



APPLEFORD SCHOOL STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

Appleford school fully recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding and child protection

We have a whole school approach to safeguarding, which is the golden thread that runs throughout every aspect of Appleford School. Our fundamental priority is our children and their wellbeing; this is first and foremost.

Legal Status: This policy complies with, The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations currently in force, Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE: September 2025) and the National Minimum Standards (NMS) for Residential Special Schools (RSS) (DfE: September 2022) We are required to establish procedures for the regulation of staff conduct under regulation 7 of [The School Staffing \(England\) Regulations 2009](#).

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), we should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistle-blowing, as well as acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

This policy sets out our expectations for all staff and volunteers. This includes anyone who is undertaking duties for your organisation, whether paid or unpaid, such as agency staff, interns and students on work placement. This policy outlines the expected conduct of staff at all times.

Related Documents:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (DfE: In force September 2025)
- Working together to Safeguard Children (HMGovt.: February 2026)
- Teachers Standards (Currently Enforced)
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (September 2025);
- Data Protection Policy (September 2025);
- Special Needs policy (September 2025);
- Supporting children with medical needs policy (September 2025);
- Behaviour policy (March 2026);
- Physical Intervention policy/procedures (March 2026)
- Working alone with children procedures/policy (September 2025);
- Mobile phone and camera published procedures (September 2025).

Policy Agreed: March 2026
Date Published: March 2026
Next Review: September 2026

Signed:

Dr Peter Gardner
Directing Lead and Proprietor

Mr David King
Headmaster and Company Director

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Our approach at Appleford School is child-centred and at all times, we will act in the best interests of the child. All who work, or volunteer or supply services to our school have an equal responsibility to understand and implement this policy and its procedures both within and outside of normal school hours, including activities away from school. All employees and volunteers are required to sign that they have read, understood and will abide with our 'Child Protection Policy,' 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) part one' and for those who work directly with children 'KCSIE Annex A.' This policy takes full account of the child protection procedures agreed by the Wiltshire Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership (SVPP) along with our Safer Recruitment

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Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, Staff Behaviour policy, and The Teachers' Standards.

Overview: Aims, Scope and principles

Relationships amongst staff and with pupils at Appleford School are friendly and mutually respectful. Both the Senior and the Prep Schools seek to provide a safe and supportive environment that ensures the wellbeing and best outcomes for all pupils and supports our aims and values.

The Staff Code of Conduct has been formulated in order to maintain this balance by:

- clarifying the professional responsibility of all staff, teaching and non-teaching;
- giving clear advice about what constitutes illegal behaviour and what might be considered as misconduct; and
- establishing expectations of standards that all staff must maintain when carrying out school business or representing the School in any circumstance.

The School recognises that it has a duty of care towards its employees to provide a safe working environment for staff. It is intended that this guidance will help ensure that staff maintain the safest possible working practice and thereby safeguard all pupils in their care as well as safeguard themselves against accusations of improper or unprofessional conduct.

Specifically, staff should be aware that:

- allegations of unprofessional conduct or improper contact can arise at any time;
- professionalism and vigilance are required in order to ensure the safety of children in our care and to reduce the risk of an allegation of impropriety against a member of staff;
- forming inappropriate relationships with children or young people who are pupils at another school may also be regarded as gross misconduct.

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

Many of the principles in this code of conduct are based on the [Teachers' Standards](#).

School staff have an influential position in the school and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards.. We expect all support staff, governors and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

This code aims to establish the usual standard of conduct expected of all employees, whilst also reflects the Core Values and Vision of the School. It is a combination of these regulations, standards and values which formulates how an employee of The Appleford School is expected to conduct themselves.

Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in our staff disciplinary procedures.

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement, and common sense and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils.

As an employee, you must not put yourself in a position where duty and private interests conflict and you must not make use of your employment to further your private interests.

Responsibilities of the School

- Explain the provisions of the Code of Conduct to employees and signpost employees to other relevant policies, document and
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guidelines

- Provide additional advice and guidance to staff in relation to queries they may have regarding the application of the Code of Conduct
- Coach, support and provide feedback to employees on their performance in relation to the required standards of conduct
- Take appropriate action at the earliest opportunity to address breaches of the expected standards of conduct

Responsibilities of the Employee

- To read, understand and comply with the Code of Conduct at all times
- To use this code, alongside other relevant School policies and professional codes, to guide them in their role
- To seek guidance from the Headteacher a member of SMT or proprietor if they are unclear about the conduct or actions expected of them
- To alert the Headteacher a member of SMT or proprietor at the earliest opportunity where an employee believes they may have acted in a manner which is inconsistent with the Code of Conduct and other relevant School Policies and professional codes.

Setting an example

School employees are role models and must strive to adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the pupils/students within the School and is appropriate in a School setting. This includes:

- Refraining from abusive or potentially offensive/discriminatory language or actions. (The use of profanity, vulgar expressions, personal insults, violence, and harassment for example, will be considered unacceptable)
- Being mindful and sensitive to the customs, practices, culture and personal beliefs of others.
- Positively contributing to the creation of a fair and inclusive work environment where everyone can thrive and do their best work.
- Demonstrating tolerance and respect towards others by being mindful and sensitive to the customs, practices, culture and personal beliefs of others
- Contributing to the creation of a fair and inclusive School environment where everyone can thrive and do their best work.
- Observing boundaries appropriate to their role and a School setting
- Ensuring personal / political opinions or beliefs do not impact on the discharge of duties and/or are not expressed in a way which exploits pupils /students vulnerability or seeks to unduly influence.
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Maintaining high standards of personal presentation, attendance and punctuality
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within
- Adhere to the Teachers' Standards (where appropriate)
- Adhere to Appleford Schools Model Code of Conduct (where appropriate)

Should employees be in doubt about the appropriateness of their behaviour they should seek guidance from the Headteacher (or a member of SMT or proprietor in the case of the Headteacher).

Safeguarding

All Employees and volunteers must understand and abide with the school's Safeguarding Policy, currently in force. Please refer to our Safeguarding - Child Protection Policy and other safeguarding documents for more details.

Position of Trust

All staff who work in a school setting are in a position of trust in relation to individuals in their care and so must adopt high standards of personal integrity and conduct and behave in such a way that does not compromise their position both within and outside of the workplace or the safety and/or welfare of children and young people. This is known as transferable risk and examples include:

- Domestic abuse
- Drug and alcohol use
- Extremism and radicalisation
- Mental health
- Friendships/close personal relationships with people who may pose a risk to children
- Involvement with the Police/social care

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The above list is not exhaustive and if there are any matters in a member of staff's personal life which could compromise their position both within and outside the workplace, they must notify the Head Teacher immediately. This includes any involvement with the Police, regardless of whether the Police decide to take any action or not.

Low-level concerns about members of staff

Appleford school operates a 'low-level' concerns policy in accordance with KCSIE. 'Low-level' refers to behaviour that is: inconsistent with expectations set out in this policy, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and/or does not meet the allegations threshold, or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Standards of personal behaviour

Staff-Pupil Relationships

Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so. If staff members and pupils must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

- This takes place in a public place that others can access
- Others can see into the room
- In view of the CCTV cameras and not in rooms without CCTV cameras
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of school/boarding hours if possible. Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes social media profiles. 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 always remain self-aware so that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation. If possible Individual work with pupils should not be undertaken in isolated areas or rooms, rooms without CCTV or areas without viewing panels. If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, or if a staff member is concerned at any point about a fellow staff member and a pupil, this should be reported in line with the procedures set out in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Additional Boarding Comments: Boarding staff have a professional obligation to raise legitimate concerns about the conduct of colleagues or managers. In the case of raising legitimate concerns about the conduct of colleagues or senior staff, the School will seek to respect the confidentiality and anonymity of the whistle-blower and will as far as possible protect him/her from reprisals. Appleford School will not tolerate any attempt to victimise the whistle-blower or attempts to prevent concerns being raised and will consider any necessary disciplinary or corrective action appropriate to the circumstances.

Staff should:

- not use force as a form of punishment;
- try to defuse situations before they escalate;
- inform parents of any behaviour management techniques used;
- adhere to the School's behaviour management policy and
- be mindful of factors which may impact upon a student or young person's behaviour e.g. bullying

When dealing with negative behaviour, staff will always communicate in a clear, calm and positive manner. Staff will make every effort to set a positive example to children by behaving in a friendly and tolerant manner themselves, promoting an atmosphere where children and adults respect and value one another.

Relationships with other members of staff and other clients and customers of the School

The School does not concern itself with the private lives of its staff unless they affect its effective operation or its reputation. Members of staff who are relatives or who have a close personal relationship should not normally have a supervisory, assessing or authorising relationship with each other. Employees must inform their line manager if they have a close personal relationship with another employee or a client or customer of the School that could be considered by colleagues, pupils or others, as impacting on the way they conduct

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themselves at work. All staff, irrespective of job role, should be polite, helpful and professional towards each other. They should seek to be considerate and courteous at all times, even on occasions when there may be differences of opinion or challenge.

Other relationships

Staff must declare any relationships that they may have with pupils, staff, clients, contractors, suppliers or parents/carers outside of the school. This may include mutual membership of social groups, care, tutoring and/or family connections. Existing or new personal relationships at work between colleagues should be declared to the Head Teacher where there is a potential for this to impact upon the work of either (for example: a risk of allegations of bias or conflict of interest). All staff must complete a declaration of business interest form and declare any business and/or pecuniary interests annually.

Equality of opportunity

The School seeks to promote inclusivity and values diversity. It also seeks to ensure that the work environment for its employees is supportive, and one where individual respect is shown to all. All members of staff and pupils, regardless of their gender, race, ethnic background, culture, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, age, religion, socio-economic status or any other factor will be supported and encouraged to perform to their potential.

All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way. Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed, and the staff member supported to correct it, at an early stage. This creates and embeds a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff while minimising the risk of abuse. Reporting and responding to low-level concerns is covered in more detail in our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and Management of Low Level Concern Policy. These are available on the shared drive and School Website. Printed copies are available from the HR Manager.

Harassment and bullying

To secure an environment in which pupils and members of staff are able to flourish and to achieve their full potential, the School is committed to ensuring that everyone is able to work and to participate in the life of the School without fear of harassment, bullying or intimidation. Everyone in the School has a part to play by ensuring that their own behaviour, whether intentional or unintentional, does not constitute harassment. The School will take action against inappropriate behaviour that shows lack of respect for others or which leads people to feel threatened.

Employees must treat all other employees, pupils, parents, and people with whom they come into contact with courtesy and respect and must not make any remarks or gestures relating to the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation which may cause offence.

Any incident involving bullying or harassment will be dealt with in accordance with Applefords Anti Bullying Policy . Any complaint of discrimination, harassment, or victimisation or complaints made on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics listed above, will be taken seriously and will be the subject of a thorough investigation. This could give rise to the implementation of the School's Disciplinary procedure, depending on the outcome of the investigation.

Health and safety

The School places a high priority on providing a safe working and learning environment and will act positively to minimise the incidence of all workplace risks as required by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and other associated legislation. All activities should be carried out with the highest regard for the health and safety of employees, students, visitors and the public. Our aim is excellence in health and safety, by means of continuous improvement of standards, and the comprehensive use of risk assessments so as to systematically remove the causes of accidents/incidents and ill-health. This, together with more specific aims and objectives, reflects the School's commitment to promote employee wellbeing. See the Health and Safety Statement of Intent and Health and Safety Policy for further information.

Security

In the interests of security, employees must carry their identity pass as a means of identification whilst in School and produce it on request. The School reserves the right to search the outer clothing, bags, lockers etc. of staff members whilst on site. The staff member may have a colleague in attendance on such (rare) occasions.

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Performance

The School expects individuals to follow all reasonable rules and instructions given by those supervising or managing their activities and/or work areas.

Employees are expected to follow all reasonable and lawful instructions by a person with the authority to issue such instructions unless:

- There is a danger to a person's health and safety.
- A conflict of interest may exist.
- It does not comply with School's policy and practice.

Head Teachers and Line Managers must be able to justify their instructions and decisions in line with their delegations, authority, and School policy and procedures, and be open and respond promptly to constructive questions.

Attendance and Timekeeping

Should a staff member need to be absent or expect to be late for any reason, he/she should ask the HR manager and their Head of Department in advance when possible. If this is not possible, he/she is asked to contact the HR manager and Head of Department at the earliest opportunity.

Use of language

Staff must ensure that they use appropriate language at all times. Staff must:

- avoid words or expressions that have any unnecessary sexual content or innuendos
- not use language that could be considered racist, sexist or homophobic;
- not use language that promotes extreme political ideas or that promotes any form of radicalisation;
- avoid any words or actions that are over-familiar;
- not swear, blaspheme or use any sort of offensive language in front of pupils; and
- understand that the use of sarcasm or derogatory words should be avoided when punishing or disciplining pupils and unprofessional comments about anyone must also be avoided;
- take care if engaging in banter with pupils and/or colleagues, however well intended.

Smoking

The School is a non-smoking site and staff must observe the School's policy on smoking.

Fitness for work

The School accepts that alcohol is legally and freely available. Employees must:

- Ensure that the use of alcohol out of work does not adversely affect your work performance, the health, safety or welfare of yourself or others and does not damage the Schools image and reputation.
- If you are a Headmaster or Manager, consider the options available for managing employees in the above situation and consider if there is a need to make a supportive referral to the services of Occupational Health. The HR manager will complete this referral
- Not consume or be under the influence of alcohol, use illicit drugs or other illegal substances while at work.
- If taking medication you must seek the advice of your doctor to ensure that such medication will not impede your ability to do the job (e.g. operate machinery).
- Inform your Headmaster or Line Manager of any situations where a risk to yourself or others may arise because of this.
- If you are a Headmaster or Line Manager consider the options available for assisting employees who are required to take legally prescribed drugs and whose levels of performance has been impaired. In these circumstances a risk assessment should be undertaken

Misuse of drugs and alcohol

Staff must not drink alcohol during the normal school working day nor should they drink alcohol with pupils outside of the normal school working day apart from in the instances set out below.

Drinking alcohol with pupils is not allowed. The consumption of alcohol on trips is not permitted. Drivers must not consume alcohol under

any circumstances.

It is a disciplinary offence to be on School premises and/or carrying out official duties when under the influence of non-medically prescribed drugs.

Gambling

Gambling activities must not be conducted on School premises; discretion may be used in relation to small raffles for charitable purposes, national lottery syndicates, occasional sweepstakes etc.

Conduct outside work

The School does not seek to dictate how employees conduct themselves in their personal lives outside work. However, unlawful, anti-social or other conduct by employees that may jeopardize the School's reputation or position will be dealt with through the Disciplinary Procedure. In particular, a member of staff accused of a criminal offence is expected to inform the School at the earliest opportunity and failure to do so may be a disciplinary offence.

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school, or the teaching profession, into disrepute. This covers conduct including but not limited to relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school on social media. Staff should ensure that the use of alcohol/drugs outside of work does not adversely affect the work performance and safety of themselves or others, and does not bring the School into disrepute.

Dress code

The School operates a formal dress code for its employees, other than for those who are provided with a uniform and/or protective clothing. However, employees must ensure that their dress is appropriate for the situation in which they are working and that they present a professional image and one that reflects sensitivity to customer perceptions. This may reflect their ethnicity and lifestyle, but should not be provocative or cause offence to those with whom they have contact.

There is a general expectation that dress will be appropriate to the nature of the duties and responsibilities of the job. For instance, sport-type clothing will be worn when conducting practical PE lessons however smart business dress will be worn when conducting other classroom lessons. This also applies to off-site activities and as representatives of the school smart business dress is required at all times unless the activity is of a physical nature. The School values and welcomes the ethnic diversity of its workforce and therefore dress codes will take account of ethnic and religious dress requirements with sensitivity ensuring that employees are free to observe them. Where there is a clear business case or a health and safety reason, the School may introduce appropriate dress codes to suit the services provided. For clarity, smart business dress does not include:

- Denim
- Leggings with short tops
- Tracksuits
- Jogging bottoms
- Flip-flops or Crocs
- Trainers (unless carrying out PE or OT)

Appropriate clothes should be worn for trips and visits and for PE. Staff should also wear aprons for activities such as DT and Food Tech. There will also be occasionally "mufti days" for special events as in previous years where staff and pupils can wear casual clothes and we will try to give advance notice of these so everyone is aware.

Mobility and Flexibility

Due to the demands and nature of the school, staff should be prepared to transfer upon request within departments either temporarily or permanently, to undertake work of a different nature, providing it is reasonable and safe to do so and the staff member is adequately trained.

Use of Mobile Phones and Cameras

Photographs will only be taken of children with their parents' permission (provided in writing via a consent form). Photographs will only

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be taken by a designated staff member/s. Where photographs are taken by staff to give evidence of children's progress, photos can only be taken on School cameras. They must then be downloaded onto School computers, where they will be monitored. Photos cannot be used or passed on outside the School unless in accordance with the schools online safety and mobile technology policy. Neither staff nor children may use their own mobile phones to take photographs within our setting.

Guidelines on the prevention of allegations of abuse

Restrictive Interventions – Including reasonable force and seclusions: The use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force and seclusion, can have a significant impact on the pupils, staff members and parents involved, as well as the wider classroom. However, there are times when the use of restrictive interventions will be lawful and necessary; for example, to keep individuals and the wider school community safe. Restrictive interventions are a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil, including both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain pupils in different ways. This may also include a child being secluded to support with their self-regulation. Any 'Reasonable Force' used in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time'. We follow the latest DfE guidance ["Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force and seclusions"](#).

All staff will follow our behaviour policy and all pupils are encouraged to follow these expectations to reduce the need for the need for 'restrictive interventions.' Staff will work in collaboration with pupils and parents/carers to plan positive, proactive behaviour support which may include support plans, referral to specialist agencies and agreeing actions to reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviour. For full details, please see our Restrictive Interventions Policy.

Staff homes

Pupils should not visit staff unaccompanied unless specifically agreed in writing by the DSL or the Headmaster, or the home has been designated by the School or regulatory body as a work place e.g. childminders, foster carers.

Staff must not allow pupils to stay in their homes overnight unless there is a friendship between a pupil and the child of a member of staff. In these cases, all such arrangements must be made with full parental consent. Where accommodation is provided by the School, the agreement of the Head of Boarding is also required.

Communication with pupils including the use of social media

Staff should not give their personal mobile phone numbers or email addresses to pupils, nor should they communicate with them by text message or personal email. If they need to speak to a pupil by telephone, they should use one of the School's telephones and email using the School system. The group leader on all trips and visits involving an overnight stay may ask the pupils for their mobile numbers before allowing them out in small, unsupervised groups. The group leader will delete any record of pupils' mobile phone numbers at the end of the trip or visit and should ensure that pupils delete any staff numbers that they may have acquired during the trip. Staff should be aware that it is not appropriate to use social media to communicate directly with pupils.

School staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, staff are advised they should not use their full name, as pupils may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead and set public profiles to private.

Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents via social media, or any other means outside school, to develop any sort of relationship. They will not make any efforts to find pupils' or parents' social media profiles. Employees must not post any comments, photographs, images or conversations on social networking websites which may bring them or the School into disrepute.

Security settings should be maintained at the highest level in order to prevent members of the public seeing any employee's personal information. Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at the school without their consent. Staff should be aware of the School's Online Safety Policy.

Financial probity

Self-employment, other employment or consultancy work

The School understands that these types of opportunities can bring benefits to the School as well as to individual members of staff. All

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staff proposing to undertake a self-employment, other employment or consultancy work must secure the approval from the HR Manager and Headmaster and ensure that the proposed work is not in conflict or detrimental to the School's aims and objectives.

Intellectual property

You are required to inform the School immediately of any invention, improvement, discovery, process, design or copyright which you create or obtain whilst in the School's employ or as a consequence of it. This will become the absolute property of the School except as otherwise stated by statute. You irrevocably waive all moral rights under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 in any existing or future works created by you.

Financial regulations

The School's financial regulations create a framework of financial controls within which the staff of the School must operate. These regulations are designed to protect the School and individual members of staff. Failure to comply with these regulations may lead to the loss of assets, significant delays in payments to employees and suppliers, and additional work for colleagues.

Conflicts of interest

The highest standards of behaviour are also expected in all areas of school life, especially where individuals are in positions to make decisions that may have significant impact on others. In all such cases it is important that decisions are taken in a fair and balanced way that can withstand external scrutiny. Conflicts of interest should be identified so that individuals are not involved in decisions where their actions could be seen as biased.

Access to confidential information

Although the School strives to conduct its business in an open fashion, there will be times when individuals, through their positions as members of committees, selectors/recruiters, line managers etc., become aware of confidential information, either about other individuals or in connection with the School's commercial/academic activities. Individuals should be aware of the need to keep such matters confidential and to respect the proper channels of communication for such information.

Staff members should never give absolute guarantees of confidentiality to pupils or adults wishing to tell them about something serious. They should guarantee only that they will pass on information to the minimum number of people who must be told in order to ensure that the proper action is taken to sort out the problem and that they will not tell anyone who does not have a clear need to know. They will also take whatever steps they can to protect the informing pupil or adult from any retaliation or unnecessary stress that might be feared after a disclosure has been made.

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the school, staff, pupils and their parents. Such information must not be disclosed to any person who is not entitled to have access to this or legitimately needs it for work purposes. Specifically, all employees must:

- Work in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (2018) and associated legislation
- Observe the School's procedures for the release of information to other agencies and members of the public
- Not use or share confidential information inappropriately or for personal gain
- Not speak inappropriately about the school community, pupils, parents, staff or governors including discussing incidents, operational or employment matters with parents/members of the public
- Ensure all confidential data is kept secure and password protected

This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, as detailed further in our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy. Should employees be in doubt about the appropriateness of sharing information they should seek guidance from the Headteacher.

Use of equipment for non-work purposes

The School will allow employees reasonable use of School equipment and facilities, provided that authorisation has been obtained from the Headmaster, that the use does not interfere or conflict with the work of the School, and that any costs are met by the individual.

Private telephone calls

Employees may use School telephone facilities to make occasional private calls for essential or emergency matters. Private international calls are not permitted without prior authorisation by the Headmaster

Use of IT equipment, internet and social media

Users of the School's IT and internet facilities must behave reasonably towards other users and in public areas, they must behave appropriately. Users who do not behave reasonably and appropriately may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with relevant procedures. In particular, employees must not use School facilities to create, display, produce, store, circulate or transmit obscene or pornographic material in any form or medium.

Employees must keep the use of School internet facilities for personal matters to a minimum and only during lunch breaks or after contracted hours.

Acceptable Use of Technologies:

Staff will not use technology in school to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content. Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school equipment for personal use, in school hours or in front of pupils. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils. We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the School IT system. Staff should be aware of the School's Acceptable Use Policy.

Appropriate Communications to each other as Staff: staff should be polite and professional, supportive and co-operative to each other. We expect our staff to work as a team. This means we need staff to be able to share information and ideas, be ready to be thoughtful and reflective about the education we provide, and readily responsive to instruction from the senior staff. We expect staff to refrain from any actions which may undermine another staff member's confidence or professional abilities, including bullying one another. At all times, staff should remember that we are all working with the best interests of the children in mind. Staff should conduct themselves in public at all times as a professional, whether at a school social occasion outside school hours, or in school. At school social occasions, and at external school related functions, staff should be moderate in their behaviour, language and in their consumption of alcohol. They should act as if on duty at all times when in contact with school parents, pupils and staff. Whatever the occasion staff are expected to keep the academic and professional procedures and processes of the school confidential as required by the Headmaster at all times unless given clear and unequivocal permission to do otherwise.

Procedures

Raising matters of concern - Whistleblowing

Employees have a right and a duty to raise concerns that they may have about breaches of the law or propriety by the School. This should normally be through the headmaster but in circumstances where this is not appropriate, they may approach the HR manager in confidence. No individual who expresses their views in good faith and in line with this guidance will be penalised for doing so. For further information please refer to the School's Whistleblowing Policy, which is available on the School website.

Whistle-blowing reports wrongdoing that it is "in the public interest" to report. Examples linked to safeguarding include:

- Pupils' or staff's health and safety being put in danger
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement
- Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest

Staff are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. Their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and their confidentiality will be respected. Staff should consider the examples above when deciding whether their concern is of a whistle-blowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or school procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

Staff should report their concern to the Headmaster. If the concern is about the Headmaster, or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the Proprietor.

Concerns should be made in writing wherever possible. They should include names of those committing wrongdoing, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter. For our

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school's detailed whistleblowing process, please refer to our Whistleblowing policy.

Action if a pupil is missing

Please refer to the WPS and Appleford lost children, late collection and children missing education policy, available on our shared drive and website, when a child is not collected on time, which also include the requirements for a day pupil or boarder missing child in their content. A record is kept by the School of any instances in which a pupil is missing from school without satisfactory permission and documentation, including the action taken and the pupil's explanation.

Complaints

The School's Complaints Procedure is available on the School website and copies can be sent to any parent on request. Any complaint arising from the implementation of this policy will be considered under the School's Complaints Procedure.

Breaches of this code

This code of conduct has been drawn up to provide a source of guidance to the School's employees. It is not a contractual document and can be amended at any time by the School. All staff must comply with both the provisions of this code and the School's policies and procedures, breaches of which will be taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Staff are also reminded that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. The School's primary duty is towards the welfare of pupils and its staff. Individuals are encouraged to take a common-sense approach towards their conduct. Any staff member who has a concern or is unsure about an event that has arisen should discuss the matter with a senior colleague as soon as possible.

APPENDIX 1 - ONE TO ONE SITUATIONS

One to one situations

Staff carefully consider the welfare needs of children and their own safeguarding when in a one-to-one situation. All spaces in the school are set up to allow any activity to be easily observed by other staff in the school. Windows and doors are kept clear from display materials to allow rooms to be overlooked. Internal doors remain open when practicable. See school lone working procedures/policy (September 2025).

Staff working in one-to-one situations with children and young people are 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. Pre-arranged meetings with pupils away from the School premises should not be permitted unless approval is obtained from their parent and the Headmaster or another senior colleague with delegated authority. Children are provided with age/developmentally appropriate advice about managing distressing feelings that may arise during 1-1 situations in school.

To avoid misunderstandings the following should be adhered to carefully:

- Members of staff should exercise particular caution and sensitivity before visiting lavatories or changing areas. Male members of staff should never be in girls' changing areas unless accompanied by a female member of staff and likewise for female staff and boys changing rooms;
- No member of staff should ever be behind a locked door with a child;
- Ensure that unnecessary contact with children is avoided (e.g. children sitting on laps or hair stroking etc.) and that outward displays of affection are only appropriate in the case of comforting a distressed child, and should never occur unless there is another adult present;
 - Whilst it would be unrealistic and undesirable to preclude all physical contact between adults and children, staff are expected to exercise caution and avoid placing themselves in a position where their actions might be open to criticism or misinterpretation;
- Staff should take great care that relationships with individual children are kept on a professional level. It is important that all children are treated the same and that discipline is fair, consistent and impartial. Staff should take care that "joking comments" cannot be misconstrued to give offence;
- Staff must not be party to gossip about colleagues or children;
- Personal or academic information on children should be kept confidential and away from other children or parents;

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- The highest level of confidentiality should always be maintained in relationships with both adults and children. Staff, however, should make it clear that there are certain circumstances (e.g. where a child is suffering or is likely to suffer harm) when other people will need to be told, so that the community or the child can be protected. If a child asks to tell a member of staff something in confidence, they should always be told that this will depend upon the circumstances and absolute confidence cannot be guaranteed;
- If a child behaves inappropriately or makes an inappropriate advance to a member of staff, it is essential that the child is immediately informed that the language or behaviour is unacceptable. The incident, and what has been done and said, should be recorded, and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately;
- One-to-one meetings should, wherever possible, take place in public or semi-public places, such as classrooms or offices. If in classrooms, ensure you are seated so that you and the child can be seen through the visibility panel in the door or with the door open;
- When in a private meeting with a child or one-to-one session, as occurs with Therapists, ensure furniture is positioned to allow easy access into or out of the room and that the glass panel in the door is not obscured so that you can be seen clearly;
- Staff will at no time travel unaccompanied outside of the school with children;
- Inform another adult of where the 1:1 teaching is taking place;
- Staff should ensure that a meeting is arranged during normal school hours when there are plenty of other people about;
- Do not continue a meeting for any longer than is necessary to achieve its purpose;
- Avoid sitting or standing in close proximity to a pupil, except as necessary to check work;
- Avoid using "engaged" or equivalent signs on doors or windows;
- Avoid idle discussion;
- Avoid all unnecessary physical contact and apologise straight away if there is accidental physical contact;
- Avoid any conduct that could be taken as a sexual advance;
- Report any incident that causes you concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy, and make a written record (signed and dated);
- Report any situation where a pupil becomes distressed or angry to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Relationships at Work Policy

Scope and purpose of the policy

The purpose of this Policy is to provide guidance to all staff regarding personal relationships within the work environment.

The school recognises the importance of preserving the integrity of professional relationships between members of staff. Whilst most social and personal relationships need not present a difficulty and can be entirely beneficial in that they promote good working relationships and trust, it is recognised that there will be particular circumstances where staff members concerned will need to withdraw from certain situations in order to protect themselves, the school and its pupils from any possible criticism of unfair bias.

In particular, it is important to recognise that relationships at work can leave staff vulnerable to allegations of bias or coercion in safeguarding matters.

This Policy is in place to minimise these risks.

The purpose of the policy is therefore to:

- Protect members of staff from allegations;
- Avoid any actual or potential conflicts;
- Avoid misuse of authority.

Who is covered by the policy?

This policy covers all employees working at all levels. It also applies to, consultants, contractors, casual and agency staff and volunteers (collectively referred to as staff in this policy).

Personnel responsible for implementing the policy

All Senior Leaders have a specific responsibility for operating within the boundaries of this policy, ensuring that all staff understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and taking action when behaviour falls below its requirements.

All staff are responsible for adhering to this policy and should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it.

Definition of related persons

In the context of this policy, a personal relationship is defined as follows:

- Spouse;
- Parent or child;
- Siblings;
- In-laws;
- Aunt/uncle;
- Niece/nephew
- First cousins;
- Grandparent/grandchild;
- Member of same household;
- Persons in a romantic or sexual relationship;
- Close personal friendships; and
- Significant business relationships.

The above definitions are examples of personal relationships which may give rise to conflicts of interests in the workplace. However personal relationships are not restricted to these examples and anyone who considers that they are in a potential conflict of interests should declare it as outlined in the policy below.

Expectations

Staff should conduct themselves at all times in ways that are consistent with their role and duties and within all school policies (i.e. The school's Code of Conduct). The recruitment, selection, treatment, development and promotion of staff should be based solely on evidence and not be in any way affected by personal relationships at work.

Where personal relationships occur between members of staff, it is the responsibility of both individuals to avoid any actual or potential conflicts of interest.

Staff who are in a personal relationship must not display intimate behaviour e.g. kissing and holding hands, whilst at work and especially in the presence of pupils.

All members of staff have a responsibility to follow the terms of this policy. In cases where staff are unsure that the policy is being adhered to or where they believe a breach may have occurred or is likely to occur, the member of staff should raise the breach or potential breach with the Headmaster.

Once the matter has been raised, if it is unavoidable that the matter will need to be discussed with the members of staff involved and also with senior members of staff. However, any discussions will be undertaken with consideration to the sensitivities of the person reporting the breach and the potential impact on their working relationships.

If the member of staff involved in the actual or potential breach is a Headmaster, the member of staff concerned about the breach or potential breach should raise their concerns with the Proprietor.

Identifying and declaring a personal relationship at work

As part of the school's recruitment policy, candidates must declare on the Application Form any existing or personal relationships they have which involves an individual of the school community which may give rise to an actual or potential conflict of interest, misuse of power or unfair bias.

Staff should declare to the Headmaster any existing or new personal relationships they have with other members of staff, parents of pupils or contractors or suppliers which may give rise to an actual or potential conflict of interest, trust or breach of confidentiality. It is also appropriate that staff declare any professional relationships they have with pupils at the school i.e tutoring.

The Headmaster will treat these matters in confidence and in consultation with the member(s) of staff, find ways in which potential conflicts of interest can be avoided. The SMT will need to be notified of any declaration, but any such declaration will, so far as is practicable, be treated as confidential.

All declarations should be related in confidence, recorded in writing and placed on the employee's personnel file. Should there be any changes in the future, the member of staff should request that the documents should be removed from the file and destroyed.

Staff who declare a personal relationship at work, should be treated fairly and with due regard to equality of treatment issues.

Staff who are uncertain about whether there is likely to be any risk of a potential conflict of interests emerging from a personal relationship at work, should discuss the matter with the Headmaster or HR in the first instance. Staff should approach their line manager in confidence should a relationship develop that may potentially contravene the principles of this policy.

Where either a personal relationship as defined above, or a failure to comply with this policy, following investigation, results in an unfair advantage or disadvantage to either of the parties to the relationship the matter will be considered seriously by the school. This includes investigation of the above in accordance with the school's Disciplinary Procedure.

Personal relationships at work

In order to accommodate partners and family members working the school, some regulation is necessary where such staff are brought into closer contact, e.g. where they may be working within the same class, key stage, department/faculty or subject area.

In establishing whether there is a potential conflict of interest, Senior Leaders should consider the following:

a) Is there any implication in relation to the safeguarding of pupils?

- b) Are there any implications in relation to the members of staff working in the same key stage/area or performing their relevant allocated roles?
- c) Are any staff likely to be made uncomfortable in their dealings with either of the two staff members because of the existence of a known personal relationship?
- d) Is a personal relationship seen to offer advantage to an employee and disadvantage to another by them feeling excluded from the relationship?
- e) Is the relationship potentially interfering with the professional conduct of School?
- f) Is the relationship potentially having a negative effect on the workings of a team?

Where there is evidence that a potential safeguarding position exists, or if there is a conflict of interest, breach of confidentiality or unfair advantage may occur as a result of staff with a personal relationship working within the same key stage/area, or in their allocated role, the person to whom the personal relationship has been disclosed should discuss the issue with the Headmaster.

If the Headmaster or a member of the SMT is involved, this should be discussed with the Proprietor and if necessary alternative arrangements will be put in place, e.g. a change in reporting arrangements or duties or arranging for one party being moved to another area of work or work location if appropriate in the circumstances. They should consider all such matters. In all instances any changes should be of equal status wherever possible.

Personal relationships at work involving a more senior role

In order to avoid any actual or potential conflict of interests, members of staff who are in a line management or supervisory role, should not be involved in:

- a) The activity or performance review, promotion or discipline or any other management activity or process involving a member of staff with whom they have a declared personal relationship
- b) The authorisation of any financial payments/decisions relating to financial matters, e.g. expense claims, salary changes or allocation of personal funding for a member of staff with whom they have a declared personal relationship. However, if the person is the budget holder then they should see the financial transaction but have additional independent authorisation.

In the recruitment, selection or appointment of any application with whom they have a declared personal relationship and every decision should be justified as fair and equitable without bias or conflict of interest.

If a member of staff believes that they may be personally adversely affected by a misuse of power, authority or conflict of interest relating to a personal relationship at work involving a line manager or supervisor, they should raise this in the first instance with a member of the Senior Leadership Team, or they may go direct to the Headteacher.

Where there is evidence that a conflict of interest, breach of confidentiality or unfair advantage may result from a personal relationship, the manager to whom the personal relationship has been disclosed should discuss the issue with the Headmaster. Consideration may be given to an alternative arrangement, e.g. a change in reporting arrangements, or duties within a team; investigating one party being moved to another area of work or work location, if appropriate in the circumstances. They should consider all such matters in confidence and consult the staff involved and notify HR. In all instances, any changes should, wherever possible, be of equal status.

When a Relationship Breaks Down

There may be occasions when a relationship as defined, breaks down which has a potential impact on team relationships and the operation of the school. If it is envisaged that the breakdown of the relationship is or will cause ongoing workplace issues, these should be addressed sensitively in discussion with the employees with a view to the issues being resolved, where possible.

Personal relationships at work involving a staff member and a pupil

The school regards it as the unquestionable responsibility of staff to recognise the professional and ethical responsibilities inherent in the staff and pupil relationship, the protection of interests of pupils, respecting the trust obligation and accepting those constraints and obligations.

Members of staff are in a position of trust and must not enter into personal relationships with pupils. The school has a legal duty to report any such relationships.

It is recognised that professional relationships between staff members and pupils may exist. A professional relationship between a member of staff and a pupil is defined as one where there is an assessing, supervising, tutoring, teaching or pastoral role or a role providing any other support. Any such professional relationship must be declared to the Headmaster in accordance with the school code of conduct as below:

“You must advise your Line Manager before engaging in any other work especially if it could reasonably be seen to conflict with your employment with the school or lead to misunderstanding or criticism (for example, private tutoring of students from your school)”.

If a member of staff has a child at school, is related to a child or a close family friend’s child is a pupil then they need to ensure that appropriate professional boundaries are maintained to ensure there is no perceived favouritism. The JCQ provides guidance in its ‘General Regulations for Approved Centres’ on conflicts of interest when family members are preparing students for examinations as per page 12 - Gen_reggs_approved_centres_23-24_FINAL-1.pdf (jcq.org.uk)

Personal relationships at work involving a staff member and a parent of a pupil

It is recognised that members of staff may strike up friendships with parents.

- a) Members of staff must keep the relationship professional;
- b) Members of staff must not discuss school matters or other pupils or staff members.

Appendix

Examples of misconduct in line with this policy which could result in disciplinary action. It is important to be clear that NO disciplinary action will be taken against a member of staff for having a relationship with another member of staff. It is only if the relationship causes a member of staff to act inappropriately that disciplinary action may be appropriate (examples as below):

- a) where a personal relationship has not been declared and results in unfair advantage or disadvantage to either party;
- b) where a staff member abuses their authority or influence to bring benefit or detriment to another individual;
- c) where a personal relationship has not been declared and brings the school into disrepute;
- d) where there has been a breach in confidentiality;

- e) Where a staff member behaves in a way that may cause difficulty or embarrassment to others, for example, arguing in the workplace or open displays of affection.
- f) Where as a result of disagreement or the breakdown of the relationship a staff member does not communicate with another member of staff or parent
- g) Where there is a general adverse impact on team dynamics and reduction in team/school morale
- h) where the conduct or behaviour of a staff member (or members) is inappropriate or breaches professional standards;

The above list should not be considered exhaustive and if as a result of an existing or previous personal relationship, an employee's actions are perceived or have been shown to be unacceptable, formal action may be taken.