

# Hartismere Family of Schools:

## Code of Professional Conduct



### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Code of Conduct is intended as a guide and a help to all school staff. It sets out standards of conduct which staff are expected to follow when within, or representing the School. This code is not exhaustive but is written to assist staff and it is important that staff should take advice and guidance if necessary. If in doubt ask.
- 1.2 The underlying purpose is to ensure that the School serves its community well and promotes public confidence in the integrity of the School.
- 1.3 All colleagues are strongly advised to read this Code carefully and consider the issues which it raises.
- 1.4 Reference to this Code will be made in contracts of employment, and copies will be given to all staff. In addition, the induction programme for all new staff will reinforce the principles of this Code.

### 2. CODE OF CONDUCT

#### 2.1 Exclusivity of Service

Colleagues' off-duty hours are their personal concern, but they should avoid a position where duty and private interests conflict. This includes:

- Colleagues making online associations/friendships with current pupils via social networking sites like Facebook
- Colleagues texting current pupils on their personal mobile phone or computer
- Colleagues communicating with current pupils through personal email accounts.

The above amendments have been included to safeguard the safety of pupils and the safety and professional integrity of school staff.

The School does not seek to preclude staff unreasonably from undertaking additional employment but you are required to devote your full time, attention and abilities to your duties during your working hours and to act in the best interests of the School at all times. Accordingly, you must not, without the written consent of the Headmaster, undertake any employment or engagement which might interfere with the performance of your duties or conflict with the interests of the School.

It follows that, regardless of whether you are employed on a full-time or fractional contract, you are required to notify the Headmaster of any employment or engagement which you intend to undertake whilst in the employment of the School. (including any such employment or engagement which commenced before your employment began with the School).

## 2.2 Specific Aspects

**Health and Safety:** Colleagues must take care of their personal hygiene, safety and welfare, and that of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions. All staff must comply with the requirements of the School Health and Safety policy and relevant legislation and regulations, and also ensure that pupils do likewise.

**Fire:** Colleagues must familiarize themselves with the fire precautions, procedures and drill routines. They must regard practice fire drills or building evacuations in a positive manner, and ensure they are perceived by pupils as an essential precaution to prevent risk of injury or fatality.

**Business Practice:** All colleagues must maintain an impeccable standard of integrity in all their professional relationships.

**Media:** Other than on matters of authorized publicity, only the Headmaster is authorized to speak or send any communication on behalf of the School to members of the press or broadcast media. This decision is to avoid any embarrassment or unfair pressure on staff members. This authorization may be extended by the Headmaster to other colleagues.

**Copyright:** Staff shall observe copyright laws on computer software, audio-visual and printed material.

**Data Protection Act:** It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure the School's compliance with the Data Protection Act. Personal data must only be used to assist you to carry out your work; it must not be given to people who have no right to see it. All staff should maintain the security of all computerized databases of information on individuals, whether they are staff, pupils or members of the general public. Staff should refer any queries to the Headmaster.

## 2.3 General Points

Colleagues should display the highest possible standards of professional behaviour that is required in an educational establishment (see also Appendix 1).

Colleagues to wear smart business dress avoiding cords, canvas and denim jeans. Male members of staff are expected to wear a shirt and tie unless given written permission by the Headmaster due to the particular nature of their work. Dress should be appropriate to a professional workplace and colleagues should be mindful of the responsibility of working with children and adolescents.

Colleagues should seek to co-operate with their colleagues, providing support, help and guidance as required by them and their line manager, and enable effective communication throughout the School. The use of e mails to raise points of dispute between employees is not acceptable.

Colleagues should avoid words and deeds that might bring the School into disrepute or might undermine colleagues in the perception of others (colleagues/pupils/parents/community).

Colleagues should retain professional independent objectivity, avoiding the promotion of political and personal beliefs or bias.

Colleagues should be aware of, and should follow School policies systems and procedures. They should normally communicate through the line management structure, and should ensure pupils do likewise.

Colleagues should attend their place of work punctually in accordance with their conditions of service and at the times agreed with their line manager. Those unable to avoid being late or absent should follow the procedure set out in the staff handbook and, whenever possible, give as much notice so that alternative cover arrangements may be made. Colleagues may not leave the premises during working hours without prior permission of the Headmaster and those leaving during the School day should sign out beforehand.

#### **2.4 Administrative Duties**

Teaching staff shall maintain and properly complete a register for all classes.

2. In order to ensure safeguards both for staff and pupils, staff must follow the school procedures as outlined in the staff handbook before:-

- taking pupils off the School premises;
- arranging for any visiting speakers;
- incurring any expenditure on behalf of the School.

#### **2.5 Confidentiality**

Colleagues shall maintain appropriately high levels of confidentiality with respect to student and staff records and other sensitive matters. They should take care not to discuss issues of particularly sensitive matters within the School community which could cause distress to School staff, pupils or parents.

#### **2.6 When in doubt, ask**

If any member of staff is in any doubt with regard to the guidelines of this Code, and how they apply in any particular situation, then please consult with the Headmaster.

# APPENDIX 1

## PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR

Professional behaviour is a generic term, but within this Code of Conduct includes such aspects as:

- acting in a fair, courteous and mature manner to pupils, colleagues and other stakeholders;
- co-operating and liaising with colleagues, as appropriate, to ensure pupils receive a coherent and comprehensive educational service;
- endeavouring to assist the School achieve its corporate and strategic objectives – in particular, by adopting a positive attitude to marketing and the achievement of quality and equality;
- respect for School property;
- maintaining the image of the School through standards of dress, general courtesy, correct use of School stationery, etc.;
- taking responsibility for the behaviour and conduct of pupils in the classroom and sharing such responsibility elsewhere on the premises;
- being fit for work (i.e. not adversely influenced by drugs, alcohol, etc.);
- being familiar with job requirements (e.g. proper preparation, use of suitable methods/systems, maintenance of appropriate/required records, etc.), including keeping up-to-date with developments relevant to the job.
- being familiar with communication channels and School procedures applicable to both pupils and staff;
- ensuring all assessments/exams/tests are conducted in a fair and proper (prescribed) manner, and that procedures are strictly followed with respect to confidentiality and security;
- respect for the rights and opinions of others.

This list is not exhaustive but the examples are given as a summary.

## APPENDIX 2

### DISCIPLINARY RULES

The following are examples of behaviour which the School finds unacceptable. The list is not exhaustive and it is acknowledged that it will be necessary to exercise judgement in all cases and to be fair and reasonable in all the circumstances.

1. Any form of physical/verbal violence towards pupils.
2. Physical violence, actual or threatened towards other colleagues or visitors to the School.
3. Sexual offences, sexual insults or sexual discrimination against pupils, other colleagues or visitors to the School.
4. Racial offences, racial insults or racial discrimination against pupils, other staff or visitors to the School.
5. Theft of School monies or property and of monies or property of colleagues or visitors to the School. Removal from School premises of property which is not normally taken away without the express authority of the Headmaster or of the owner of the property may be regarded as gross misconduct.
6. Deliberate falsification of documents such as time sheets, bonus sheets, subsistence and expense claims for the purpose of gain.
7. Acceptance of bribes or other corrupt financial practices.
8. Wilful damage of School property or of property belonging to other colleagues or visitors to the School.
9. Wilful disregard of safety rules or policies affecting the safety of pupils, other staff or visitors to the School.
10. Any wilful act which could result in actionable negligence for compensation against the School.
11. Refusal to comply with reasonable instructions given by staff with a supervisory responsibility.
12. Gross neglect of duties and responsibilities.
13. Unauthorized absence from work.
14. Deliberate breaches of confidentiality, particularly on sensitive matters.
15. Being incapable by reason of alcohol or drugs (not prescribed for a health problem) from fulfilling duties and responsibilities of employment.
16. Conduct which substantially brings the name of the School into disrepute or which seriously undermines confidence in the employee.

The following are examples of behaviour which could lead to formal disciplinary warnings.

1. Unsatisfactory timekeeping without permission.
2. Neglect of safety rules and procedures. Some offences of wilful neglect may be regarded as gross misconduct.
3. Breaches of confidentiality. Deliberate breaches on sensitive matters may be regarded as gross misconduct.
4. Failure to comply with reasonable work related requirements or lack of care in fulfilling the duties of the post.
5. Behaviour towards other employees, pupils, and visitors which gives justifiable offence. Certain behaviour giving rise to offence may be regarded as gross misconduct.
6. Acting in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as rude, impolite, contemptuous or lacking appropriate professional demeanour. In certain circumstances, such behaviour may be regarded as gross misconduct.
7. Conduct which it is considered adversely affects either the reputation of the School or affects confidence in the employee. Certain conduct may be regarded as gross misconduct.