

NORTHAMPTON SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

APPROPRIATE CONTACT WITH STUDENTS

Links with other Policies:-

- ***Safeguarding Children - Child Protection Policy***
- ***Safeguarding Children Recruitment Policy***
- ***E Safety Policies and Codes of Conduct***

It is important to build good professional relationships with students that encourage them to trust us and confide in us, when issues are troubling them. The safe, secure environment we aim to provide in school rests upon students' confidence in teachers' professional conduct and ability to provide informed guidance in difficult situations.

In these difficult situations, staff must not act in ways which put themselves at risk.

Always remember that wherever you are, to students and parents, you are 'the teacher', 'the LSA' etc. and a member of NSG staff and, therefore, there is an expectation that your behaviour will not compromise the essential characteristics of the professional relationship with students - such as, mutual respect, acting as a role model, trusted and responsible adult.

In recent years there has been an increase in the number of complaints against teachers alleging improper conduct. Sadly, Unions confirm an increase in the number of false/malicious allegations and in litigation against teachers and schools.

The Department for Education document 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' update contains directives and guidance, setting out the responsibilities of all staff for the safety and welfare of children (see also the school's Safeguarding Children Recruitment/Child Protection Policy).

Part four of the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2016, covers all cases where it is alleged that a member of staff has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm to children.

It is important that all staff understand that, if an allegation is made, it must be investigated and a record kept of how it was followed up, any action taken and decision reached. This record must be kept on the person's confidential file and a copy given to the individual. The record has to be retained until the person has reached normal retirement age or for a period of 10 years from the allegation, if that is longer. This applies even when the allegation is found to be false or malicious.

All staff have a duty to safeguard children, this includes ensuring that children are listened to and supported. Staff are expected to always act in the best interests of the child and in a professional manner in accordance with all school policies and guidance. This is your best protection against false allegations. This policy has been written following the DCSF Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People.

All members of staff are required to read, understand and sign this document as part of their induction into the school.

The following advice is offered as further guidance:

1. Always seek support from senior staff, if you are not sure what to do or how to advise a student.
2. Where a student discloses abuse, or you think a student may be on the verge of doing so, **always** follow the Child Protection Procedures and inform the schools' designated teachers at the earliest opportunity.
NEVER ACT ALONE.
3. Never tell a student that you will "tell no-one". Instead, explain that if the problem is very serious, it may have to be shared, in order to get the student the help she needs.
4. If you are concerned that particular students are becoming 'too friendly' always share your concerns with a senior member of staff or your team leader.
5. When you are working with or talking to students, do so where you can be seen e.g. in a room with a glass panel or leave the door open. Do not obscure the view into your classroom/office.
6. If you are concerned about interviewing a particular student, share your concern with your Team Leader. It may be appropriate for them to join you.
7. Do not feel that you should "know the answer". Many situations are more complex and difficult than they first appear. If in doubt, ask a senior member of staff for advice, taking a break in the interview with the student, if necessary.
8. Do not join students in activities outside of school hours, unless it is an organised school activity for which parental permission has been granted, or is a recognised community activity at which other adults will be present.
9. Do not give students a lift without prior permission from parents or informing senior staff. (Your car insurance must cover use of your car for this purpose).
10. Do not blur the boundary between your professional role and 'friendship'. For example, do not give students a personal telephone number or email address – use your school email address. Do not include students as 'friends' e.g. on Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, etc.
11. **Be very careful not to do anything potentially embarrassing or professionally damaging on the Internet.**

Abuse of trust

All staff, including volunteers working in school, need to be aware that it is an offence for a person over 18 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. This applies where the child is in full time education and the person works in the same establishment, even if s/he does not teach the child.

I confirm I have read, understand and will adhere to the above policy.

Signed: Date:

Print Name:

Organisation:

Visiting: