Appendix 1

Tower House School

Staff Code of Conduct

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1. Background information

This document has been drawn from the DfE guidance (2005) which was produced by the National Network of Investigation and Referral Support Co-ordinators and the document Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings (2009). The guidance recognises that the vast majority of adults working with children in education settings act professionally, seeking to provide a safe and supportive environment to secure the well-being and best outcomes for the young people in their care. Members of staff have a crucial role to play in shaping the lives of young people. They have a unique opportunity to interact with children and young people in ways that are both affirming and inspiring.

This guidance has been produced to help staff establish the safest possible learning and working environments. The aims are to safeguard young people and reduce the risk of staff being falsely accused of improper or unprofessional conduct.

Underpinning Principles

- The welfare of the child is paramount (Children's Act 1989).
- Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- Staff should work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way.
- Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from their Head of Department, Line Manager or a member of the SMT (which comprises Headmaster, Deputy Headmaster, Bursar, Junior School Coordinator & Director of Studies)over any incident which may give rise to concern.
- Records should be made of any such incident and of decisions made/further actions agreed, in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy, as detailed in the Staff Handbook.
- All staff know that the Director of Studies is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at THS and that the Headmaster is the Deputy DSL for safeguarding and child protection. All staff should be familiar with local child protection arrangements and understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children. This information is contained in the Safeguarding Policy, which is on the school intranet and on the website.

Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.

The Safeguarding Policy outlines the school's responsibilities and procedures for reporting to external agencies allegations of practices or behaviour which have put (or may have put) pupils at risk of significant harm.

2. Duty of Care

All staff have a duty to keep young people safe and to protect them from physical and emotional harm. This duty is in part exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between staff and pupils and behaviour by staff that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement.

Employers have a duty of care towards their employees under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 which requires them to provide a safe working environment for staff and guidance about safe working practices. The Act also imposes a duty on employees to take care of themselves and anyone else who may be affected by their actions or failings. In this respect, the duty of care towards both staff and children can be demonstrated through the use of these guidelines. An employer's duty of care and the staff duty of care towards children should not conflict.

3. Exercise of Professional Judgement and Training

This guidance cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for staff. It does highlight, however, behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable. There will be occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or take action in the best interests of the child or young person which could contravene this guidance or where no guidance exists.

The School recognises the importance of appropriate training in informing teachers' professional judgement. The DSL is responsible for ensuring that all staff who are new to the school receive training in Safe Working, Child Protection and Acceptable use of ICT as part of the induction process. This training will also include informing staff about behaviour which may constitute serious misconduct, as outlined in the Staff Handbook section on Disciplinary Procedure and Grievances. The DSL is also responsible for informing all staff of any substantive changes to policies and guidelines which relate to child protection and safe working.

4. Power and Positions of Trust

As a result of their knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, all adults working with children and young people in education settings are in positions of trust in relation to the young people in their care. A relationship between a member of staff and a pupil cannot be a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people and staff have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.

Wherever possible, staff should avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others, and report and record any incident with this potential.

5. Confidentiality

Members of staff may have access to personal details about pupils in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities. In some circumstances, staff may be given additional highly sensitive or private information. Such information should be treated in a discreet and confidential manner.

Confidential information about a child or young person should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need to know basis. In circumstances where the child's identity does not need to be disclosed, the information should be used anonymously.

There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a child, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a duty to pass information on without delay, in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy.

If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from one of the DSLs.

The storing and processing of personal information about pupils is governed by the Data Protection Act 1998 - see Data Protection section in Staff Handbook.

6. Propriety and Behaviour

The most recent standards (2012, updated 2013) for Trainee and Newly Qualified Teachers include a section on Personal and Professional Conduct:

- A teacher is expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct throughout a teacher's career.
- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:
- Treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position;
- Having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions;
- Showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others;
- Not undermining fundamental British values, which are defined as comprising: democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
- Ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.

- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

7. Gifts

A Register of Gifts and Interests is a formal record of hospitality, gifts and donations received by every individual within an organisation. It also allows for the declaration of any possible conflicts of interest while discharging professional duties. The introduction on 1 July 2011 of the main provisions of the Bribery Act 2010 means that the School must have a policy on the declaration of interests by its employees. As a consequence, the School introduced a Register of Interests and Gifts with immediate effect.

All staff are required to register their interests, and gifts and hospitality above £100 in value, on the Register. If the cumulative value of a series of small gifts, or hospitality from the same (or connected) source exceeds £200, this too must be registered. If in doubt, either ask for guidance from the Headmaster or simply register the gift(s).

The registration process is simple. The form can be accessed via the staff documents on the staff portal. Disclosures are confidential and covered by the Data Protection Act.

8. Social Contact

Members of staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a relationship that involves an inappropriate level of emotional dependence (on either side) or that would otherwise represent an abuse of the position of trust. If a pupil seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise her/his professional judgement in making a response and be aware that such social contact could be misconstrued. In particular, staff must be aware of their legal and professional responsibilities, and their duty of care, especially if invited to join pupils at a pub, in a restaurant or at a party where alcohol is being consumed and/or where there is no other adult supervision, even where the pupils involved are all over 18.

Staff are advised that there are risks in making available their personal details such as home/mobile phone number, home or personal e-mail address to pupils. Internal email/direct messaging systems should be used in accordance with the School's Communication / Social Media section of the Handbook.

Staff should not put themselves in a position where it might appear that they are showing favouritism to one or more pupils. In particular, be aware that giving presents to individual pupils might raise concerns about 'grooming'. As far as possible, be consistent and transparent in how you reward pupils or otherwise foster teacher-pupil relationships. In addition be aware of the potential

for a pupil to form an unsolicited, emotionally-dependent, attachment to a teacher. In particular, if pastoral interactions with a pupil become inappropriate or difficult, then the DSL should be immediately informed and guidance sought. The circumstances should be recorded in writing and, if necessary, a note placed on the child's file.

9. Physical Contact

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. A 'no touch' approach is impractical for most staff and may in some circumstances be inappropriate. When physical contact is made with pupils this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate given their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. Staff should therefore use their professional judgement at all times.

Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the DSL should be informed of the incident and the circumstances should be recorded in writing as soon as possible and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the child's file.

Physical contact which occurs regularly with an individual child or young person is likely to raise questions unless the justification for this is part of a formally agreed plan (for example in relation to pupils with SEN or physical disabilities). Any such contact should be the subject of an agreed and open school policy and subject to review. Where feasible, staff should seek the child's permission before initiating contact. Staff should listen, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and - so far as is possible - use a level of contact which is acceptable to the child for the minimum time necessary.

Extra caution may be required where it is known that a child has suffered previous abuse or neglect. In the child's view, physical contact might be associated with such experiences and lead to staff being vulnerable to allegations of abuse.

It is recognised that some children may seek out inappropriate physical contact. In such circumstances staff should deter the child sensitively by helping them to understand the importance of personal boundaries, and also inform the DSL of the incident.

The general culture of 'limited touch' should be adapted, where appropriate, to the individual requirements of each child. Children with special needs may require more physical contact to assist their everyday learning. The arrangements should be understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the child's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny.

10. Physical Education and other activities which require physical contact.

Some staff, for example, those who teach PE and games, or those who offer music tuition, will on occasions have to initiate physical contact with pupils in order to support a child so that they can perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument or assist them with an exercise. This should be done with the pupil's agreement.

Contact under these circumstances should be for the minimum time necessary to complete the activity and take place in an open environment (see section 17, one-to-one situations, below). Staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the child.

11. Changing (including shower and toilet areas)

Young people are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes, using the toilet or taking a shower.

However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard young people, satisfy health and safety considerations and ensure that bullying or teasing does not occur. This supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the young people concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

Staff should enter toilets or a shower areas only in an emergency or when addressing genuine concerns about a child's safety or welfare. Staff should apply their professional judgement in these areas and ensure that they are never alone with a single pupil in a situation which could be misconstrued or compromising.

Members of staff should not use the pupils' toilets during school hours, or when pupils are in the school building. When using external facilities for games and sports or other trips, the time spent in shared public changing rooms or toilets should be kept to a minimum. Where practicable, staff-pupil use of such facilities should be deliberately staggered so as not to coincide.

It is acceptable, where necessary, to check briefly that boys are not loitering in the changing areas or toilets.

If a member of staff believes there actions in any of these areas could be misinterpreted, the DSL should be informed of the incident and the circumstances should be recorded in writing as soon as possible and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the child's file.

Pupils in distress : There may be occasions when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance. This may include age appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation. If a member of staff believes such action could be misinterpreted, the DSL should be informed of the incident and the circumstances should be recorded in writing as soon as possible and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the child's file.

12. Behaviour Management

All pupils have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Corporal punishment is unlawful in all schools. Equally, staff should not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a pupil. Whilst the use of humour can help to defuse a situation, the use of demeaning or insensitive comments towards pupils is not acceptable in any situation. Staff should be aware that the School's anti-bullying policy applies to all members of the School community (pupils, parents and staff).

Where a pupil's behaviour causes concern, the school's behaviour, rewards and sanctions policy should be adhered to (see policy on Staff Portal). If a member of staff is in any doubt as to the best course of action, he or she should seek further advice from a member of the SMT or the DSL.

13. Care, Control and Physical Intervention

The circumstances in which staff can intervene with a pupil are covered by the 1996 Education Act. and set out in the school's Restraint Policy. Staff may legitimately intervene to prevent a pupil from committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property, engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline. Staff should have regard to the health and safety of themselves and others.

Under no circumstances should physical force be used as a form of punishment. The use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence.

In all cases where physical intervention is deemed necessary, the incident and subsequent actions should be documented and reported to the Headmaster and/ or the DSL.

14. Sexual Contact with Young People

Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a child or young person is both inappropriate and illegal. Children and young people are protected by the same laws as adults in relation to non- consensual sexual behaviour. They are additionally protected by specific legal provisions regardless of whether the child or young person consents or not. The sexual activity referred to does not just involve physical contact including penetrative and non- penetrative acts. It may also include non-contact activities, such as causing children to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of pornographic material. Keeping Children Safe in Education (2014) defines sexual abuse as: [that which] 'involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.'

There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' where the sole purpose is to gain the trust of a child, and manipulate that relationship so sexual abuse can take place. Staff should be aware that conferring special attention and favour upon a child might be construed as being part of a 'grooming' process, which is an offence.

Staff should avoid any form of communication with a child which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative i.e. verbal comments, letters, notes, electronic mail, phone calls, texts or physical contact.

15. One to One Situations

Staff working in one to one situations with children and young people, such as those who provide individual specialist music tuition, may be more vulnerable to allegations. Teachers and others should recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure the safety and security needs of both staff and pupils are met.

Where possible, staff should avoid meetings with pupils in remote, secluded areas of school. They should ensure that there is visual access and/or an open door in one to one situations. Should a child become distressed or angry during such a meeting, this must be reported to a member of the Senior Management Team and a written report detailing the incident kept on the child's file.

Transporting Children: In certain situations e.g. out of school activities, staff may agree to transport children. Wherever possible and practicable it is advisable that transport is undertaken other than in private vehicles. For journeys in private (including hired) cars belonging to staff the School has 'Occasional Business Use' insurance, which covers the use of your car on behalf of the employer.

Staff should:

- Plan and agree arrangements with all parties, including parents and other members of staff, in advance.
- Ensure that they are alone with a child for the minimum time possible. If practicable, another adult should accompany.
- Be aware that the safety and welfare of the child is their responsibility until this is safely passed over to a parent / carer.

16. Educational Visits, Sports and After School Clubs

Staff should take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere of a residential setting, after-school activity.

During school activities that take place off the school site or out of school hours, a more relaxed discipline or informal dress and language code may be acceptable. However, staff remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour cannot be interpreted as seeking to establish an inappropriate relationship or friendship, and that they maintain high standards of

professional conduct at all times. In particular, it is inappropriate to be tactile with boys. Any physical contact should be restricted to occasions when it is absolutely necessary (for example: when breaking up a fight between two boys; dressing a wound; taking a boy's temperature; or intervening to prevent a boy from putting himself in danger; or comforting a boy in a state of distress) or when playing a contact sport, where the contact should be proportionate and as befits the activity and accounts for any physical mismatches between the staff member and the boys.

Where out of school activities include overnight stays, careful consideration needs to be given to sleeping arrangements. Pupils, staff and parents should be informed of these prior to the start of the trip. Where practicable, staff should be accommodated in separate rooms to boys, with access to separate washing and toilet facilities.

The following protocols apply on school trips and foreign exchanges involving an overnight stay:

- One member of staff must be under the legal limit for driving in that country throughout any period of duty. Duty extends to being prepared to respond to an emergency during the night.
- If comforting a boy in a state of distress, a member of staff should be mindful that physical contact may be misinterpreted by the boy and should in all cases report any such contact to a colleague at the earliest opportunity.
- Any member of staff who is from time to time prescribed medication by a doctor should inform the doctor of their responsibilities and check whether any side effects might affect their ability to carry out these responsibilities.

In addition, the following protocols should be observed in all but emergency situations (for example: fire evacuation, immediate concern for a boy's safety or state of mind or where you suspect a boy or boys might be consuming alcohol or using drugs):

- Members of staff should refrain from being in washrooms, changing rooms or toilets when boys are, or might be, in them in a state of undress. Where it is essential to get a message to or from a boy who is in a washroom, changing room or toilet, the staff member should ask another boy to convey the message.
- When checking on a boy in his room, or wishing to speak to him, the member of staff should always knock and wait for the boy to say when he is happy for them to open the door. Boys will have been instructed to say, "please wait" or "come in" promptly as appropriate. If a boy does not answer (for example if asleep), the member of staff must identify themselves to the boy as about to enter before opening the door.
- If a boy is in a state of undress when a member of staff opens the door, the member of staff should promptly withdraw from the room, instructing the boy to get dressed before they return and then return after a specified period of time, sufficient to allow the boy to get dressed.
- As far as possible, any planned meetings with boys should take place in an office, classroom or public area and the member of staff should maintain an appropriate distance from the

boy. In particular, a member of staff should not cross the threshold of a boy's bedroom, unless the door is propped open and the boy has signalled he is happy for the member of staff to come in.

- On occasions when a member of staff is helping a boy with his work or advising him on school matters in the boy's bedroom, the member of staff should maintain an appropriate distance and sit on a chair or stand; under no circumstances should a member of staff sit or lie down on a boy's bed.
- Health and Safety arrangements require members of staff to keep colleagues/employers aware of their whereabouts, especially when involved in an out of school activity. Staff must be aware of and follow the guidance in the School's policy for Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits.

17. First Aid and Administration of Medication

Information about pupils with acute allergies and/or medical needs is available in the office. An updated list of these pupils is circulated to all academic staff at the beginning of each academic year.

In the event of an untrained member of staff finding themselves in an emergency situation requiring urgent medical attention, they should contact 999 immediately and ask for the appropriate emergency service.

THS has a number of trained first aiders. Teachers may volunteer to undertake this task but it is not a contractual requirement. Staff should receive appropriate training before administering first aid or medication. In particular, staff who might have to administer Emergency Medication (such as an epipen) should receive appropriate training before leading an off-site visit or trip involving one or more boys who have to carry Emergency Medication.

Under normal circumstances in school, all medication should be administered by the School Office.

For school trips, explicit parental consent should be obtained before giving any medication to a pupil, even over-the-counter medicines such as paracetamol, ibuprofen or antihistamine. Such consent can be received by any means: letter/telephone/email/text message.

Controlled Drugs are those which, under the Misuse of Drugs Regulations (2001), must be locked away appropriately and strictly monitored and recorded in a dedicated book as they are used. Should controlled drugs be required during a school trip, the staff member responsible for the trip should remain in possession of the medication and ensure that it is securely kept at all times and only administered as per the prescription.

Further information is available from the School' First Aid Policy which is available on the Staff Portal

When administering first aid, wherever possible, staff should ensure that another adult is present, or is aware of the action being taken.

18. The Curriculum

Some areas of the curriculum will include or raise subject matter which is of a sexual or of an otherwise sensitive nature. Care should be taken to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the learning outcomes identified when planning lessons. Those with less experience should seek guidance from a senior member of staff, such as their Head of Department.

The curriculum will sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussion about subject matter of a sexual or otherwise sensitive nature. Responding to pupils' questions will require careful judgement and staff may wish to take guidance before lessons with this potential from a senior member of staff.

Be aware that such discussions might affect particular boys more than others (for example, if a boy has suffered a related traumatic experience). Where a discussion takes a course that makes you feel uncomfortable or appears to make a boy feel uncomfortable, report it to your line manager as soon as possible. The circumstances should be recorded in writing as soon as possible and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the child's file.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of any sex education provided (but not from the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction necessary under the science curriculum).

19. Photography, Videos and other Creative Arts

Many school activities involve recording images, which are undertaken as part of the curriculum, extra school activities, for publicity, or to celebrate achievement.

Using images of children for publicity purposes will require the consent of the parents of the individual concerned. Images should not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without such consent. The definition of a public place includes areas where visitors to the school have access.

Parental agreement to the above is sought when the child starts at the School and parents have the right to alter their consent at any time. The School Office keeps a list of those parents who have provided consent and can provide confirmation to staff as required.

Staff need to be aware that there is potential for the capturing of images on a personal device (including a phone), and/or for the storing of images of pupils in a private location, to be misconstrued. For example, capturing and storing images of particular boys in certain contexts may raise concerns about 'grooming'.

20. Internet Use

As part of our safeguarding policy we expect staff and pupils and, where appropriate, parents, to follow these protocols when using PCs and mobile devices.

In particular, be aware that THS prohibits teachers from befriending pupils via social media (such as Facebook).

Our relevant policies and this code apply to all practice in connection with your work at THS, regardless of whether this is conducted over a school machine, a school system, on your own device or over systems belonging to you or a third party.

In particular please be aware of the following advice:

[All staff must recognise that] once something is posted online it has a persistence that is not like something that is said. It is also replicable and searchable (directly and through its metadata), and you cannot be sure who your audience is or will be. Once something is posted online, its effects are often magnified and can be mirrored out of context. All of this requires experience to understand. Remember: when you post, you have not only your own reputation to consider but also that of others and that of the school. Every member of the community has to take responsibility for his or her actions online. If you are in doubt, it is best not to post, send an email, etc.

We encourage staff to use digital technologies but to do so in an informed, thoughtful way that is fully consistent with the position of trust we occupy.

Staff should ensure that they understand the tools they are using, the implications of any privacy and sharing settings, and, on a site-by-site basis, the terms and parameters of any connections or networks made. In particular, be sensitive to the potential for a relationship with a pupil to be misunderstood or misrepresented by the pupil, or misrepresented by the terminology or interface of a given online platform.

Certain sites and apps may lend themselves in a straightforward way to use at school, irrespective of whether this is by adults or pupils (eg, a social app that records running). Others may require the creation of a separate account (eg, Twitter) for teaching purposes or a thorough and careful understanding of the settings needed to ensure that pupils see only what you wish them to see (eg, Facebook, Flickr).

Particular awareness is necessary of issues associated with the words deployed to describe the establishment of contacts and networks on-line: there are innumerable ways, across countless sites, of defining or describing contacts and connections. For example, Facebook has distorted the usual understanding of the term "friending", and there are "circles" on Google.

Where a site or app is used in the course of a school activity or with a class, it is recommended that the idea is talked through with the IT technician: he will be able to advise and, if necessary, will take the matter to the Headmaster. Pupils participating in such activities must not be identifiable in any way that puts them at risk. Where contributions and/or comments are created by pupils, the teacher in charge accepts full responsibility for the monitoring and moderating of the site or app and will treat any issues arising appropriately.

In any professional capacity, staff must not use pseudonyms or post anonymously, nor must they claim or appear to claim to represent or speak in the name of the school except where specific permission to do so has been given by the Headmaster. A school email address should never be used for any personal use of social media.

Staff should be aware of their obligations to keep, as appropriate, records of contact with pupils. In particular, they should recognise the difficulties presented by certain messaging platforms, such as direct messaging. Where an interaction with a pupil or pupils indicates that records will be necessary, re-direct communication to a recordable platform, like email.

Staff may, of course, choose to use social sites and apps in a personal capacity. It remains the case that 'when you post, you have not only your own reputation to consider but also that of others and that of the school'. You may wish to say where you work and what you do. Many people who do this include a disclaimer along the lines of, 'the views expressed here are my own and not my employer's'. Such a disclaimer in no way dispenses with the need to exercise good judgement and care in what you say and do online.

All staff must understand the standards of behaviour expected of them. Breaches of these standards may result in disciplinary action. Such breaches might include, but are not restricted to: failure to comply with the law or relevant regulatory bodies; communication of confidential or personal information; defamation or disparagement of the school or school community and its members; harassment or bullying; failure to comply with our policy concerning the use and distribution of images. The school's Social Media Policy in the Handbook gives specific examples of inappropriate use of the internet which may constitute gross misconduct.

During the school day our primary focus should be the education and welfare of pupils and any personal correspondence or business should not substantively inhibit or conflict with that focus.

In all things, staff should act with consideration and with an awareness of the trust invested in them for the safeguarding of pupils. Moreover, staff should be proactive in promoting good online practice by every member of the community. Your judgement will be informed by your experience, prior training, character and the context of any given situation, but it must also be informed by your professional obligations. Where you have concerns about a pupil's behaviour online, or if you believe your own actions may be misinterpreted, you should immediately inform and take guidance from the DSL.

21. Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. The School has a whistleblowing policy, in the Staff Handbook, that meets the terms of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant external agencies. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

22. Sharing Concerns and Recording Incidents

All staff should be aware of the school's child protection procedures, including procedures for dealing with allegations against staff. Staff who are the subject of allegations are advised to contact their professional association.

All staff have a duty to report any child protection concerns to the DSL, or in his absence, the Deputy DSL.

23. Disclosure and Barring Service checks

All staff are subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check before taking up their position at the School. It is the responsibility of members of staff to inform the Headmaster in confidence if they are charged with a criminal offence whilst in the employment of the School.