

SECTION VI SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS REQUIRED OF STAFF

Overview

The vast majority of adults who work with children in education settings act professionally. They seek to provide a safe and supportive environment, which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for children and young people in their care. Much relies on pupil and staff interactions where tensions and misunderstandings can occur. It is here that staff behaviours can give rise to allegations being made against them. Allegations may be genuine, malicious or misplaced. They may arise from differing perceptions of the same event, but when they occur, they are inevitably distressing and difficult for all concerned.

This document seeks to ensure that the duty of care towards pupils is promoted by raising awareness of illegal, unsafe and unwise behaviour. It is explicitly stated so that it will assist staff to monitor their own standards and practice.

Through this guidance trustees as employers give a clear message that unlawful or unsafe behaviour will not be tolerated and, where appropriate, legal or disciplinary action is likely to follow.

Whilst every attempt has been made to cover a wide range of situations, it is recognised that any such guidance cannot cover all eventualities.

Underpinning Principles

- Staff 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.
- Staff should work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way.
- Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from a senior member of staff over any incident, which may give rise to concern.
- Records should be made of any such incident and of decisions made/further actions agreed, in accordance with school policy for keeping and maintaining records.
- Staff should apply the same professional standards regardless of gender, ethnicity or sexuality.
- All staff should know the name of their Designated Safeguarding Leads and be familiar with local Child Protection arrangements and understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children and young people.
- Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.

Safe Working Practices Required:

1. Introduction	Staff have a crucial role to play in shaping the lives of young people. They have a unique opportunity to interact with children and young people in ways that are both affirming and inspiring. This guidance has been produced to help staff establish the safest possible learning and working environments. Staff should be familiar with KCSIE 2024 (in particular Part 1 and Part 5). <i>This means that these guidelines:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>apply to all adults working in education settings whatever their position, roles, or responsibilities.</i>
2. Duty of Care	Teachers and other education staff are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority, manage risk, use resources and protect pupils from discrimination and avoidable harm.

	<p>All staff, whether paid or voluntary, have a duty to keep young people safe and to protect them from physical and emotional harm. This duty is in part exercised through the development of respectful and professional relationships between staff and pupils and behaviour by staff that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement.</p> <p>Trustees, governors, staff and parents have legitimate expectations about the nature of professional involvement in the lives of pupils. When individuals accept a role that involves working with children and young people, they need to understand and acknowledge the responsibilities and trust inherent in that role.</p> <p><i>This means that adults should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>always act, and be seen to act, in the child's best interests</i> ● <i>understand the responsibilities, which are part of their employment or role, and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached</i> ● <i>avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions</i> ● <i>take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour</i> ● <i>report any incident to the relevant person within school in a timely fashion using appropriate systems</i>
<p>3. Exercise of Professional Judgement</p>	<p>This guidance cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for staff. It does highlight, however, behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable. Individuals are expected to make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the children in their charge and, in so doing, will be seen to be acting reasonably.</p> <p><i>This means that staff should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>avoid any actions, words or behaviours that are inappropriate</i> ● <i>discuss the circumstances that informed their action, or their proposed action, with a senior colleague</i> ● <i>be prepared to seek advice prior to any proposed action if problems are anticipated</i> ● <i>always discuss any misunderstanding/accidents with a senior manager</i> ● <i>always record discussions and actions taken with their justifications</i> ● <i>log any concerns and copy these to the Headteacher, the relevant line manager and the member of staff responsible for Child Protection.</i>
<p>4. Positions of Power and Trust</p>	<p>As a result of their knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, all adults working with children in education settings are in positions of trust in relation to the young people in their care. A relationship between a member of staff and a pupil is not a relationship between equals and is a serious safeguarding breach.</p> <p>There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people and staff have a responsibility to ensure that the unequal balance of power is not used in any way for personal advantage or gratification.</p> <p>Wherever possible, staff must avoid behaviour, which might be misinterpreted by others, and must report and record any incident that they are privy to with this potential. Staff must not use their position of power and trust to influence politically. See guidance on political neutrality/impartiality in staff conduct policy.</p> <p><i>This means that adults should not:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>use their status and standing to form or promote relationships with children, which are of a sexual nature</i> ● <i>use their power to collude with, intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine pupils</i> ● <i>use their position to gain access to information for their own advantage and/or a child's or family's detriment</i> <p><i>all adults should be aware of acceptable ways in which a child can be disciplined and of the difference between discipline and bullying.</i></p>
<p>5. Confidentiality</p>	<p>Members of staff may have access to confidential information about pupils in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities. In some circumstances staff may be given additional highly sensitive or private information. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the pupil.</p>

	<p>Confidential information about a child or young person should never be used casually in conversation (e.g., in the corridor during break or lunchtime) or shared with any person other than on a need-to-know basis.</p> <p>There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a child, for example when there is a safeguarding concern. In such cases, individuals have a duty to pass information on without delay, but only to the Designated Safeguarding Leads.</p> <p>Confidential information should not be displayed where others can see it.</p> <p>Gossip spreading within school is not acceptable and, if necessary, situations will be clarified publicly by a senior member of staff.</p> <p>Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to a member of the senior leadership. Staff should not comment if contacted by any media, including social networks.</p> <p>The storing and processing of personal information about pupils is governed by the Data Protection Act 1998. All staff must treat all pupil or staff information as confidential.</p> <p><i>This means that staff:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>need to be cautious when passing information to others about a child/young person</i> ● <i>are expected to treat information they receive about children and young people in a discreet and confidential manner</i> ● <i>in any doubt about sharing information they hold or which has been requested of them should seek advice from a senior member of staff</i> ● <i>should record information in an objective and sensitive way and be prepared to defend anything they have written.</i>
<p>6. Propriety and Behaviour</p>	<p>All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children and young people.</p> <p>They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their peers, pupils and the public in general.</p> <p>An individual's behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, should not compromise her/his position within the work setting. Teachers must appreciate the importance of their own professional status in society. They should recognise that professionalism involves using judgement over appropriate standards of personal behaviour.</p> <p><i>This means that adults should not:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or act as a role model</i> ● <i>make sexual remarks to a pupil (including email, text messages, Teams messages, phone or letter)</i> ● <i>discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of, pupils</i> ● <i>discuss a pupil's sexual relationships in inappropriate settings or contexts</i> ● <i>make (or encourage others to make) unprofessional personal comments about staff, students, the school, which scapegoat, demean or humiliate, or might be interpreted as such.</i>
<p>7. Dress and Appearance</p>	<p>Staff should consider the manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role which may be different from that adopted in their personal life.</p> <p>Staff should ensure they are dressed professionally. Staff who dress or appear in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or misconduct. The Headteacher can legitimately request that individual members of staff alter their dress or appearance if it is casual or not in line with the high standards of professionalism expected in the school.</p> <p><i>This means that adults should wear clothing which:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>promotes a positive, formal and professional image</i> ● <i>is appropriate to their role</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative</i> ● <i>does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding</i> ● <i>is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans (this applies to property that staff may have as well, e.g. cups)</i> ● <i>is not considered to be discriminatory.</i> <p>The list above is provided as guidance and is not meant to be exhaustive. Staff should seek guidance from their Line Manager if they have any queries. The Headteacher will be the final arbiter on what is deemed appropriate.</p>
8. Gifts	<p>It is against the law for public servants to take bribes. Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.</p> <p>There are occasions when children or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff e.g. at Christmas or as a thank-you and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts of any significant value (the total value should not exceed £10).</p> <p>Similarly, staff must not give personal gifts to students. They could be misinterpreted as a gesture either to bribe, or single out the young person. It might be perceived that a 'favour' of some kind is expected in return.</p> <p>Any reward given to a young person should be agreed as a part of the schools reward system, recorded and not based on favouritism.</p> <p><i>This means that adults should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>ensure that any gifts received or given are declared</i> ● <i>generally, only give gifts to an individual young person as part of an agreed reward system</i> ● <i>where giving gifts other than as above, ensure that these are of insignificant value and given to all children equally.</i>
9. Infatuations	<p>Staff need to be aware that it is not uncommon for pupils to be strongly attracted to a member of staff and/or develop a heterosexual or homosexual infatuation. All situations should be responded to sensitively to maintain the dignity of all concerned.</p> <p>Staff should also be aware that such circumstances always carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against staff.</p> <p>A member of staff, who becomes aware that a pupil may be infatuated with themselves or a colleague, should discuss this immediately with a senior colleague so that appropriate action can be taken. In this way, steps can be taken to avoid hurt and distress for all concerned.</p> <p>Staff should not spend excessive amounts of time with any pupil or pupil(s). This carries with it a risk of other students or staff perceiving it to be inappropriate (please see positions of power and trust - above).</p> <p><i>This means that adults should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>report immediately any indications (verbal, written or physical) that suggest a pupil may be infatuated with a member of staff.</i> ● <i>Any student(s) who are seeking them out and wanting to spend long periods of time with them.</i>
10. Social Contact	<p>Staff must not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. This includes having contact with pupils via social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, mobile phones and email. Staff must ensure that their privacy settings and account settings for these sites are at maximum, so that pupils cannot access their details. Please see Social Networking Policy for further details.</p> <p>Staff should not give their personal details such as home/mobile phone number, home or e-mail address to pupils unless the need to do so is agreed with senior management. Where appropriate, staff will be given the use of school-owned mobile phones.</p> <p>The school email and Google Classroom platform should be the only methods used for communication with students regarding school work in accordance with school policy.</p>

	<p><i>This means that adults should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>always seek prior approval of any planned social contact. For example, when it is part of a reward scheme or pastoral care programme speak to the senior leader.</i> • <i>report and record any social contact or attempted social contact, which might compromise the school staff or their own professional standing.</i>
<p>11. Physical Contact</p>	<p>There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. Please note that in our diverse community there are particular cultural sensitivities around physical contact between male staff and female students. Staff should be aware and minimise any physical contact with students.</p> <p>Physical contact should never be secretive, or 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 recorded as soon as possible in the school's incident book and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the child's file. The school/SAT has a Restraint Policy which must be adhered to.</p> <p><i>This means that adults should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described</i> • <i>never touch a child in a way which may in any way be considered indecent</i> • <i>always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact is open to scrutiny</i> • <i>never indulge in horseplay, tickling or fun fights</i> • <i>never touch a child in affection or anger.</i>
<p>12. Physical Education and other activities which require physical contact</p>	<p>Some staff, for example, those who teach PE and games, or who offer music tuition, will on occasion have to initiate physical contact with pupils in order to support a child so they can perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument or assist them with an exercise. This should be done with the pupil's agreement.</p> <p>Contact under these circumstances should be for the minimum time necessary to complete the activity and take place in an open environment. Staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or nonverbally by the child.</p> <p><i>This means that adults should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>consider alternatives, where it is anticipated that a pupil might misinterpret any such contact, perhaps involving another member of staff, or a less vulnerable pupil in the demonstration</i> • <i>always explain to a pupil the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take.</i>
<p>13. Showers and Changing</p>	<p>Young people are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes or taking a shower. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard young people, satisfy health and safety considerations and ensure that bullying or teasing does not occur. This supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the young people concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.</p> <p>Staff need to be vigilant about their own behaviour, ensure they follow agreed guidelines and be mindful of the needs of the pupils. Specific ethnic or religious issues may need to be taken into account when deciding on appropriate behaviour with individual students.</p> <p><i>This means that adults should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>avoid any physical contact when children are in a state of undress</i> • <i>avoid any visually intrusive behaviour</i> <p><i>Where there are shower areas adults should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>announce their intention of entering</i> • <i>avoid remaining in the room unless the pupil needs it.</i>

	<p><i>Adults should not:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>change in the same place as children</i> ● <i>be in a state of undress where children see them</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>shower with children.</i>
14. Pupils in Distress	<p>There may be occasions when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance. This may include age - appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.</p> <p>In cases where a child is upset as a result of bullying (including online bullying and phone bullying), staff should follow the schools' Bullying Referral System.</p> <p>Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance s/he should seek further advice from a senior manager.</p> <p><i>This means that adults should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>consider the way in which they offer comfort to a distressed pupil</i> ● <i>always tell a colleague when and how they offered comfort to a distressed child</i> ● <i>record situations which may give rise to concern and follow school's procedures</i> ● <i>avoid being alone with the student</i> ● <i>avoid physical contact with students.</i>
15. Behaviour Management	<p>Everyone has a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Corporal punishment is unlawful in all schools. Equally, staff should not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a pupil. The use of humour can help to defuse a situation but humour should not at the expense of a child. The use of demeaning or insensitive comments towards pupils is not acceptable.</p> <p><i>This means that adults should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>not use force as a form of punishment</i> ● <i>try to defuse situations before they escalate</i> ● <i>keep parents informed of any sanctions by logging incidents on CPOMS</i> ● <i>adhere to the school's Behaviour Policy.</i>
16. Safeguarding concerns or allegations made about staff	<p>Please refer to Part four of KCSIE 2024. All allegations against staff should be made via Keeping Everyone Safe Form accessed through Dashboard > Safeguarding > Keeping Everyone Safe Form</p>
17. One to One Situations	<p>Staff working in one-to-one situations with children and young people may be more vulnerable to allegations.</p> <p>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 pupils are met.</p> <p>Staff should endeavour to follow these procedures at all times including during informal meetings at break time and instances after school when pupils may be waiting to be collected to go home or have missed their bus.</p> <p>Pre-arranged meetings with pupils away from the school premises should not be permitted unless approval is obtained from their parent and the Headteacher or other senior colleague with delegated authority.</p> <p><i>This means that adults should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>avoid meetings with pupils in remote, secluded areas of school (e.g. music practice rooms, offices which are not in view of others)</i> ● <i>ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in one-to-one situations</i> ● <i>inform other staff of the meeting beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by</i> ● <i>avoid use of 'engaged' or equivalent signs wherever possible. Such signs may create an opportunity for secrecy or the interpretation of secrecy</i> ● <i>always report any situation where a child becomes distressed or angry to a senior colleague</i> ● <i>consider the needs and circumstances of the child/children involved</i>

<p>18. Transporting Children</p>	<p>In certain situations, e.g. out of school activities, staff or volunteers rarely may agree to transport children. This should only take place if the senior line manager has been informed and if the member of staff involved has the correct level of insurance.</p> <p>Parental permission must be given before any member of staff transports a pupil in a private vehicle. Wherever possible and practicable, it is advisable that transport is undertaken other than in private vehicles, with at least one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort.</p> <p>Staff should ensure that their behaviour is safe and that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. They should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.</p> <p><i>This means that adults should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>plan and agree arrangements with all parties in advance, responding sensitively and flexibly to disagreements</i> ● <i>ensure that they are alone with a child for the minimum time possible</i> ● <i>be aware that the safety and welfare of the child is their responsibility until this is safely passed over to a parent/carer</i> ● <i>report the nature of the journey, the route and expected time of arrival to the general office in accordance with agreed procedures</i> ● <i>ensure that their behaviour and all arrangements ensure vehicle, passenger and driver safety.</i>
<p>19. Educational Visits and After School Clubs, etc.</p>	<p>Staff should take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere of a residential setting or after-school activity.</p> <p>During school activities that take place off the school site or out of school hours, a suitable level of discipline must be maintained with staff remaining in a position of trust. Staff need to ensure that their behaviour cannot be interpreted as seeking to establish an inappropriate relationship or a relaxation of the normal expectations. Staff behaviour must remain professional at all times.</p> <p>Where out of school activities include overnight stays, careful consideration needs to be given to sleeping arrangements. Pupils, staff and parents should be informed of these prior to the start of the trip. All arrangements should be made in accordance with the school's trips and visits policy.</p> <p>Health and Safety arrangements require members of staff to keep colleagues/employers aware of their whereabouts, especially when involved in an out of school activity. Staff must be aware of and follow the guidance of the school's policy on trips and visits.</p> <p><i>This means that adults should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>always have another adult present in out of school activities, unless otherwise agreed with senior staff in school</i> ● <i>undertake risk assessments</i> ● <i>have parental consent to the activity</i> ● <i>ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times.</i> <p><i>This means that adults should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>adhere to the school's First Aid Policy</i> ● <i>make other staff aware of the task being undertaken</i> ● <i>explain to the child what is happening.</i>
<p>20. Curriculum</p>	<p>Some areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit, or of an otherwise sensitive nature. Care should be taken to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the learning outcomes identified by the lesson plan. This plan should highlight particular areas of risk and sensitivity.</p> <p>There may also be areas of the curriculum which could lead to pupils expressing views which are extremist or promoting religious conflict, or offensive to others (e.g. racist, sexist, homophobic). It is the duty of all teachers to challenge all contentious or unacceptable language, views and actions by pupils, making it clear that this is not acceptable in the school and log this on CPOMS.</p>

	<p>The curriculum can sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussion about subject matter of a sexually explicit or otherwise sensitive nature. Responding to pupils' questions can require careful judgement and staff may wish to take guidance in these circumstances from a senior member of staff.</p> <p>Care should also be taken to abide by the Policy on Sex and Relationships Education and the wishes of parents. Staff should introduce lessons of a sensitive nature with clear guidelines about the parameters within which questions may be asked.</p> <p><i>This means that adults should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>have clear written lesson plans and teach within the scope and resources identified in the curriculum. Staff must follow the requirement on political impartiality.</i> ● <i>where possible pre warn students of lesson/assemblies of a sensitive nature.</i> <p><i>This means that adults should not:</i> <i>enter into or encourage inappropriate or offensive discussion about sexual activity.</i></p>
<p>21. Photography, Videos and other Creative Arts</p>	<p>Many school activities involve recording images. These may be undertaken as part of the curriculum, extra school activities, for publicity, or to celebrate achievement.</p> <p>Staff need to be aware of the potential for these aspects of teaching to be misused. Using images of children for publicity purposes will require the consent of the individual concerned and their legal guardians. Ordinarily parents sign an authorisation as part of the admission process consenting to the use of photographic images.</p> <p>Images should not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without the consent of a senior manager.</p> <p><i>This means that adults should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>be clear about the purpose of the activity and about what will happen to the photographs when the lesson/activity is concluded</i> ● <i>ensure that a senior member of staff is aware that the photography/image equipment is being used and for what purpose</i> ● <i>ensure that all images are available for scrutiny in order to screen for acceptability</i> ● <i>be able to justify images of children in their possession</i> ● <i>avoid making images in one-to-one situations</i> ● <i>check with the office to ensure that permission has been given for the use of photographic images.</i> <p><i>This means that adults should not:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>take, display or distribute images of children or staff unless they have consent to do so from their Line Manager.</i>
<p>22. Internet Use</p>	<p>Please follow the school's Online, Data Protection and Social Networking Policies.</p>
<p>23. Informality</p>	<p>Staff have a duty to act at all times as responsible adults. Staff should not speak or act informally with the students. Informality can be considered by the students as a basis for a special relationship. It also means that the member of staff is opening themselves up to allegations of inappropriate conduct by the pupil or his/her parents. Long or frequent conversations with an individual(s) need to be formalised (by writing them up) and seeking the approval of the line manager.</p> <p><i>This means that staff should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Act formally</i> ● <i>Follow the formal school's expectations</i>
<p>24. PREVENT</p>	<p>Staff have a duty to report any concerns that they may have if they believe a pupil is being radicalised.</p> <p><i>This means that staff should:</i> <i>Watch out for signs of extremism and radicalisation</i> <i>Report concerns</i> <i>Challenge extremist views if expressed in lessons or out of lessons.</i> <i>Familiarise themselves with the PREVENT duty March 2024.</i></p>