

# Staff Code of Conduct

This policy provides guidance on what is expected in terms of behaviour from the adults in the school; its aim is to make all staff aware of what is considered appropriate and thereby minimise the risk of inappropriate conduct.

School staff are in a position of trust and have a strong influence on children and students; we all have a duty to ensure that the way we conduct ourselves is, as far as possible, worthy of their imitation or respect.

Staff also have an individual responsibility to consider their reputation and the reputation of the school.

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers in the school regardless of their position, role or responsibility. References to 'staff' throughout the policy relate to all of the following:

- Teachers
- Administrative and support staff
- Volunteers
- Trustees
- Temporary and supply staff
- Teacher training students on placements

This code of conduct is not an exhaustive list of acceptable and unacceptable standards of behaviour. In situations where guidance does not exist in this policy staff are expected to exercise their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the pupils and the school.

## Professional and Contractual Responsibilities

Every member of staff is expected to fulfil the professional responsibilities of his/her position according to the contract of employment, including attendance and punctuality.

Frequent absences or lateness undermine the quality of the education we offer and present a poor model of adult behaviour for the pupils.

Absence or lateness for legitimate reasons should be managed according to the Staff Absence Policy and procedure.

## Professional Behaviour and Conduct

Staff are expected to conduct themselves consistently with honesty and integrity and to treat each other, pupils, parents and the wider community with dignity and respect at all times.

Staff must act in accordance with their duty of care to pupils with regard to their safety and welfare.

Staff must have regard for the ethos and values of the school and must not do or say anything which may bring the school into disrepute.

Care should be taken by staff that they consider any conflict of interest that may arise between activities undertaken outside school and responsibilities within school.

Staff are expected to act in accordance with the school's policies and procedures at all times.

With regard to conduct, staff should take note of the Code of Conduct for pupils and the Anti-Bullying Policy; adults can be bullies as well as children.

## Dress and Appearance

We recognise that dress and appearance are matters of personal choice. However, all staff must dress in a manner that is appropriate to their professional role.

Staff should dress in a manner that is not offensive, revealing or sexually provocative and is free from political or contentious slogans.

Staff should dress safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake.

### **Smoking, Alcohol and Other Substances**

It is illegal to smoke anywhere on school premises at any time.

Staff must refrain from the consumption of alcohol and other substances (e.g. drugs or other illegal substances) at events where pupils or parents are present (i.e. Leaving parties, school trips) both within the school premises and outside, or when they are representing the school in any capacity.

### **Relationships with Pupils/Students**

Staff must maintain professional boundaries with pupils appropriate to their position.

Staff should act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to question their actions or intent. It is important that staff think carefully about their conduct so that misinterpretations are minimised.

Staff should be aware that to establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils or their parents could be misconstrued. In situations where social contact is sought by parents or pupils, (e.g. invitations to parties) staff should use their professional judgement.

Staff must not make sexual remarks to a pupil, discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of, pupils or discuss a pupil's relations sexual relationships in an inappropriate context.

Staff must have regard for the school's e-safety policy.

Staff must have regard for the school's Safeguarding Policy.

Staff should be mindful of The Sexual Offences Act 2003, and in particular the sections that refer to abuse of positions of trust. The Act is available here:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42/contents>

Working Together to Safeguard Children is also helpful:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/419595/Working\\_Together\\_to\\_Safeguard\\_Children.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419595/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children.pdf)

### **Infatuations**

It is not unusual for pupils or, sometimes, their parents to develop infatuations towards members of staff. All such situations must be responded to sensitively to maintain the dignity of those concerned.

Staff should also be aware that in such situations, there is a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against them.

Any indications of an infatuation towards yourself or another member of staff should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

### **Physical Contact with Pupils**

Physical contact between people is part of healthy relationships of all kinds. It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact; what is appropriate for one child or staff member in one situation may be inappropriate for another. Staff should therefore, use their professional judgement at all times and be mindful that physical contact with a pupil is appropriate to:

- their professional role

- the given situation
- the age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background of the pupil
- the individual pupil's needs, personal boundaries etc.

Staff should be sensitive to the pupil's reaction and ensure that the physical contact is not unwelcome; even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described. Staff should never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent. Always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact is open to scrutiny.

Extra caution should be exercised where a child is known to have suffered abuse or neglect. Such experiences may sometimes make a child exceptionally needy and demanding of physical contact and staff should respond sensitively by helping them to understand the importance of personal boundaries.

There may be occasions when a pupil is in distress and in need of comfort as a reassurance. This may include age appropriate physical contact. Staff should be mindful at all times that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

If you have a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance you should seek further advice from the DSL.

Staff supervising PE and games or providing musical tuition may be required to initiate physical contact with pupils to support a child to perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument or to assist them with an exercise. Contact under these circumstances should be done with the pupil's agreement, for the minimum time necessary and in an open environment. Staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the pupil/student.

Physical contact must never be secretive, 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 incident and circumstances should be reported to the DSL, who will record it and take whatever further action is deemed necessary.

## **Changing**

Pupils are entitled to privacy while changing for P.E. and should not change anywhere except in the designated changing rooms. Supervision of changing rooms should be appropriate to the needs and age of the pupils and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

Staff should be vigilant about their own behaviour when helping children change in and out of clothes for PE and other activities, e.g. into and out of costumes for plays.

## **One to One Situations**

Staff working individually with pupils should be aware of the potential vulnerability of pupils and staff in such situations. Staff should manage these situations with regard to the safety of the pupil and to protect themselves from accusations.

Individual work with pupils should not be undertaken in isolated areas. Where it is necessary to close doors for reasons of confidentiality a colleague should be made aware of this and asked to remain vigilant.

## **Transporting Pupils**

When taking pupils offsite, the Risk Assessment Policy must be followed and staff must follow guidance in the current policy regarding their own conduct and that of pupils.

## **E-Safety**

*All of the school's policies are available on the website and in the office.*

Staff should have regard for The St Michael Steiner School's E-Safety policy and procedures.

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school or the school community into disrepute.

Staff should remain mindful of their digital footprint and exercise caution in all their use of social media or any other web based presence they have. This includes written content, videos or photographs and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts or following certain individuals or groups.

Staff should exercise care when using dating websites where staff could encounter students.

Staff must not accept 'friend' invitations or become 'friends' with any pupil of The St Michael Steiner School on any social media platform or communicate with pupils using any social media site.

The St Michael Steiner School acknowledges that staff may wish to make contact with parents over social media. Staff must exercise professional judgement in these circumstances and should not have any contact with pupils' family members via social media if that contact is likely to constitute a conflict of interest or call into question their objectivity with regard to the children.

Mobile phones should be switched off (or silent) during lessons and when on break duty. They may be used as timepieces but not for making phone calls, texting or for access to the internet when pupils are present, except for research purposes related to lessons in the High School.

Mobile phones and personally-owned mobile devices brought in to school are the responsibility of the device owner. The St Michael Steiner School accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of personally-owned mobile phones or mobile devices.

## **Photography, Video and Images of Children**

Many school activities involve recording images as part of the curriculum, extra school activities, publicity or to celebrate an achievement. In accordance with The Data Protection Act 1998 the image of a pupil is personal data. Therefore, it is a requirement under the Act for consent to be obtained from the parent/guardian of a pupil for any images made, and this is given in the Consent Form that the parents sign at the beginning of their time at the school.

It is the duty of staff to make themselves aware of pupils for whom consent has been withheld and to respect this. It is also important to take into account the wishes of the pupil, remembering that some pupils do not wish to have their photograph taken or be filmed.

Photographs/stills or video footage of pupils should only be taken for purposes authorised by the school and should be stored securely.

Staff should ensure that the College is aware of the proposed use of photographic/video equipment and that this is recorded in lesson plans. All photographs/stills and video footage should be available for scrutiny and staff should be able to justify all images/video footage made.

Staff should remain aware of the potential for images of pupils to be misused to create indecent images of children and/or for grooming purposes. Therefore, careful consideration should be given to how activities which are being filmed or photographed are organised and undertaken.

Particular care should be given when filming or photographing young or vulnerable pupils who may be unable to question how or why the activities are taking place. Staff should also be mindful that pupils who have been abused through the use of video or photography may feel threatened by its use in a teaching environment.

Parents and pupils are not allowed to film or or take photographs at school unless asked to specifically and are not allowed to post images taken at school or on school trips on social media without permission from the school.

## **Confidentiality**

Members of staff have access to confidential information about pupils, their parents/carers or their siblings. Staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil on a need to know basis. All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential and these should be dealt with in the same way.

Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil or her/his family for their own, or others' advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other organisations).

Staff have a statutory obligation to share with The St Michael Steiner School's DSL or deputy, any information which gives rise to concern about the welfare or safety of a pupil/student or that might suggest a pupil/student is in need or at risk of significant harm. Staff should pass on information without delay in accordance with The St Michael Steiner School's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

Staff should refer to the Department of Education's document Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for further guidance on information sharing. If you are in any doubt about whether to share you should seek guidance from the DSL or Deputy DSL.

### **Whistleblowing**

Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, without fear of repercussion.

All school staff have a duty to report any behaviour by a colleague which raises concern. Staff should refer to the school's Whistleblowing Policy for further guidance. This is particularly important where the welfare of pupils may be at risk.

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