



## 2-7 STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This policy sets out clear guidance on the standards of behaviour expected from all staff at Guildford High School. The principles underlying the guidance aim to encourage staff to achieve the highest possible standards of conduct and minimise the risk of inappropriate conduct occurring.
- 1.2 School staff are in a unique position of trust and influence as role models for pupils. Therefore, staff must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all pupils within the school.
- 1.3 Staff also have an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, both inside and outside working hours and work setting.
- 1.4 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 groups:
  - 1.4.1 All members of staff including teaching and support staff
  - 1.4.2 Volunteers, including governors
  - 1.4.3 Casual workers
  - 1.4.4 Temporary and supply staff, either from agencies or engaged directly
  - 1.4.5 Students on placement, including those undertaking initial teacher training and apprenticeships.
- 1.5 Guildford High School requires that all staff have read and agree to comply with this policy.
- 1.6 Breach or failure to observe this policy will result in action being taken under the school disciplinary procedures including, but not limited to, dismissal.
- 1.7 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/students and the school.

## 2. PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR AND CONDUCT

- 2.1 Staff are expected to demonstrate the highest possible standards of personal and professional conduct and behaviour and consistently act with honesty and integrity. Guildford High School expects staff to treat each other, pupils, parents and the wider community with dignity and respect at all times.
- 2.2 Staff must act in accordance with their duty of care to pupils and ensure that the safety and welfare of pupils are accorded the highest priority.
- 2.3 Staff should show fairness in their treatment of children and avoid behaviours such as embarrassing or humiliating pupils, making jokes at the expense of pupils, discriminating against or favouring pupils and sarcasm.
- 2.4 Staff must show tolerance of and respect the rights of others and should uphold the fundamental British values including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and respect for those with different faiths and beliefs.
- 2.5 Staff must have regard for the ethos and values of the school and must not do or say anything which may bring the school or governing body into disrepute. Care should be taken by staff to avoid any conflict of interest between activities undertaken outside school and responsibilities within school. Staff should act in accordance with the school's policies and procedures at all times.
- 2.6 Staff are expected to treat others with dignity and respect and to be committed to creating a culture where individuals feel confident raising concerns about behaviour that is unacceptable. Staff should be aware of their behaviour towards others and understand what reasonable and acceptable behaviour is, and what is not. All staff are required to complete training on bullying and harassment within the workplace and to familiarise themselves with United Learning's Dignity and Respect Policy (available from *Useful Documents / Human Resources* on the GHS intranet and on the UL hub).

## 3. DRESS AND APPEARANCE

- 3.1 Guildford High School recognise that dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, all staff must dress in a manner that is appropriate to a professional role and that promotes a professional image; this includes the wearing of a jacket/blazer around the school.
- 3.2 Staff should dress in a manner that is not offensive, revealing or sexually provocative and in a manner that is absent from political or contentious slogans.
- 3.3 Staff should dress safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake.
- 3.4 Tattoos, self-harm scars and body art should be covered while staff are in school. Discreet earrings are acceptable but all other body piercings should be removed while on school premises.

## 4. SMOKING, ALCOHOL, E-CIGARETTES AND OTHER SUBSTANCES

- 4.1 Guildford High School is a non-smoking site. Staff must not smoke or use e-cigarettes on school premises or outside school gates. Any member of staff wishing to smoke or use an e-cigarette must leave the school grounds.
- 4.2 Staff must not smoke or use an e-cigarette whilst working with or supervising pupils offsite.
- 4.3 Staff must not consume illicit drugs or other illegal substances on or near school premises.
- 4.4 Alcohol may be consumed at school events e.g. a glass of wine at productions, champagne at leaving events and end of term. Alcohol at school events must be consumed in moderation and staff should remain professional in their conduct at all times.

## 5. RELATIONSHIPS WITH PUPILS/STUDENTS

- 5.1 Staff must maintain professional boundaries with pupils appropriate to their position and must always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably. Staff should act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to question their actions or intent. Staff should think carefully about their conduct so that misinterpretations are minimised.
- 5.2 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. If a young person seeks to establish social contact staff should exercise your professional judgement in making a response and be aware that such social contact could be misconstrued.
- 5.3 Staff must not develop personal or sexual relationships with pupils and should not engage in any sexual activity with a pupil. Sexual activity does not just involve physical contact including penetrative and non-penetrative acts. Working Together to Safeguard Children<sup>1</sup> defines sexual abuse as ... ‘forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)’.
- 5.4 Over-familiar words and actions, displays of affection, discussion of one’s personal life or the personal life of a pupil are almost always inappropriate. Sexual innuendo is wrong in all circumstances. Staff must avoid actions, words or expressions that could be interpreted as suggesting that they have an emotional relationship with any pupil. In a professional staff-pupil relationship it is not appropriate to single a pupil out for favours or to suggest to a pupil that she is a special friend.

- 5.5 Staff must avoid threatening words, raised voices and any aggressive contact such as holding, pushing, pulling or hitting.
- 5.6 Staff should be mindful of sections 15A and 16 of The Sexual Offences Act 2003<sup>2 3</sup>.
- 5.7 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 sexual relationships in an inappropriate setting or context.
- 5.8 Contact with pupils should be through Guildford High School email or iSAMS during school hours. Personal phone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via all social media platforms should be avoided and staff should not share their home address with pupils. Occasionally it is necessary for professional academic reasons for staff to communicate with pupils out of hours. On trips where possible, the school's mobile phone should be used and the number given to pupils for use during an educational visit. In circumstances where there is a concern for the unexplained absence or whereabouts of a pupil, pastoral matters may be dealt with by using personal phone contact. If contact of this nature is made, it should be recorded with the Head of Year or Head of Key Stage. If contacted via an inappropriate route the member of staff must inform the Head or Head of Junior School immediately.
- 5.9 Guildford High School staff must not accept friend invitations or become friends with any pupil of Guildford High School on any social media platform. Staff should also refrain from following the Twitter or other similar social media accounts of pupils or their parents. Staff must read the school's Use of Technology policy carefully and follow all advice and guidance contained within it.
- 5.10 Guildford High School staff may use students in a babysitting capacity. They must notify the relevant Head of Year and the pupil's parents before it commences.
- 5.11 GHS staff can babysit for parents of pupils. They must notify their line manager or relevant member of SLT.
- 5.12 GHS staff may tutor students who are not pupils of GHS. They must notify their line manager or relevant member of SLT.

## 6. INFATUATIONS

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 Staff should also be aware that such circumstances carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against staff. Any indications of an infatuation towards yourself or another member of staff must be reported to SLT.

## 7. GIFTS/HOSPITALITY

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- 7.1 Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift/offer of hospitality that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. However, there may be occasions where pupils/students or parents wish to give a small token of appreciation to staff, for example at religious festivities or at the end of the year.
- 7.2 It is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or to suggest to pupils that gifts are appropriate or desired. Cash must not be accepted as a gift. If you are unsure whether to accept a gift you should consult the HR department.
- 7.3 All such gifts with a value of over £20 and all offers of hospitality should be reported on the Gift Declaration tab of the Intranet.
- 7.4 Personal gifts must not be given by staff to pupils and any reward to pupils/students should be in accordance with Guildford High School's Behaviour and Discipline policy, recorded and not based on favouritism.
- 7.5 Business and Related Interests: To avoid any misunderstandings that might arise, all staff with significant financial or spending powers are required to declare any financial or related interests they have in companies or individuals from whom Guildford High School may purchase goods or services. The disclosure should also include business interests of relative, such as a parent or spouse where influence could be exerted over a member of staff by that person. All such declarations should be reported to Katherine Barnett-Christie.

## 8. PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH PUPILS

- 8.1 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. A 'no touch' approach is impractical for most staff and may in some circumstances be inappropriate. When physical contact is made with pupils it should be in response to their needs at that time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.
- 8.2 Where feasible, staff should seek the child's permission before initiating contact. Staff should listen, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and, so far as is possible, use a level of contact which is acceptable to the child for the minimum time necessary.
- 8.3 It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. Staff should, therefore, use their professional judgement at all times.
- 8.4 Staff should 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. 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 be open to scrutiny. Staff must not engage in rough play, tickling or fun fights with pupils.

- 8.5 Extra caution should be exercised where a child is known to have suffered previous abuse or neglect. Such experiences may sometimes make a child exceptionally needy and demanding of physical contact and staff should respond sensitively by deterring the child through helping them to understand the importance of personal boundaries.
- 8.6 Staff supervising PE and games or providing musical tuition should demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument on another member of staff if possible. However, they 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.
- 8.7 Physical contact must never be secretive, for the gratification of the adult or represent a misuse of authority.
- 8.8 If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported to SLT, recorded and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the child's file.
- 8.9 Staff should refer to Guildford High School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy and appendices.

## 9. CHILD IN DISTRESS

- 9.1 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 remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.
- 9.2 Such incidents should always be recorded and shared with your Head of Year/Head of Key Stage. If you have a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance you should seek further advice from your line manager.

## 10. CHANGING

- 10.1 Staff should be vigilant about their own behaviour and announce their intention of entering a changing room or cloakroom. Personal and school devices with a camera or video function should not be taken into areas where children are showering or changing. Staff must not change or shower in the same place as children.
- 10.2 Male members of staff must not enter changing rooms or cloakrooms, unless it is an emergency.

## 11. ONE TO ONE SITUATIONS

- 11.1 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 themselves.
- 11.2 Individual work with pupils should not be undertaken in isolated areas or rooms where there is no external viewing panel. Where it is necessary to close doors for reasons of confidentiality a colleague should be made aware of this and asked to remain vigilant.

## 12. TRANSPORTING PUPILS

- 12.1 In certain circumstances it may be appropriate for staff to transport pupils offsite, for example sports fixtures, swimming lessons or other out of school activities. A designated member of staff should be appointed to plan and provide oversight of all transport arrangements and to respond to any difficulties that may arise.
- 12.2 Staff should ensure that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. Staff should ensure that the driver has the appropriate license for the vehicle, that the vehicle is roadworthy, has a valid MOT certificate and is appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.
- 12.3 Staff should ensure that the driver is not distracted while the vehicle is in motion for any reason other than an emergency and should also ensure all passengers are wearing correctly fastened seatbelts. Staff should never transport pupils/students while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- 12.4 Prior to transporting pupils off-site, consent must be obtained from parent/guardian and staff should be aware that the safety and welfare of the pupils is their responsibility until this is safely passed back to their parent/carer.

## 13. ONLINE SAFETY

- 13.1 Staff should follow Guildford High School's Use of Technology policy for staff and pupils at all times.
- 13.2 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 adopt the highest security settings on any personal profiles they have.
- 13.3 Staff should remain mindful of their digital tattoo 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.
- 13.4 Staff must not make contact with pupils or ex pupils, must not accept or initiate friend requests nor follow pupil or ex-pupil accounts on any social media platform. Staff must not communicate with pupils or ex-pupils via social media, websites, instant messenger accounts or text message. The only acceptable method of contact is via the use of school email accounts or telephone equipment.

- 13.5 Staff should not make contact with pupils' family members, accept or initiate friend requests or follow pupils' family member's account on any social media platform.
- 13.6 However, Guildford High School acknowledges that staff who are also parents may wish to make contact with other parents, who are friends, over social media. Staff must exercise caution and 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.
- 13.7 The Bluetooth functionality of a mobile phone or tablet should be switched off at all times and may not be used to send images or files to other mobile phones. Mobile phones and personal devices, cameras and videoing equipment are not permitted in certain areas within the school site, such as changing rooms and toilets.
- 13.8 The camera and filming functions of personally owned mobile devices must not be used in school, on school trips or on official school business.
- 13.8 Mobile phones and personally-owned mobile devices brought in to school are the responsibility of the device owner. Guildford High School accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of personally-owned mobile phones or mobile devices.

#### 14. PHOTOGRAPHY, VIDEO AND IMAGES OF CHILDREN

- 14.1 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. 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.
- 14.2 Using images for publicity purposes will require the age-appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their parent/guardian. Images should not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without their consent. Staff should also be clear about the purpose of the activity and what will happen to the photographs/images/video footage when the lesson or activity is concluded.
- 14.3 Photographs/stills or video footage of pupils/students should only be taken using school equipment for purposes authorised by the school and should be stored securely and only on school equipment.
- 14.4 Staff should ensure that planning is done when there is a proposed use of photographic/video equipment in lessons 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.
- 14.5 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/students who have been abused through the use of video or photography may feel threatened by its use in a teaching environment.

## 15. CONFIDENTIALITY

- 15.1 Members of staff may 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.
- 15.2 Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil or her family for their own, or others' advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other organisations). Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the pupil.
- 15.3 All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a pupil is bullied by another pupil, this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate school procedure. It must not be discussed outside the school, including with the pupil, parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the school except by a senior member of staff with the appropriate authority to deal with the matter.
- 15.4 Staff have a statutory obligation to share with Guildford High School's Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead any information which gives rise to concern about the welfare or safety of a pupil/student or that might suggest a pupil is in need or at risk of significant harm. Staff should pass on information without delay in accordance with Guildford High School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and procedures and this should be recorded. Staff must never promise a pupil that they will not act on or pass on any information that they are told by the pupil.
- 15.5 Staff should refer to the Department of Education's document *Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services*<sup>4</sup> for further guidance on information sharing. If you are in any doubt about whether to share, you should seek guidance from a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- 15.6 Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to SLT and only approved staff and Governors should communicate to the media about the school.

## 16. PARENTS AS EMPLOYEES

- 16.1 It is acknowledged that some staff also have children who attend the school. It is recognised that in these cases the staff fulfil a dual role of parent and employee.
- 16.2 Parents as employees should ensure that they uphold boundaries between the two roles and that their behaviour does not constitute a conflict of interest. For example, they

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<sup>4</sup>[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/419628/Information\\_sharing\\_advice\\_safeguarding\\_practitioners.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419628/Information_sharing_advice_safeguarding_practitioners.pdf)

must maintain the same level of confidentiality despite social expectations. Parent-staff should discuss any inter-role conflict with their line manager.

- 16.3 Personal relationships may arise if your own children are friends with those in school, or when you have personal relationships with parents of children outside of school. Please use your professional judgement and pass on any concerns.

## 17. LOW LEVEL CONCERNS/ALLEGATIONS

- 17.1 GHS encourages a culture where all concerns about an adult working with children are shared responsibly, recorded and dealt with appropriately.
- 17.2 As outlined in this policy staff should be clear about their professional boundaries and act within them.
- 17.3 As in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy any concerns or allegations about any member of staff working with children should be passed onto the Head or DSL. This included low level concerns.
- 17.4 All concerns, no matter how small will be addressed by the Head and recorded. Concerns that meet threshold will be referred to the LADO/Police, low level concerns will be addressed and centrally recorded in a low level concerns file.

All information is available in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## 18. WHISTLEBLOWING

- 18.1 Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, without fear of repercussion. All reported incidents will be investigated. All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding regime.
- 18.2 Any concerns should be raised with SLT and or the LGB in the first instance, for them to respond. If a member of staff or volunteer is not satisfied with the response, SLT/LGB will raise the concern with Jon Coles. If still not satisfied, then the concern should be reported to the NSPCC Whistleblowing line – 0800 028 0285.

## 19. COMPLIANCE

- 19.1 All staff must complete the receipt of policies check list form confirm they have read, understood and agree to comply with this policy. This form should be signed and dated, and a copy retained on the member of staff's file.