

# Whickham School and Sports College



## Code of Safe Practice

Reviewed August 2019

The aims of this code are:

- to keep pupils safe
- to reduce the risk of allegations against staff
- staff should always report to a senior member of staff anything of concern about a pupil's safety or their own
- **All** members of staff have a duty to keep pupils safe and to protect them from physical and emotional harm.
- All staff must be aware of the school's Child Protection Policy and procedures.
- If child abuse is suspected, members of staff have a duty to pass information without delay to the named persons. (**Designated Safeguarding Lead : Sarah Maher**)
- Members of staff also have a duty to take care of themselves. (Health & Safety At Work Act 1974).
- Where no specific guidance exists, members of staff are expected to make professional judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of pupils and, in so doing will be deemed to be acting *reasonably*.

Positions of power and trust

- Don't use your position to gain access to information for your own advantage or to a pupil's or family's detriment.
- Don't use your power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine pupils.
- Don't engage in sexual activity with any pupil, sixth form included, or cause or invite a pupil to engage in or watch any kind of sexual activity. Their consent is irrelevant.
- Be aware of how your actions may be viewed by others. Do not be seen to be paying special attention to a particular pupil. Always ask yourself, 'Are my actions fair, reasonable, warranted, proportionate, measured, safe and applied equitably?'

## Confidentiality & Data

- Don't share confidential information about a pupil with any person, other than on a professional need-to-know basis.
- Never promise complete confidentiality to a pupil prior to, during or after a disclosure.
- Never pass on confidential information to 'outsiders', press, police, social services etc without first seeking guidance from a senior member of staff.
- All data covered by the Data Protection Act (basically anything personal, be it academic, home background etc) should be treated in accordance with the Act, (ie with real care!). If you are unsure of whether or not the data is covered, please see School Business Manager : Hazel Davison.
- Since the 2004 Children's Act, children's child protection needs have priority over data protection, but consult Sarah Maher or Sarah Macpherson in such circumstances.

## Data Protection

- Staff have access to a range of academic, personal, medical and social information on pupils that is used to help them to ensure the personal and academic well-being and progress of the children they teach. It is vital that we respect the confidentiality of this information, whether it is stored in paper or electronic forms.

### **Do not:**

- Leave papers that contain personal information open on desks or other communal areas.
- Leave computers open that display or contain personal information on pupils. When accessing such information ensure that computers are not linked to OHP/whiteboards.
- Discuss sensitive information on pupils in corridors, on duty or other areas where such discussions could be overheard.

## Electronic Data Security

- Keep sensitive or personal data in school on secure systems.
- Only take home data that you require and ensure it is stored on the encrypted data stick only.

### **Personal or sensitive data is:**

- (i) Anything that could identify a living individual (other than yourself)
- (ii) School information that is not in the public domain, such as Raise, FFT, internal analysis, critical analysis.

### **DO**

- Change your password regularly, or whenever you think there is a possibility it has been compromised.
- Report lost or missing data.
- Keep a back-up on the school's secure system, not local hard drives.

## DON'T

- Write your password down.
- Allow anyone else to know your password.

## Propriety

- Don't behave in such a manner that would lead any reasonable person to question your suitability to work with children or act as a role model.
- Don't make sexual remarks to a pupil (including email, text messages, phone and letter) or behave in any way which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative.
- Don't discuss your own sexual preferences or sexual relationships with or in the presence of pupils.
- Don't discuss a pupil's individual sexual relationships in full class or in other inappropriate contexts or settings.
- Don't make unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate pupils.

## Infatuations

- Report immediately to S Haigh or a member of the Leadership Team, any indications (verbal, written or physical) that suggest a pupil may be infatuated with you, or with a colleague.

## Dress

- Dress decently, safely and appropriately. (See staff dress code).

## Gifts

- Don't accept any gift which might be construed by others as a bribe, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. Small 'thank yous' are OK, but don't receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.
- Generally only give gifts to a pupil as part of the schools reward systems. In any other context, ensure that any gifts given are of insignificant value and given to all children equally.

## Contact

- Don't try to establish social contact with pupils or friendships or a relationship.
- Don't give personal details to pupils, eg home/mobile phone numbers, home or email address, unless checked with and agreed by senior staff.
- Don't give your school mobile number to pupils or parents without senior staff agreement.
- Any contact with parents or pupils by email must be by school email.
- Any unwelcome communications to members of staff, be they written or visual, from pupils or parents should be reported immediately.

## Physical Contact

- As a general rule, do not touch pupils.
- Physical contact should never be secretive or for personal gratification, or of a type which may be considered indecent.
- There are occasions when it is appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but you should only touch when it is appropriate and proper to do so in your professional judgement. Physical contact should be in response to a child's needs at the time, of limited duration, and appropriate given their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.
- Some staff (eg PE, music and SEN staff) may need to initiate physical contact, eg in order to support a child so they can perform a task safely, to demonstrate a particular piece of equipment/instrument or assist them with an exercise. This should be done with the pupil's understanding of the reason and their consent, and in an 'open' environment.
- Don't indulge in horseplay, tickling or fun fights.
- Use extra caution when it is known that a pupil has suffered previous abuse or neglect.
- Report immediately to S Haigh, any physical contact which concerns you or which you believe may have been misconstrued.

## Pupils in distress

- There may be rare occasions when a very distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance, including limited age-appropriate physical contact, principally with your youngest pupils.
- Be self-aware, avoid any contact which may be intrusive or open to misinterpretation.
- Tell a colleague if you have offered comfort to a distressed pupil.

## Control and physical intervention

- Always try to diffuse situations without physical intervention.
- Members of staff are not expected to put themselves at physical risk, but you may intervene to prevent a pupil from injuring themselves or others. You may use only *reasonable* force. There is no legal definition of reasonable force, but you must be sure that any physical intervention is warranted by the circumstances of the particular incident (ie not in response to a trivial action), and that the degree of force used is in proportion to the seriousness of the behaviour, or the consequences it is intended to prevent. Any force used should be the minimum to achieve the desired result.

## Showers and changing

- Pupils are of course entitled to privacy and therefore you should announce your intention of entering the changing rooms.
- avoid visually intrusive behaviour.

- don't touch a pupil in a state of undress.
- don't remain there unless pupil needs require it.
- don't change or shower in the same place.
- be particularly careful about gender issues.

## Behaviour Management

- Don't use physical intimidation or invade a pupil's space.
- Don't use force as a form of punishment.
- Don't use sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments.
- Always try to remain calm and diffuse situations before they escalate.
- Never try to bar a pupil's 'way' or to physically prevent a pupil from leaving a room or a situation, unless of course they may constitute a threat to themselves or others. Calmly advise them that leaving against your instructions constitutes defiance.
- Apply the school's Code of Conduct fairly and consistently so as to minimise the risk of pupils perceiving injustice or victimisation.

## One-to-one situations

- Avoid meeting in remote, secluded areas of the school.
- Ensure there are visual access and/or an open door wherever possible.
- Try to ensure that there are other members of staff around or at least aware of the meeting.
- Don't use 'engaged' or equivalent signs.
- If you have reason to be concerned about a one-to-one meeting in advance, because of a pupil's previous behaviour or vulnerability, arrange for a colleague to be present, especially where there is a gender difference.
- Don't pre-arrange meetings with pupils away from the school premises, expect (exceptionally) with the approval of the parent and the headteacher.

## Overnight supervision during exams

- This should never be undertaken without prior arrangement with the exam board and with senior staff.
- Only staff volunteers would be used and they would be fully briefed about appropriate and safe practice.

## Transporting pupils

- You should not transport pupils in your own vehicle, especially one-to-one, without the consent of the pupil, parent and line manager.
- You must always have valid business insurance for this purpose.
- Never transport a pupil to hospital in your own vehicle following an accident. Always call an ambulance.

## Educational visits and after school activities

- Observe all aspects of the school policy on educational visits.
- Always have another adult present in out-of-school activities, unless otherwise agreed by a line manager.
- Check with students that there is parental consent to the activity.
- Remember that in these less formal contexts you are still in a legal position of trust and need to ensure that your behaviour is professional at all times and cannot be interpreted as seeking to establish an inappropriate relationship or friendship.

## First aid and administration of medicines

- No medicine should be given by the school without written parental consent. This includes aspirin, ibuprofen, paracetamol etc.
- Staff are not expected to administer or to supervise the taking of medicines unless specifically authorised and trained to do so.
- Pupils needing medication regularly should have a health care plan drawn up by the school health adviser.
- Wherever possible, first aid should only be given by our trained volunteer staff and by staff of the same gender if possible. Try to ensure that another adult is present, or at least aware, when first aid is administered. In exceptional emergency circumstances it may be necessary for an untrained member of staff to intervene. If so, do the minimum required whilst awaiting specialist support.
- Always report any incident or first aid administration to the school first aid coordinator as parents must be informed. Details must be recorded in the first aid file.
- A member of staff should always accompany a child taken to hospital by ambulance, and should stay until the parent arrives.

## Curriculum

- Care should be taken that resource materials are appropriate and relate to the planned learning objectives.
- Sensitive issues (e.g. relating to sex, race, religion, gender, disability) should be handled with care, especially where unplanned discussion arises.
- Do not enter into or encourage inappropriate or offensive discussion about sexual activity.
- Remember that parents have a legal right to withdraw children from all or any part of sex education (but not from the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction integral to the science curriculum).
- Don't show visual material which is inappropriate for the age of the pupils concerned, taking special care over the use of videos.

## Photographic and video images

It is very good practice at times to record photographic and video images of pupils, or to allow pupils to record such images of each other, eg to assist teaching and learning, to celebrate achievement, for publicity.

Because of the potential for images of children to be misused for pornographic or grooming purposes, staff should follow this code:

- Only record images when there is a justifiable need.
- Be clear to pupils about why the images are being recorded and what will happen to them.
- Ensure that a more senior colleague is aware that you are recording images.
- Ensure that all images recorded are available for scrutiny, in order to screen for acceptability.
- Avoid making images in one to one situations.
- Images of pupils should not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without the consent of the pupil or parent/carer.
  1. Students aged 13+ have the right to issue or withdraw their own consents for the use of their images.
  2. Parents / Legal Guardians are asked for consent for the use of images for promotional/media images of pupils aged 12 or below. Their answers are held within SIMS. Students are given the opportunity to update their own consents on their entry into Year 9 and their preferences are updated in SIMS. (see Guidance notes for images, media and permission for full information.)
- Where the school has decided that images should be retained for further use, they should be securely stored and used only by those authorised to do so.
- No photos or videos of school events/activities should be taken by parents or others.

### Internet Use

- Staff must follow the school policy on the use of IT equipment and the internet.
- Accessing child pornography, or making, storing or disseminating such materials is illegal and, if proven, will lead to a bar from teaching / working with children.
- Staff must not use school IT equipment to access adult pornography, on or off site.

### Advice

- Staff should make a report to the Headteacher (or Deputy Headteacher in his absence) of any behaviour by colleagues which gives cause for concern in relation to safeguarding the wellbeing of pupils.
- If any incident occurs which may result in an action being misinterpreted and/or an allegation being made against a member of staff, then the relevant information should be recorded promptly and reported to the Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher.
- Members of staff who are the subject of allegations are advised to contact their professional association.

This policy has been written to support staff and pupils by being as clear as possible about safe conduct. Inevitably, situations will arise that the policy doesn't cover, and staff should seek advice from members of the Leadership Team.





