

## Mission Statement

In Christ We Grow – As a learning community we live out our mission statement striving for excellence through caring, sharing and achieving.

**All staff are required to sign that they have received, and will adhere to, the policies provided.**

### Safeguarding responsibilities

Designated Senior Person (DSP) – Mrs K Lawson

Back-up DSP – Mrs T Poskitt

Governor Responsible – Mrs K Gresty

### Introduction

Even if it were desirable to do so, it would not be possible to write an exhaustive list of rules governing staff conduct. Staff should be trusted in the discharge of their responsibilities, which implies allowing room for initiative and judgement. In fairness to staff, however, it is important to set out guidelines as to where the exercise of that initiative and judgement could potentially bring them into conflict with others.

Whilst there are clearly areas of our professional lives, for example, finance or health and safety, where rules simply have to be obeyed, the staff Code of Professional Standards is by and large, not a document that can be adhered to in that sense. Its purpose is to communicate to all staff a shared expectation of member of staff's duty to the rest of the School community.

There may be occasions when a member of staff wants to know how a particular aspect of conduct might be regarded, when measured against the staff Code of Professional Standards. Staff should seek the Headteacher's advice if they are in doubt of this kind.

In order to compile this document, there has been consultation with staff and governors, LA advice, research with other institutions and professional bodies and close alignment with the Standards Framework which is available at the TDA website.

## Representing the School

In order to preserve the reputation of the School, staff must:

- Obtain approval from the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher before contacting the press or committing school resources other than for those which they have responsibility.
- Take care over the use of school headed paper and the school logos, whether for themselves or for the learners that they are supervising. They should not be used for personal correspondence.
- Maintain professional standards of conduct towards others at all times.
- Dress appropriately when acting in a professional capacity and with due regard from the conclusions others may draw from their attire. (see Dress Code).
- Ensure punctuality and professionalism when attending meetings with outside agencies, CPD sessions or meeting with stakeholders and have due regard and respect for the dignity of individual stakeholders.

## Additional Professional Responsibilities

Whilst it is proper that staff should receive the rewards of their own professional and academic endeavours, it is also essential to the mutual interests of both staff and the school that these are not achieved at any cost to primary contractual commitments. To this end, staff should be clearly aware of the importance of ensuring that the Headteacher is kept informed as to their intentions in the following areas:

- Except in the case of employees with supply contracts, the proposed undertaking of additional paid employment
- Any interest they may have regarding the appointment of staff, selection of learners or contracts with which they may be involved on the school's behalf.

In addition staff are reminded that they are expected at all times to observe the following professional obligations:

- To preserve the confidentiality of information relating to the school's staff, learners, finances, marketing and strategic planning, together with any further information rightly to be judged the property of the school. Any work carried during school time is legally the property of the school
- To preserve this same degree of confidentiality for twelve months after leaving the school's employment
- To exercise proper professional discretion in the event of their being offered hospitality or gifts of any kind
- To wear their school ID at all times so that it is visible to others

## School Property

In order to preserve the quality of the school's environment and physical resources staff must ensure that:

- They, and learners for whom they are responsible, look after school premises and property which they use
- Procedures for borrowing school equipment are observed (see Property Manager)
- Energy is conserved wherever possible
- The security of school property is maintained as well as possible and not put at risk
- They pay the school for any costs incurred by the personal use of school equipment (e.g. fax, photocopier). However, in calculating this staff should bear in mind any costs that they may have incurred by the use of their own equipment on school business
- Staff should also assist with the security of the school by directing to Reception anyone who they think might be a stranger on site.

## **Communications (Safeguarding all staff and learners)**

### Communications with Learners

1. See section: Relationships

### Personal Letters Home

1. When it is appropriate for staff to write letters to parents, then **all** letters must be passed to Mrs N Barber to be referenced, filed, checked and presented on headed paper.
2. Personal notes in journals to parents must be signed and dated using appropriate language at all times. The note should clearly state the reason for writing and ask for a parental comment and signature. Any member of staff who is unsure should refer the issue to their line manager or a senior colleague.

### Communications by Electronic Mail

1. All staff communicating through e-mail to stakeholders or outside agencies must be aware that an informal register is not appropriate. Staff must ensure that communications do not convey an inappropriate tone. In particular friendly and chatty styles committed to e-mails can be easily misconstrued by the recipient as the 'conversation' is effectively private to just two individuals, with all that this implies.
2. Staff are required to check their e-mails on a daily basis and are further required to empty their folders on a weekly basis to ensure that the system remains free. This must not be completed while in charge of children.

3. Staff communicating with learners through school e-mail should ensure that communications do not convey an inappropriate tone. Staff must ensure that images, sound files and written communication are suitably professional at all times. Staff must not use their personal e-mail accounts to communicate with learners or parents.
4. The increased availability of internet, VLE 'chat-rooms' and similar on-line forums pose significant problems. Staff should under no circumstance use unregulated chat rooms for discussions with their learners. School systems should be used with caution and language should remain professional at all times and care should be taken to ensure that communications cannot be perceived as friendly or indeed misconstrued. Staff are strongly advised that social networking sites e.g. Facebook should not be used to socialise or communicate with either current or former learners.
5. All staff must ensure that their passwords to laptops enabling access to e-mail accounts are never given to other staff or learners (except ICT technicians). This will ensure that malicious messages can not be sent and that confidential materials remain secure. The Headteacher or a senior colleague has the right to access staff e-mails as required.
6. All staff must ensure that when communicating electronically with other staff that materials and resources are not offensive, discriminative, and racially discriminative or of a sexual nature. Any instances of misconduct will result in disciplinary procedures being followed. No electronic communication is allowed when in charge of children.
7. The use of external hard drives and memory sticks must be virus free and should be used with extreme caution when holding information about children. The utmost care must be taken to ensure that the Data Protection Act is fully adhered to.

### School Portal

All staff **must** access the school portal on a regular basis.

### Personal Phone Calls/Use of Mobile Phones

1. Outgoing personal phone calls are not permitted from the school phone. In an emergency please contact a senior colleague. Phone calls from departments will be logged and monitored.

2. Incoming personal phone calls will only be accepted in emergency or with prior agreement from the Headteacher. Personal business phone calls will not be directed to you. Switchboard staff have instructions not to connect personal business calls.
3. Mobile phones must not be used in lessons or while on duty and should remain switched off during learner contact time. Associate staff should have their mobile phones locked away during the hours of work. If staff must make calls, they should be between lessons and out of the sight of learners.
4. Under no circumstances should staff use their personal mobile phone or landline to contact parents or children.

### Personal Letters

1. Personal letters should not be sent through the school system without authorisation from the Headteacher or Business Manager.
2. Personal mail is not permitted to be directed to school without prior agreement of the Headteacher or Business Manager

### Text Messages

1. Text messages to learners and parents must be sent via the school system through Learner Services. Messages must be appropriate and have a professional tone. Messages must not contain any elements which could be misconstrued or that have a sexual connotation. Text messages to parents and learners must not, under any circumstances, be sent by staff phones.
2. Staff must ensure that when text messaging other colleagues that consent to use this facility is arranged. All staff must ensure that messages are appropriate and that they could not be misconstrued as: discriminative, racially discriminative or as sexual harassment.

### The Internet

1. The use of the internet is not permitted for personal use during working hours as this is a breach of professional conduct. Staff are, however, free to use the internet for personal business before 08:00 and after 16:00. (Please refer to ICT policy)
2. The use of the internet to support learning must be appropriate to the unit of work and the ICT policy

## Social Networking Sites

1. The use of Social Networking Sites is actively discouraged as staff are potentially putting private information in the public domain. All staff have a duty to uphold Catholic values inline with your Catholic Education Service contracts. Where issues are reported to the school, for example, inappropriate language, inappropriate images etc., then staff are subject to disciplinary procedures. Staff who choose to use these sites must not add learners as their 'friends' until they have reached the age of 25 as this contravenes safeguarding procedures.
2. Staff should not have photographs of their children on display as these can be used to create social networking accounts by scanning images of children. This includes on laptops as screensavers etc. Please do not leave photographs of your children where they can be easily accessed by learners.

## **Relationships (Safeguarding all staff and learners)**

### Working with Learners - General

1. In their dealings with learners in and out of school Our Lady Queen of Peace expects that all staff will ensure their relationships with learners are never of a kind that could compromise their professional abilities. In addition, staff should always ensure relationships promote a high standard of behaviour and morality.
2. Staff must ensure that their relationships with learners reflect their age, gender and maturity of the child.
3. Staff must ensure that all aspects of language, attitudes and demeanours – however conveyed – do not give rise to misunderstandings, especially when dealing with adolescent boys and girls.

### Physical Contact

Physical contact may be misconstrued by a learner, parent or observer. Touching learners, including well-intentioned informal and formal gestures such as putting a hand on the shoulder or arm, can if repeated regularly, lead to questions being raised. Staff must not make gratuitous physical contact with learners and should avoid attributing 'touching' to their teaching style as a way of relating to learners.

There will be occasions when physical contact will be acceptable. In general these will fall into one of four categories:

### 1. Action to prevent harm or injury to the learner or to others

If it is necessary to prevent a learner causing injury to him/herself or to others the use of minimum force and contact necessary to prevent harm or injury is acceptable and defensible. Such incidents must always be reported on the appropriate documentation contained within this guidance.

Further advice is contained in the LA document 'Guidance on Physical Intervention for Teachers and Other Employees Working with Young People'.

### 2. Comforting a learner in distress

There is no easy definition of what is acceptable since much will depend on the circumstances, the age of the learner, the extent and cause of the distress and the alternative means of providing comfort. Employees will need to use their professional judgement and discretion in relation to these factors. Employees should consider how others might perceive the action and ensure that it does not develop into unnecessary contact. Particular care must be taken in instances, which involve the same learner over a period of time. Staff must not comfort or deal with a learner in distress alone.

### 3. Unavoidable contact

This is a particularly sensitive issue in subjects such as Physical Education and Drama and in some forms of skills coaching. All teachers must be alert to the possibilities of misinterpreting any contact. To avoid such misunderstanding all planned contact must be demonstrably unavoidable. It may be, for example, that alternative methods involving demonstrations of particular techniques by the teacher or a particularly competent learner may be more appropriate than modifying a learner's technique by physical contact. It will generally not be acceptable for physical contact to take place between adolescent learners and teachers. In cases of doubt or uncertainty staff should seek advice from their Headteacher or a senior colleague.

There are other occasions when physical contact may be questioned even if innocent in intention. Employees should therefore ensure that their actions recognise the possibility of misinterpretation and are open to the scrutiny of colleagues. Individual professional judgments will be required about the level of physical contact with individual children, which will take account of their age, circumstances and background.

#### 4. Searching Learners

Please be advised that it is legally acceptable to search learners when there is a health and safety concern raised e.g. in possession of a knife or drugs. Staff must always ensure that there are two members of staff present of the same gender as the child.

#### Corporal Punishment

Any form of physical punishment is prohibited under disciplinary procedures and potentially actionable in law. This also applies to any form of physical response to misbehaviour, with the exception noted above.

#### Private meetings

Private meetings, by their very nature, provide opportunities for learners to make malicious allegations. Teachers and others must therefore recognise this possibility and plan such meetings accordingly. It is advisable to avoid remote areas of the school and to ensure that wherever possible the door is left open or visual contact with others is maintained. Under no circumstances should meetings with individual learners be arranged off the school premises without the prior approval of the Headteacher or any senior colleague with delegated authority to approve such meetings. This includes the transporting of individual children in private cars. Such meetings should, in any event, be discouraged.

Where it is not possible to meet in the circumstances referred to above another member of staff should be told of the meeting beforehand. Steps to prevent others entering a room by the use of 'Meeting in Progress' are especially likely to be open to misinterpretation. In many cases it will be advisable for another learner or adult to be present or in a position to minimise risk during the interview. Also use offices or rooms with windows and vision panel doors. Vision panels in classrooms or offices must never be covered.

### Learners with Special Needs

If learners require assistance with toileting staff should consider whether it would be possible to arrange for the presence of another adult in the vicinity. Where this is not possible employees should discuss with their Headteacher what arrangements will be reasonable in all the circumstances. The Headteacher may refer to the matter to the relevant agency for further advice.

### First Aid

The existence of any life threatening or serious condition will determine the suitability and necessity of physical contact. In the absence of such justification employees who administer first aid should ensure that, wherever possible, other children or another adult can be present if there is any doubt over the possibility of any physical contact being misconstrued.

### Comments and Discussions with Learners (please refer to Safeguarding)

Employees must avoid comments to or about learners which could be taken to have sexual overtones. It is equally unacceptable for employees to encourage debate and discussion between groups of learners, which could be interpreted as having sexual overtones, which are not justified in the context of the teaching programme or supportive of our Catholic Ethos. It will be especially helpful if Schemes of Work highlight particular areas of risk and sensitivity.

Specific guidance may be needed to assist newly qualified or other teachers who are new to this area of work. This will call for the exercise of careful judgment in responding to questions raised by a learner. Notwithstanding the advice given above it is recognised that, in order to discharge particular pastoral responsibilities, employees may from time to time need to engage in conversation with learners which cover sensitive matters. Staff must use their professional judgement to ensure that they are not drawn into areas inappropriate to their duties or their relationship with the learners concerned. Staff must also use their discretion to ensure that, for example, any probing for details cannot be construed as unjustified intrusion.

In responding to individual learners' distress employees will need to consider carefully whether they should offer advice, sympathy or counselling if a discussion enters a sensitive

area or, alternatively, refer them to a colleague or agency who is better placed to offer appropriate advice.

The use of sarcastic, demeaning or insensitive comments towards young people may also be regarded as a form of abuse which is potentially very damaging and should be avoided.

#### Infatuations and Crushes (Safeguarding Policy)

These unfortunately do develop and can involve learners and teachers of both sexes on both a heterosexual and homosexual basis. They need to be handled sensitively. Careless and insensitive reactions have been known to provoke false accusations. It is therefore in the interest of all parties to avoid adding to the learner's problems by encouraging the crush or making jokes about the situation. In such situations the advice of a senior colleague must be sought. Other members of staff have a part to play, too, in alerting a colleague to the possibility of an infatuation in order that appropriate steps can be taken to minimise hurt and distress and the risk to the teacher concerned. Whilst the risk of infatuation is not limited to younger members of staff, newly qualified teachers must recognise their particular vulnerability to adolescent infatuation.

#### Out of School and After-School Activities (Safeguarding Policy)

Employees should take particular care when supervising learners in the less formal atmosphere of a residential setting or after-school activity. The more relaxed relationships that may promote successful activities can be misinterpreted by young people. It is important to emphasise that the standards of professional conduct and behaviour expected of employees should be no different to that which applies within school. Employees should be aware of the particular care, which should be taken with older, more mature learners in these circumstances.

#### Teaching materials

The use of books, videos and films of an explicit or sensitive nature, particularly in relation to language or sexual behaviour must be given careful consideration to ensure that its selection is not subsequently misinterpreted. There should always, therefore, be a clear link with the targets of the teacher's programme. Materials must not be used which have an age restriction which is higher than the target audience.

## Reporting Incidents

Staff should report any concerns they may have following any incident where s/he feels that his/her actions may have been misinterpreted. This report should be made to the Headteacher as soon as possible after the incident and should include as an immediate follow-up the preparation of a written note of the incident, a copy of which should be given to the Headteacher. The teacher may also wish to seek advice from his/her professional association.

Whilst reporting of incidents is always advisable it is particularly important to ensure that a written record is made if any form of restraint has been used against a learner or whenever a learner, parent or third party has complained about an action or expressed an intention to complain. See documentation in this guidance.

## **Working with Colleagues**

1. All staff must at all times treat colleagues with respect and courtesy. This includes attending meetings, directed time and meeting deadlines on which their colleagues depend.
2. In order to assist their colleagues, staff must adhere to the school's policies and procedures. For purposes of illustration, copies of policies can be found in this document