

Code of Conduct for Employees Policy

Heathlands School





Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Board.

The policy was agreed by the Full Governing Board on 9 October 2024

Next Review due October 2026

Co-Headteachers Signature:		Date: 9.10.24
Governor Signature:		Date: 9.10.24

INTRODUCTION

The Governing Body is required to set out a Code of Conduct for all school employees. The following code has been negotiated with Trade Unions and is recommended for adoption by the Governing Body.

In addition to this policy, all staff employed under Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Employment have a statutory obligation to adhere to the 'Teachers' Standards 2012' and in relation to this policy, Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct.

Employees should be aware that a failure to comply with the following Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including dismissal.

1. Objective, Scope and Principles

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school employees are expected to observe. All staff are role models and are in a unique position of influence therefore must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the pupils within the school.

This Code of Conduct applies to all employees of the school. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

In addition to this Code of Conduct, all employees engaged to work under Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Employment have a statutory obligation to adhere to the 'Teachers' Standards 2012' and in relation to this policy, Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct.

This Code helps all staff to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable, regard should also be given to the disciplinary rules set out in the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure which may be found on the staff drive in the School Office Admin file. Staff should be aware that a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including, but not limited to, dismissal.

2. Setting an Example

All staff who work in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils. Staff must for example avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times towards anyone.

All staff must, demonstrate high standards of conduct to encourage pupils to do the same.

All staff must avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

All staff are expected to familiarise themselves and comply with all school policies and procedures.

3. Safeguarding Pupils

Staff have a duty to read and follow Keeping Children Safe in Education throughout their employment and abide by the duties placed upon them within this.

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from all forms of abuse.

The duty to safeguard pupils includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil or colleague to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

The school's DSL is Sarah Shields. The Deputy DSLs are Lesley Reeves Costi, Pauline Jordan and Sabrina Lee.

Staff have access to the Child Protection Policy, Safeguarding Policy and Whistleblowing procedures which is found on the staff drive, in the Policies file within School Office Admin file. Staff must be familiar with these documents.

Staff should treat pupils with respect and dignity and must not demean or undermine pupils, their parents or carers, or colleagues.

Staff should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of pupils or adults, embarrassing or humiliating pupils or adults, discriminating against or favouring pupils.

Staff must take good care of pupils under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.

4. Relationships

It is recognised that staff may have genuine social contact with some parents and families outside school. This is especially the case within the deaf community, these relationships are easily recognised and openly acknowledged. Staff should inform the Co-Headteachers of any regular social contact they have with a pupil which could give rise to concern. Staff should inform the Co-Headteachers of any relationship with a parent where this extends beyond the usual parent/professional relationship.

Staff must declare any relationships that they may have with pupils outside of school; this may include mutual membership of social groups, tutoring, or similar. Staff should not assume that the school are aware of any such connections. A declaration form may be found in appendix 2 of this document.

Relationships with pupils must be professional at all times. Physical relationships with pupils are not permitted and may lead to a criminal conviction.

Encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which may lead to a sexual relationship or any other inappropriate relationship will be viewed as a grave breach of trust.

Contact with pupils and their parents must be via school-authorized mechanisms and solely for educational purposes. At no time should personal telephone numbers, text, email addresses or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with pupils.

If contacted by a pupil by an inappropriate route, staff should report the contact to their Line Manager immediately.

Behaviour giving rise to concern should also be reported which includes pupils seeking affection, being sexually provocative or exhibiting overly familiar behaviour.

Existing or new personal relationships at work between colleagues should be declared to the Co-Headteachers. This may be due to a risk of allegations of bias or conflict of interest for example. The Co-Headteachers will treat declarations in confidence in accordance with the Relationships at Work Policy which may be found in the Policies file on the staff drive.

Staff should inform the Co-Headteachers of any relationships which may create an enhanced risk to children so that necessary steps can be taken eg cohabitation with a person convicted of a serious offence.

5. Pupil Development

Staff must comply with school policies and procedures to support the wellbeing and development of pupils.

Staff must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues and external agencies to support the development of pupils.

Staff must follow reasonable instructions that support the development of pupils.

6. Honesty and Integrity

Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.

All staff must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or if they request, agree or accept, or receive a bribe from another person. If you believe that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act, you should refer to the school's Whistleblowing procedure which may be found in the Policies file on the staff drive.

Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to the Co-Headteachers, with the exception of "one off" token gifts from pupils or parents. Personal gifts from individual members of staff to pupils are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted and may lead to disciplinary action. A record will be kept of all gifts received over the value of £40.

Staff must not act on behalf of the school unless they have the authority to do so.

Professional references from the school will be provided by the Co-Headteachers or, where delegated, by the Deputy and Assistant Head. References given by other members of staff must be clear that they are provided in a personal capacity.

7. Conduct outside of Work

Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation of the school or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community. In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022, any conduct or behaviour that indicates an employee may not be suitable to work with children including such behaviour outside of the workplace which may or may not involve children is likely to be regarded as unacceptable.

For example, should a member of staff be involved in domestic violence at home and no children were involved, the school will need to consider what triggered these actions and question whether a child in the school could trigger the same reaction, therefore be put at risk

In addition, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable where it brings into question an employee's suitability or ability to do their role/work in an educational setting.

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 in the school. It is recommended that permission is sought in advance.

- Staff must disclose any work outside school or outside business interests where there is a potential conflict of interests with their employment at the school.
- If any allegation of wrongdoing occurs in a staff member's work outside school (whether or not they deny this) which may have a bearing on their employment they must disclose this immediately to the Co-Headteachers or their Line Manager.

Forming inappropriate relationships or friendships with children or young people who are pupils under the age of 18 at another school/college will be viewed as inappropriate and impact upon the school's ability to trust the member of staff to maintain professional boundaries with pupils at the school.

A work related social event is considered to be an extension of the workplace and as such the standards of behaviour expected at these events is in line with this policy.

8. E-Safety and Internet Use

Staff must exercise caution when using technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Regard should be given to the Online Safety Policy and Acceptable User Agreements, which may be found on the staff drive Policies file, at all times both inside and outside of work.

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social media sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute. Staff should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have.

Staff should exercise caution in their use of all social media or any other web based presence that they may have, including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts established by others. This may also include the use of dating websites where staff could encounter pupils either with their own profile or acting covertly.

Contact with pupils should only made via the use of school email accounts or telephone/videocall equipment when appropriate and strictly for educational reasons.

Photographs or video footage of pupils should only be taken using school equipment, for purposes authorised by the school. Any such use should always be transparent and only occur where parental consent has been given. The resultant files from such recording or taking of photographs must be stored in accordance with the school's procedures on school equipment.

9. Confidentiality

Where staff have access to confidential information about pupils or their parents or carers, staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil.

All staff may at some point witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a pupil is bullied by another pupil (or by a member of staff), this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate school procedure. It must not be discussed outside the school, including with the pupils, including with the pupils' parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the school except with a senior member of staff with the appropriate authority to deal with the matter.

However, staff have an obligation to share with their manager or the school's Designated Senior Person any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a pupil. Staff must not promise a pupil that they will not act on information that they are told by the pupil.

Staff are not allowed to make any comment to the media about the school, its performance, governance, pupils or parents without written approval. Any media queries should be directed to the Co-Headteachers.

10. Dress and Appearance

All staff must dress in a manner that is appropriate to their role and promote a professional image with no trainers or denim to be worn. Residential staff can dress casually which befits the role.

Staff should dress in a manner that is absent from political or other contentious slogans.

11. Compliance

All staff must complete the form in appendix 1 to confirm they have read, understood and agreed to comply with the code of conduct. This form should then be signed and dated.

Appendix 1

Staff Dress Code

For all staff in school when pupils are in school

Teaching is a formal and professional vocation. The staff dress code should reflect this and it is important that staff project a professional image to students, parents and other stakeholders.

In order to ensure that staff present a consistently professional and positive image it is necessary to make expectations clear. This document is also designed to help protect staff, so that if their dress is seen as inappropriate it can be approached in a neutral way rather than a comment that could be seen as personal and judgement based.

We understand there are differences teaching in Upper and Lower school so have made some adjustments.

Aims

Our aim in having a dress code for staff is to ensure:

- Clear guidelines are given for staff, students on placements and volunteers in school.
- Staff are suitably dressed to meet safeguarding and professional expectations.
- That, through such a professional dress code, all pupils are encouraged to see the staff as positive role models with regards to the expected professional appearance at school.

Guidelines

As part of safeguarding for staff and pupils it is important that staff wear clothing which is:

- Appropriate to their role and is suitable for the activity e.g. 'moving and handling' or sitting on the floor; and decide whether trousers are more appropriate than a skirt.
- Not likely to be viewed as offensive or revealing.
- Not distracting, taking into consideration 'visual noise' which is distracting for deaf students.
- Appropriate for the task or role in school and not breach Health and Safety regulations.
- Absent from any political or otherwise contentious slogans
- Shoes must be supportive with a professional presentation. Shoes or smart trainers fitting with smart casual dress code are acceptable. For lower school staff any sandals worn must be supportive and have a back strap.

The Site Team are provided with navy polo shirts, trousers and work boots to wear whilst undertaking their duties.

During **out-of-school visits** the dress code applies (see above), however if pupils are required to wear alternative clothing then the same will apply for staff based on the specific circumstances of the visit.

Suitable Clothing for Physical Education:

Lower school staff will need to change into trainers for PE sessions and are expected to change back after the lesson.

Upper school PE teacher would wear PE clothes during all PE teaching lessons.

Swimming:

Appropriate attire should be worn for swimming.

- Swimsuit or swimming trunks (covered by shorts and T-shirt if desired)
- Modesty swimwear including semi and full cover swimsuits, burqini, veilkini

Non uniform Inset days:

On INSET days, non- uniform days or when staff are on trips where normal professional dress would be inappropriate, staff should remember that they are still 'on display' and acting as role models and ambassadors for the school.

Non uniform days should follow the ethos of the staff dress code with a 'casual' twist. Therefore denim, trainers, hoodies, t-shirts are acceptable on those days. On 'themed' dress days such as 'Wear it Pink', the dress code is to be applied with the exception of the coloured or themed item/s.

Nails, Body Art and Jewellery:

- Nails (natural/gel/false) should be kept at sensible length so they do not prevent staff from undertaking everyday tasks or pose a risk to others in practical lessons.
- Offensive/inappropriate tattoos should be covered.
- Jewellery should be kept to a minimum and is always worn at the individual's own risk. Long earrings, necklaces, chains, etc. are discouraged. Care must be taken to ensure it does not cause a health and safety hazard and that jewellery cannot injure a pupil unintentionally. Staff should be mindful of placing themselves at risk of allegation through the wearing of technologically advanced items eg. iWatches.

Additional notes:

The Governing Body are sympathetic to cultural and religious dress. However, it is crucial that staff meet our expectations of suitable clothing and footwear. Careful consideration has been given to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and to race equality. Members of staff, whilst being respectably dressed should not wear clothing that could have implications for the health and safety of themselves, or others in their care. An important consideration is Health and Safety when teaching or assisting in PE lessons. Any clothing must not present a trip hazard or be able to catch on equipment or apparatus.

Whilst "common sense" principles apply to vast majority of decisions staff make about their conduct and presentation at work, the table below is here to help with the interpretation of the Dress Code Policy:

Restrictions

While staff are encouraged to exercise their own professional judgement on their appearance, there are some items which are deemed unacceptable, as follows:

- Leisure or sportswear (except for PE or sports events)
- Denim jeans/skirts/jackets
- Inappropriate or excessively casual footwear e.g. flip flops, crocs.
- Strappy dresses (i.e. have narrow shoulder straps)
- Jeggings
- Leggings (unless worn under a tunic).
- Excessive body piercings
- Clothing made of sheer fabric or exposing underwear
- Clothing that exposes midriff or underwear
- Clothing that is tight enough to expose the outline of underwear
- Skirts/dresses that are shorter than just above the knee
- Niqabs worn for religious purposes that cover the face and prevent lipreading
- Hats (unless special permission granted)

Appendix 2

Relationships with pupils outside of work declaration

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby employees of the school are known to pupils outside of work. Examples include membership of sports clubs, or private tutoring.

Staff must declare any relationship outside of school that they may have with pupils.

Employee Name	Pupil Name	Relationship

I can confirm that I am fully aware of the code of conduct relating to contact out of school with pupils in line with this policy.

If I am tutoring a pupil outside of school I am aware that the following must be adhered to:

- I do not, at any point, teach the child in question as part of my daily timetable - this is a stipulation of such tutoring
- I emphasise to parents that this is done completely independently of the school
- No monies come through the school at any point, informally (e.g. via the pupil) or formally
- No private tutoring is to take place on the school premises

I confirm that if these circumstances change at any time I will complete a new form to ensure the school are aware of any relationships.

Signed

Date

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the school office

Appendix 3

Confirmation of compliance

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with the school's code of conduct.

Name

Position/Post Held.....

Signed

Date

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the School Office