a good and open relationship with parents

Staff should aim to create a welcoming and open relationship with parents. All parental concerns should be treated seriously and dealt with promptly. Concerns and complaints should be reported to Heads of Section and logged appropriately.

11. All staff need to be aware of the policy and procedures for Child Protection and Safeguarding

“Saint Nicholas School is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and other vulnerable groups and expects all staff, parents and volunteers to share this commitment. All staff and volunteers, where appropriate, will be required to complete our safer recruitment checks including qualifications, references and enhanced DBS.”

It is essential that all staff have regular training in Child Protection and Safeguarding issues, and know the procedures for dealing with and reporting concerns. All staff are given Safeguarding Training within school annually. New members of staff are trained by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) on arrival in school and are provided with a copy of the Safeguarding/Child Protection policy as well as Part One and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2020, the Whistleblowing Policy and a copy of this Code of Conduct. Safeguarding updates are given at regular staff meetings.

All staff are responsible for safeguarding in the school and have a duty to follow the School's Safeguarding Policy, referring concerns to the DSL.

In the case of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), it is mandatory for teachers to report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless the teacher has good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss such a case with the School's DSL and involve children's social care as appropriate.

If an employee is disturbed about possible poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the School's safeguarding procedures the Headmaster should be contacted in the first instance. If the matter is not resolved by the Headmaster, then the Chair of Governors should be contacted. If, after exhausting the internal procedures, the employee remains concerned with how a child protection/safeguarding issue has been dealt with, then relevant external bodies should be contacted i.e. Essex Local Safeguarding Board. Safeguarding and Whistleblowing policies have further guidance.

12. All staff need to be aware of how to record/report concerns ("whistleblowing").

Where staff have any concerns about another member of staff, these should be reported immediately to the Headmaster. Where the concern is about the Headmaster, it should be reported to the Chair of Governors. Please refer to Whistleblowing policy for further guidance.

All concerns will be investigated thoroughly and confidentially, and appropriate action taken.

13. All staff need to exploit the potential of the curriculum to develop a proactive approach to behaviour and child protection issues.

Staff need to take a proactive approach towards both child protection and behaviour policies, through the creation of a positive classroom environment where all children are respected.

14. Staff taking medication / other substances.

Staff must not be under the influence of alcohol, or any other substance, which may affect their ability to care for and work with children.

If staff are taking medication, the School is required to ensure that staff only work directly with children if medical advice confirms that any medication taken is unlikely to impair that member of staff's ability to look after children properly. If staff are taking medication which may affect their ability to care for or work with children, that member of staff should seek medical advice.

Staff medication on the premises must be securely stored, and out of the reach of children, at all times.

The school is a smoke-free environment and smoking is not permitted in any of the school buildings or anywhere on the school site.

15. All staff should take care of their physical and mental wellbeing

All staff are encouraged to look after their physical and mental wellbeing. This includes maintaining a healthy work-life balance. We take issues of stress very seriously, and look to provide appropriate support and help in these cases. Staff needing support are encouraged to discuss issues and concerns with the Headmaster in confidence. Support can be provided both internally (eg through the provision of a mentor) or externally through the Occupational Health Service. Trades Unions also provide help, support and advice for their members.

By adhering to this Code of Conduct, staff can be assured they are playing their part in safeguarding pupils and protecting themselves. It is our expectation that all staff should sign to indicate agreement with this Code of Conduct.

I agree with Saint Nicholas School's Staff Code of Conduct

Signed Name (please print) Date