



Staff Code of Conduct Policy

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INTRODUCTION

The welfare of the learner is paramount

- It is the responsibility of all adults to safeguard and promote the welfare of learners and young people. This responsibility extends to a duty of care for those adults employed, commissioned or contracted to work with learners and young people
- Adults who are designated as volunteers at Westhaven School will be referred to as 'Staff' throughout this policy
- Adults who work with learners 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
- Adults should work and be seen to work in an open and transparent way
- The same professional standards should always be applied regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity
- Adults should continually monitor and review their practice and ensure they follow the settings policies and practice

Principles for the Whole Workforce

Everyone who comes into contact with learners and their families has a role to play in safeguarding learners. Therefore, it is important that ALL staff:

- Ensure that they listen to and reflect on the voice of the learner at ALL times and take seriously any concerns raised to them by a learner
- Ensure that they report any concerns of harm to any learner to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately, or the DDSL in their absence
- If the concern relates to a member of staff (low level concerns), to report immediately via StaffSafe. If the concern relates to the Headteacher, to report to the LADO or Chair of Governors
- Ensure that they record any information shared directly with them by a learner or observed/witnessed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately using CPOMs

This could include sharing information on behalf of the Designated Safeguarding Lead with other agencies.

- Ensure that they maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' and report any concerns regarding the behaviour of an adult/staff member in school directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Head Teacher or Chair of Governors if the allegation is relation to the Head Teacher
- Ensure that they attend regular training/updates to support them in recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse, particularly in support of early identification of needs of learners to prevent an escalation of risk to the learner

All Westhaven School employees should be aware of the standards of conduct expected of them. Although it is impossible to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all eventualities, the Code sets out the principal areas where concerns are likely to arise and staff awareness is necessary. The Code applies to all staff working at Westhaven School although particular reference is made to teaching staff.

Staff must comply with requirements placed on them by their contract of employment, conditions of service and relevant school and statutory policies. The Code is supplementary to documents detailing terms and conditions of employment, including statutory provisions, issued at the time of appointment.

Failure to observe the provisions of the Code may be relevant in considering action under disciplinary procedures. Should this occur, full consideration will be given to all the relevant facts and circumstances of the case in accordance with the principles of natural justice and following agreed procedures.

Westhaven School has a good reputation for the quality of their work and the professionalism of their staff. This Code will serve to confirm the current good practice of staff working at Westhaven School. Should staff have any doubts about the issues raised they should consult the Head Teacher.

CONDUCT IN RELATION TO LEARNERS

The law recognises that staff act in loco parentis in respect of learners in their charge as set out in the Pupil's Act of 1989 and must act in the role of reasonable parent in the school context. Through their actions staff must act in accordance with this duty of care to ensure at all times that the safety and welfare of learners is accorded the highest priority. In this and other ways, staff should always maintain standards of conduct which sustain their professional standing and that of the school.

Power and position of trust (Under section 16 of the Sexual Offences Act) 'it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over (e.g. teacher, youth worker) to have a sexual relationship with a learner under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that learner even if the relationship is consensual'.

Staff need to understand the 'duty to prevent' (Counter Terrorism and Security Act, 2015) and how adults can influence and in turn be influenced by partners and be able to influence those they educate.

Interaction with learners should always be appropriate to their age and gender. Staff should be appropriately dressed in a business-like manner, should not touch learners, however casually, in ways or on parts of the body that might be considered indecent, unnecessary or familiar. Staff must not use inappropriate language. Particular care may be necessary when supervising learners in and out of school activities.

Teaching materials should be appropriate to the age and gender of learners. Particular care should be taken that sex or health education materials are appropriate and consistent with the school's policy and practice.

When holding meetings with learners on sensitive issues, staff should exercise proper professional judgement over the arrangements for the meeting. They should safeguard their own position by, for instance, considering the need for a second adult to be present, particularly where learners are deemed as 'high risk' or 'vulnerable'. Risk assessments may be carried out to safeguard staff and learners.

Corporal punishment defined as any intentional application of force as punishment is illegal and may render a member of staff liable to criminal action as well as action under the school's disciplinary procedures. Corporal punishment includes any form of physical chastisement.

Physical intervention will not constitute corporal punishment where its purpose is to avert an immediate danger of injury to, or an immediate danger to the property of, any person including a learner. In such circumstances, the element of restraint should be the minimum necessary to prevent injury or remove the risk of harm.

Where physical contact is necessary (e.g. in teaching PE), that contact should be the minimum necessary for the purpose and comply with accepted good practice. Particular care should be taken in helping learners with physical or other disabilities (e.g. in lifting).

First Aid staff will follow a policy on first aid and will be appropriately trained in its application, and in any event always have a first aider on the premises. The school's policy should indicate the recording process for any incidents or accidents and should be clearly linked to the school's Health and Safety Policy.

Following any incident where a member of staff has reason to believe that their actions may be open to misinterpretation, the Line Manager should be immediately notified and a written report submitted as soon as possible following the incident. Line Managers / SLT who will notify the Head Teacher.

At Westhaven School, the Designated Safeguarding Lead is the Head Teacher. In the event that a member of staff suspects or receives allegations that a learner is the subject of abuse, a report should immediately be made in strict confidence to the Designated Safeguarding Lead via CPOMs.

Agreed guidelines on procedures where staff are accused of physical or sexual abuse of learners are contained in the document "Teachers Facing an Allegation of Physical/Sexual Abuse: Guidelines on Practice and Procedure".

Staff must have read and understand the recent DFE Guidance on Keeping Pupil's Safe in Education (2024) and Safer Working Practices 2018, and understand the implications of these on the day to day job, and any other statutory guidance as directed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Staff must understand their safeguarding responsibilities in terms of the Prevent Duty, learner Sexual Exploitation and Homophobic, Bi-phobic and Transphobic bullying. Any concerns should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Staff must be aware of their legal responsibility to report Female Genital Mutilation (The Serious Crime Act 2015) and their legal responsibility relating to the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, where staff must have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism" – the PREVENT agenda.

Staff should not show favouritism towards individuals or groups of learners, nor should they exclude any learners from any physical space, activity or discussion. Westhaven School adopts a positively inclusive ethos to all learners.

Staff must be aware that parent/carer consent must be checked prior to taking photographs/video clips of learners. The images/video clips that are obtained must link to appropriate curriculum use and should not be shared outside of school use.

Staff must be aware that the use of video clips/photos or other digital images should be viewed prior to being screened to learners and that they age and curriculum appropriate.

Staff should be aware it is illegal for any adult (over the age of 18) to send a sexual message, or a message that could be viewed as intending to encourage communication of a sexual nature to anyone under the age of 16. (Serious Crime Act 2015).

CONDUCT IN RELATION TO THE SCHOOL

Staff should make sure that they do not disclose confidential information to anyone who has no right to receive it and do not say or write anything that would constitute a breach of confidence. Confidential information relating to employment or the school should only be communicated on a need to know basis or with the specific permission of the Head Teacher. Please read the Online

Safety Policy on advice to staff about the use of social networking. Staff must be aware of their responsibility to ensure that the data protection act is upheld.

Use of materials and equipment provided by the school should not be used for purposes unconnected with employment. Staff should always use public funds to the best advantage of the school and community and adhere to high standards of probity in their use.

Staff should not solicit or accept any gift, loan, fee, hospitality or other reward for their own personal consumption which influences the way in which they carry out their duties. They should not influence or be influenced in the way they carry out their duties by ties of kinship or friendship, or by some other association or loyalty.

Care should be taken to avoid any conflict of interest between activities outside the school and professional responsibilities. Staff should not undertake work or engage in activities in their own time through which they seek to exercise unfair advantage by virtue of their position. In no case should outside activities bring the school into disrepute.

Staff should not, without authority, undertake activities unconnected with their professional role during working hours. This includes the use of school ICT systems and access to the internet.

Staff in full-time employment should inform the Head Teacher where they are undertaking paid work which may impinge on their normal duties, including activities such as lectures, private tuition, publications, press articles or radio/TV appearances. Where work is undertaken in the employee's own time any fees paid may be retained by the employee. However, where the event, or preparation for it, takes place in working time and/or involves the use of school resources, it is necessary to seek approval to use such resources and agree the proportion of any fee to be paid to the school for such use.

In addition to financial interests, staff should exercise professional judgement in disclosing to the Head Teacher or their line manager, non-financial interests which may conflict with the interests of the school. Such disclosure will depend upon circumstances (e.g. in making appointments) and may include personal acquaintances, membership of voluntary or other organisations or any official position or public appointment.

Staff should be aware of the Schools' Whistleblowing policy. If staff are unhappy with the schools safeguarding procedures, they can call the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline: 0800 0280285.

Staff should be aware that conduct outside of school resulting in police involvement, arrests or cautions which could lead to a criminal conviction should be reported to the Head Teacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team in the Head Teacher's absence.

CONDUCT IN RELATION TO THE SAFE PREMISES AND SAFE LEARNERS

Staff should not attend home visits/escort learners alone without first having a lone worker risk assessment completed by the DSL. Home visits should be discussed with the DSL prior to taking place to assess the risks to staff and learners. A mobile phone should be taken to all home visits and staff should remain in contact with school at the beginning and end of the home visit.

Educational visits should all be passed through the Senior Leadership Team. Appropriate risk assessments must be completed. Lists of learners should be shared with the DSL/DDSL prior to the trip taking place. Overnight trips and residential will require a debriefing session on return to school.

Staff will ensure that when managing conflicts between learners on and off site, that any actions that are used are reasonable and proportionate. Where appropriate, staff who are Safety Intervention trained may need to be called to deal with a situation, or initiate positive handling. If positive handling is used, this must be recorded on CPOMs.

Staff should ensure their ID badges are visible at all times whilst on the school site. ID badges along with all other school property must be returned to the Business Manager when leaving the school.

GDPR – General Data Protection Regulations 2018

Staff need to ensure that you know your roles and responsibilities with regards to data sharing, confidentiality and storage of data.

USB sticks must not be used to transfer data out of school unless they are encrypted.

Sensitive/confidential data must only be sent from secure email accounts to secure email accounts. If this is not possible, data must be password protected; documents and passwords to be sent separately.

Data/confidential information should not be taken out of school unless it is absolutely necessary to complete your day to day job. If data is to be taken out of school, staff must ensure that its security is high priority. Staff must ensure that work bags/data/confidential information is not easily accessible e.g. not left in cars unattended. Breaches of data protection will be taken seriously.

Staff must ensure that all ID badges, keys and security fobs are kept secure at all times. If these are lost this must be reported to the Head Teacher/Head of School or member of the Senior Leadership immediately.

CONDUCT IN RELATION TO SOCIAL MEDIA

Personal use of social media during scheduled breaks in the school day is permitted so long as it: does not involve unprofessional or inappropriate content; does not interfere with employment responsibilities (e.g. duties) or productivity; complies with this policy and is not accessed in the same room as learners.

You must avoid making any social media communications that could damage the school's business interests or reputation, even indirectly.

You must not use social media to defame or disparage the school, our staff, learners, parents/carers or any third party; to harass, bully or unlawfully discriminate against learners, parents/carers, staff or third parties; to make false or misleading statements; or to impersonate colleagues or third parties.

You must not express opinions on the behalf of Westhaven School via social media, unless expressly authorised to do so by your manager. You may be required to undergo training in order to obtain such authorisation.

You must not post comments about sensitive business-related topics, such as our performance, or do anything to jeopardise our confidential information and intellectual property.

You must not accept learners or their parents/carers as friends or use social media to send any personal messages to them directly or indirectly – personal communication could be considered inappropriate and unprofessional and may put you and/or your colleagues vulnerable to allegations.

You are strongly advised not to be friends (on or offline) with recent learners (the potential for colleagues at the school to be compromised in terms of content and open to accusations makes the risk not worth taking) and colleagues at the school are also strongly advised not to be friends with learners at other schools (on or offline) as this is likely to make them vulnerable to allegations and may be open to investigation by Westhaven School or police. Where a colleague is considering not following this advice, they are required to discuss the matter, and the implications with the Head Teacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead.