



RICKMANSWORTH SCHOOL

Code of Professional Conduct Policy

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OVERVIEW

Purpose

This Code of Conduct Policy is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school employees are expected to observe at all times.

A reference copy of this document is kept on the shared drive and it will be brought to the attention of all members of staff.

Review Process

This document will be reviewed in accordance with our policy review process every 3 years or on the introduction of new or amended relevant legislation. .



Tony Walker
CHAIR OF TRUSTEES



Matt Fletcher
HEADTEACHER

Objective, Scope and Principles

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour that all School employees and those acting on behalf of the School are expected to observe. All staff are role models, and are in a unique position of influence, and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the students 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 are required to adhere to the 'Teachers' Standards 2012', in particular 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, and regard should also be given to the disciplinary rules set out in the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure which may be found in the policies folder on the google drive. 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.

Where this policy requires an employee to disclose matters from their personal life the School will consider the circumstances and context of each matter before determining whether any further action is required.

All staff are expected to familiarise themselves and comply with all School's policies and procedures.

Staff must not undermine fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

All staff must attend work in accordance with their contract of employment and associated terms and conditions in relation to hours, days of work and holidays.

Setting an Example

All staff set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by students.

Therefore, all staff must:

- avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times

- demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our students to do the same
- avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

Safeguarding Students

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

Staff have a duty to safeguard students from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.

The duty to safeguard students includes the duty to report concerns about a student to the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The School's DSL is Mr Christopher Hambleton. The School has a number of Deputy DSLs. Concerns about the conduct of a member of staff should be reported directly to the Headteacher, or in their absence, the Deputy Headteacher(s).

Staff have access to the Child Protection Policy and Whistleblowing Procedure which may be found in the policies folder on the google drive and staff must be familiar with these documents.

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

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

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

Staff should be aware that the management of any safeguarding concerns is dealt with in accordance with the latest statutory guidance as detailed in Keeping Children Safe in Education and includes any allegations that meet the harm test and/or allegations considered to be low level concerns. (i. e those which do not meet the harm test).

Low Level Concerns

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the harm test threshold.

A low-level concern is any concern that an adult working in or on behalf of the School may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children
- having favourites
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, other than in accordance with the School's Mobile Phone Policy and Acceptable Use of ICT Policy.
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language
- humiliating students

The School strives to create and embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which the School's values and expected behaviour set out in this policy are lived, monitored and reinforced constantly by all staff. To ensure that this ambition is realised, the Headteacher will record low level concerns and monitor patterns of staff conduct so that any unprofessional conduct is addressed and that staff are supported to correct such conduct at an early stage. The Headteacher will handle and respond to such concerns sensitively and proportionately when they are raised. Where staff recognise that their own actions or conduct may be misconstrued or interpreted in a way that may give rise to concerns, they are required to self-refer the conduct directly to the Headteacher. Low-level concerns shared about supply staff and contractors will be shared with their employers so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

Relationships

Staff must declare any relationships that they may have with students, staff, clients, contractors supplies or parents outside of the School. This may include mutual membership of social groups, tutoring, and/or family connections.

Existing or new personal relationships at work between colleagues should be declared to the Line Manager where there is a potential for this to impact upon the work of either (for example: a risk of allegations of bias or conflict of interest). The Line Manager will treat declarations in confidence.

Staff should not assume that the School is aware of any such connections and should use Appendix 1 to make a declaration(s) as appropriate.

Relationships with students

Relationships with students must be professional at all times. Physical relationships with students 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 students must be via School-authorized mechanisms and solely for educational purposes. At no time should a personal telephone number, text, email addresses or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with students.

If contacted by a student 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 students seeking affection, being sexually provocative or exhibiting overly familiar behaviour.

Student Development

Staff must comply with all School policies and procedures that support the wellbeing and development of students.

Staff must cooperate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of students.

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

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 found guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they:

- offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone
- 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 Whistleblowing procedure which may be found in the policies folder in the google drive.

Gifts from suppliers or associates of the School must be declared to the Line Manager/Headteacher, with the exception of one off “token” gifts from students or parents. Please refer to the Gifts & Hospitality policy for more detail.

Personal gifts from individual members of staff to students are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted and may lead to disciplinary action. A record will be kept of all gifts received.

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 relevant person with delegated authority. References or endorsements on social media given by other members of staff must be clear that they are provided in a personal capacity.

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 Trust’s community.

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education, 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 the 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 the 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 the School (whether or not they deny this) which may have a bearing on their employment, they must disclose this immediately to the Headteacher or their Line Manager.

Forming inappropriate relationships or friendships with children or young people who are students 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 students at the School.

Any 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.

E-Safety and Internet Use

Staff must exercise caution at all times both inside and outside of work when using information technology. Staff should be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social media sites which may bring themselves, the School, the School's 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 use. This includes creating, endorsing, liking, posting, retweeting, sharing direct messaging or sending any statements, photo's, videos, audios or messages. This also includes speaking and/or lip syncing to other creators' content and any music used.

This may also include the use of dating websites where staff could encounter students either with their own profile or acting covertly.

Contact with students should only be made via the use of School email accounts or telephone equipment when appropriate and strictly for educational reasons.

Any photographs or video footage of students not taken using School equipment should be in accordance with the Mobile Phone Policy and the Acceptable use of ICT Policy.

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 and in accordance with the Mobile Phone Policy and the Acceptable use of ICT Policy.

Confidentiality

Where staff have access to confidential information about students or their parents or carers, staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the student. Staff should only access confidential information when the need arises.

All staff may at some point witness actions or events which need to be confidential. For example, where a student is bullied by another student (or by a member of staff), once reported through the appropriate School procedure, it must not be discussed outside the School, including with other staff, students, parents or carers, in the School except with the appropriate member of staff to deal with the matter.

Staff have an obligation to share with their manager or the DSL any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a student. Staff must not promise a student that they will not act on information that they are told by the student.

Staff are not allowed to make any comment to the media about the School, its performance, governance, students or parents without written approval. Any media queries should be directed to the Headteacher.

Dress and Appearance

All staff must dress in a manner that is appropriate to their role and promote a professional image, not casual wear.

All staff must wear the green “Ricky R’s” School lanyard and photographic ID badge to easily identify them as School staff.

Staff should dress in a manner that is absent from political or other contentious slogans. If clothing has wording or pictures on it, this should not be offensive. Footwear should not pose a health and safety risk.

Where employees are transitioning to live in the gender with which they identify, the School will apply and adapt this code sensitively and flexibly.

The School understands that there may be circumstances that make it difficult for some employees to follow a code (for example, if an employee has a disability or is experiencing certain menopausal symptoms). If this is the case, the School will discuss with the employee how we can support the employee and make reasonable adjustments where possible.

The School has the final say on whether clothing and appearance is appropriate.

Disciplinary Action

Staff should be aware that a failure to comply with this Code of Professional Conduct policy could result in disciplinary action including but not limited to dismissal.

Compliance

All new staff must complete the form provided by HR to confirm they have read, understood and agreed to comply with the Code of Conduct. This form should then be signed and dated.

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees of the school have a duty to report any e-Safety incident which may impact on you, your professionalism or the school.

When using any form of ICT, including the Internet, in school and outside school

For your own protection and well-being we advise that you:

- Ensure all electronic communication with students, parents, carers, staff and others is compatible with your professional role and in line with school policies;
- Do not talk about your professional role in any capacity when using social media;
- Do not put online any text, image, sound or video that could upset or offend any member of the whole school community or be incompatible with your professional role;
- Use school ICT systems and resources for all school business. This includes your school email address, school phone and school camera. The School's ICT system should only be used for School-related matters and not for personal matters;
- Do not disclose any passwords and ensure that personal data (such as data held on MIS software) is kept secure and used appropriately;
- Only take images of students and/or staff for professional purposes, in accordance with school policy and with the knowledge of the School's Leadership Team;
- Do not browse, download, upload or distribute any material that could be considered offensive, illegal or discriminatory;
- Ensure that your online activity, both in school and outside school, will not bring the school or professional role into disrepute;
- Check emails daily as a minimum (on working days) or every other day if one day is particularly busy.
- Ensure that all email and other digital correspondence is polite, professional and courteous at all times.

Appendix 1

[Declaration - Relationships with Students Outside of Work](#)

[Declaration - Relationships Outside of Work](#)

If you complete one of these google forms, please email the Headteacher so that they are aware of a change in relationship status.