

St Christopher's School

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

Updated August 2017, July 2018

These policies apply equally to the Early Years setting, KS1 and KS2 as taught at St Christopher's School.

All education settings are required to have a clear and effective Code of Conduct for Adults working in the setting. Statutory guidance "Keeping Children safe in education" – September 2016- pp.14 – paragraph 45:

"Governing Bodies and Proprietors (in Part two unless otherwise stated this includes management committees) must ensure that they comply with their duties under legislation.

This should include:

- *An effective child protection policy; and*
- *A staff behaviour policy (sometimes called the code of conduct) which should amongst other things include –acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communications including the use of social media.*

This document provides a guide for all adults working in schools (including staff, governors, volunteers and visitors) about acceptable and desirable conduct to protect both pupils and adults. It refers to and complements other policies and guidance in your school, including:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- School Behaviour Policy
- School policy on physical interventions
- School ICT policy
- Record keeping policy/procedure

This policy reflects the requirements set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2016, and is based upon '***Safer Working Practice in Education'*** (DfE 2009)

St Christopher's Policy on Staff/Pupil Contact

- By virtue of their employment in education, all staff are legally considered to be in a *relationship of trust* with pupils, and care must therefore be taken to ensure that there is no *abuse of trust* as set out in law.
- The relationship between staff and pupils at St. Christopher's School is a professional one; it is not, and normally should not be, a personal relationship.
- There is considerable overlap within aspects of this policy and the Safeguarding policy such aspects have been separated into an appendix.

Safer Recruitment

- St Christopher's school follows the Government's guidelines for the safer employment of staff who work with children.
- We obtain enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificates on all new members of staff, temporary staff, visiting and peripatetic staff, contractors' employees, such as catering staff, who work unsupervised in the school.
- Governors and parent helpers who have regular unsupervised access to children are also required to have up to date DBS certificates. [DBS certificates are also required for the adult members of the families of members of staff who are accommodated on site].
- More details are set out in Policy on Checking Employees, Temporary Workers, Governors, Parent Helpers and Contractors.
- New staff and Governors receive Child Protection and Safeguarding training as part of their induction process. This training is repeated at not more than three yearly intervals, usually bi-annually.

As a member of staff you must have a working understanding of the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and procedures. Please refer to the following policies CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING: Child Protection, Safer Recruitment, Anti-bullying, Behaviour, Internet Safety. These senior staff are considered to have the appropriate status and authority to take responsibility for Child Protection matters:

Lead Designated Person	Hannah Edgeworth, Deputy Head
Designated Person	Emma Crawford-Nash, Head Ella Schierenberg, Head of Reception
Safeguarding Governor	Rachel Lewis, Governor

Aims of this Policy

- **To protect children.** The definition of a child under the *Children Act 1989* is a young person under the age of 18. This policy is thus linked to the School's Child Protection Policy.
- **To protect staff** against false or exaggerated claims or accusations by pupils. These may be malicious, or mistaken, i.e. made in good faith by a pupil who has misinterpreted words or actions. For the protection of staff, the definition of a pupil for this policy is a young person of any age, up to 31st August of the academic year in which she is enrolled at St. Christopher's. It also includes pupils up to the age of 18 enrolled in any other primary or secondary educational establishment at home or abroad who were at St.Christopher's or who are visiting St.Christopher's.
- **To comply with all relevant legislation**, in particular that dealing with the protection of children, including the *Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000* which created a new offence of abuse of trust.
- **To comply with all relevant guidelines** on best practice issued by the DfE, the Home Office or others.

Principles

- The relationship between staff and pupils is a professional one.
- The basic assumption in this policy and guidelines is that staff are acting professionally at all times, and are trusted by the School and by parents.
- A personal relationship between a member of staff and a pupil is inappropriate unless it is with the full knowledge and consent of the school and parents/guardians.
- All interaction between staff and pupils is carried out in a professional manner and in a professional context.
- A personal relationship between staff and a pupil which includes any sexual activity, whether same or other sex, constitutes gross misconduct. It is also a criminal offence under the *Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000* for a person aged 18 or over who is in a position of trust in relation to another person under that age to engage in sexual activity with that person. Any such activity could thus result in summary dismissal under the school disciplinary procedures, and imprisonment and unlimited fine under the law.
- The policy and guidelines apply in relation to all pupils, in all circumstances, and at all times including school holidays.

Introduction

- Staff are trusted by the School and by parents, yet allegations of unprofessional conduct or improper contact or words can arise at any time. All members of staff are thus reminded that professionalism and vigilance are required both to ensure the safety of children in our care and to reduce the risk of an allegation of impropriety against a member of staff.
- Members of staff should take particular care when dealing with a pupil who:
 - i) appears to be emotionally distressed, or generally vulnerable
 - ii) is seeking expressions of affection from a member of staff
 - iii) appears to hold a grudge against a member of staff
 - iv) acts in a sexually provocative way, or who is inclined to make exaggerated claims about herself and others, or to fantasise, or one whose manner with adults is over-familiar
- The School trusts you to act professionally at all times, and within the spirit of the policy and guidelines on staff-pupil relationships.
- **Where staff have a personal relationship with a pupil who is not their child (e.g. personal friends of parents, membership of an out-of-school club or organisation, etc.), then the Head should be informed of this so that this information may be kept on file for the protection of the member of staff.**
- In order to protect pupils, you must report to the Head any concerns that you may have yourself, or that may have been reported to you by a pupil or parent, about staff-pupil relationships.

Gifts and hospitality

This procedure does not prohibit normal and appropriate hospitality (given and received) to or from third parties.

The giving or receipt of gifts or hospitality is not prohibited, if the following requirements are met:

- it is not made with the intention of influencing a third party to obtain or retain business or a business advantage, or to reward the provision or retention of business or a business advantage, or in explicit or implicit exchange for favours or benefits;
- it complies with local law;
- it is given in the School's name, not in your name;
- it does not include cash or a cash equivalent (such as gift certificates or vouchers);
- it is appropriate in the circumstances. For example, in the UK it is customary for small gifts to be given at Christmas time;
- taking into account the reason for the gift, it is of an appropriate type and value and given at an appropriate time;
- it is given openly, not secretly; and
- gifts should not be offered to, or accepted from, government officials or representatives without the prior approval of the Bursar or the Head.
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From time to time parents or pupils may offer you gifts on an individual basis as a demonstration of their gratitude for the work you have done on their behalf, and this is perfectly legitimate. However in some contexts such gifts could be construed as an improper inducement to, for instance, accord preferential treatment in the future. Consequently it is necessary for the School to have rules applying to such gifts. These are as follows.

- All gifts from parents or pupils themselves, including ex-pupils (up to 3 years after leaving) must be declared to the Head in writing where the value **may be** above £200. The Head will consider whether it is appropriate to return the gift or donate it to a charity. The parent should be thanked for their gift and informed whether the gift is being donated to charity.
- If you receive a gift from a group of parents then the maximum value that can be accepted will be based on an average of £50 per pupil.
- You may retain gifts received from suppliers if they are token work-related items e.g. pens, notepads, flash drives, desk calendars or diaries. Any other gifts should be politely refused or donated to the School or School's nominated charity. In either case the Bursar should be notified by email, and if the gift is being donated to charity then the giver of the gift should be told that this is the case.
- You may retain any other gifts of an individual value of up to £200.

What is not acceptable?

It is not acceptable for you (or someone on your behalf) to:

- give, promise to give, or offer, a payment, gift or hospitality with the expectation or hope that an advantage for the School will be received, or to reward an advantage already received;
- give, promise to give, or offer, a payment, gift or hospitality to a government official, agent or representative to "facilitate" or expedite a routine procedure;

- accept payment from a third party that you know or suspect is offered with the expectation that it will obtain an advantage for them;
- accept a gift or hospitality from a third party if you know or suspect that it is offered or provided with an expectation that a business advantage will be provided by the School in return;
- threaten or retaliate against another worker who has refused to commit a bribery offence or who has raised concerns under this policy; or
- engage in any activity that might lead to a breach of this policy.

General guidelines on conduct with pupils

- i) Avoid sitting or standing in very close proximity to a pupil, except as necessary to check work. For practical subjects, see below.
- ii) Avoid all unnecessary physical contact and apologise immediately if there is accidental physical contact.
- iii) Never use any form of aggressive contact such as holding, pushing, pulling or hitting, which could amount to a criminal assault.
- iv) Avoid threatening words.
- v) Retain at all times an appropriately warm and supportive yet detached professional relationship; **you are a teacher, not a friend.**
- vi) **Avoid discussion of any personal topics relating to yourself; your personal life is not relevant to your professional relationship with the pupil.**
- vii) Avoid any words or actions that are over-familiar.
- viii) Avoid displays of affection either personally or in writing, including messages in greetings cards. Always ensure that any written messages in any format are sent through the school office and that copies are kept on the child's file
- ix) Do not tell or suggest to a pupil that she is your friend or a special person to you; your relationship is a professional one. Do not single out any pupil for special attention. **Avoid pupils interpreting your behaviour toward another child as favouritism or any suggestion that you have favourites.**
- x) Avoid actions, words or expressions that could be interpreted as suggesting that you have an emotional relationship with any pupil
- xi) No communication or meeting with pupils out of school hours and off school premises should take place without the knowledge and consent of school, parents or guardians.
- xii) Do not give, ask for or use personal e-mail addresses and personal mobile phone numbers for communication with pupils. Do not give your personal mobile, email address or home telephone number to a pupil. It would not normally be appropriate for a member of staff to text a pupil or ex pupil. **Always communicate openly through the parents' or guardian's telephone numbers or e mail addresses.**
- xiii) Do not contact any pupil through an Internet chatroom or similar, including such sites as Bebo, MySpace or Facebook.
- xiv) Avoid any conduct that could be interpreted as a sexual advance or "grooming" and avoid words or expressions that could be interpreted as having any sexual innuendo.

One-to-one contact with pupils

Members of staff conducting a one-to-one meeting or lesson with a child, in particular one of the opposite sex, should take particular care in the following ways:

- i) Use a room which has vision panels in the door, or keep the door open, and ensure that a colleague knows that a meeting or lesson is taking place
- ii) Arrange the meeting during normal school hours or immediately before or after school when there are plenty of other people about
- iii) Do not continue the meeting for any longer than is necessary to achieve its purposes
- iv) Avoid sitting or standing in close proximity to the child, except as necessary
- v) Avoid all unnecessary physical contact and apologise immediately if there is accidental physical contact

Report any incident that causes you concern to a senior colleague, and make a written record (dated and signed).

Physical contact during the teaching of practical subjects

1. Physical contact between a member of staff and a pupil may be necessary and beneficial in order to demonstrate a required action, or a correct technique in, for example, music lessons or during PE, sports and games.
2. Members of staff should observe the following guidelines:
 - i) Explain the intended action to the child
 - ii) Do not proceed with the action if the pupil appears apprehensive or reluctant, or if you have other concerns about the pupil's likely reaction
 - iii) Ensure that you can be seen by others through a viewing panel or by being in a public space. If you are in any doubt, ask a colleague or another pupil to be present during the demonstration

If you are at all concerned about anything which has occurred during the demonstration, inform a senior colleague and make a written record (dated and signed).

Visits to pupil's homes and meeting socially out of school

- Staff are sometimes asked to the homes of pupils for social occasions. Social invitations from parents, apart from end of year parties, should not normally be accepted. You should consult with the Head or a Deputy Head about any such invitations. **Remember that your relationship with parents and pupils is a professional one even after you or the child have left St Christopher's**
- Avoid going to birthday parties, if you go to one you will have to go to them all!
- Never invite children to come to your home, unless the parent or guardian is aware of it. Staff should ensure that pupils do not see or hear anything in their homes that may cause embarrassment or that might become the subject of inappropriate gossip or rumour. Another adult should always be present
- It is not normally appropriate for staff to meet pupils out of school. No social meeting between staff/ex staff and pupils/ex pupils should take place without the knowledge and consent of parents or guardians. Keep the school informed of any such meetings to protect yourself.

E-Safety and IT Acceptable Use Policy

Please see separate policy.