Staff Code of Conduct

Overley Hall School

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Aims, scope and principles.

This policy aims to set and maintain the standards of conduct that we expect of all staff. 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 school and act as role models for learners therefore demonstrating high standards of behaviour is paramount.

We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards.

We expect all tutors, support staff, volunteers and Board members to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

At Overley Hall we believe it is important to 'Reach High' and 'Aim for the sky'. This involves striving to do the best we can in any given situation whilst promoting British values.

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 need to use their professional judgement, 'Reach High' and act in the best interests of the school and its learners.

At times staff may be faced with challenging situations due to the complex needs of our learners. These challenges may affect staff emotionally, mentally or physically from time to time. We expect that staff value the importance of teamwork, speaking up, asking for support, recognising the need for support, as well as their personal limitations so that our learners feel safe, happy and are able to thrive.

Legislation and guidance

This policy complies with regulation 3 paragraphs 7(a), (b) and 8(a), (b) of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations (2014), and other

relevant and current regulations and guidance concerning safeguarding children to which Schools are obliged to have regard.

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.

The Equality Act (2010) and the protected characteristics within.

The Children's Act 1989 and 2004 along with Section 157/175 of the Education Act (2002).
In writing this policy we abide by The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009.

This policy also complies with our funding agreements.

Definitions.

- Fundamental British Values- these include democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.
- Parents – includes carers, guardians and other adults acting in *loco parentis*
- Pupils/ learners – includes children of all ages who attend Overley Hall School
- Staff – means all adults whether paid or unpaid working in our school – including volunteers and Board members

General obligations

Staff:

Staff set an example to pupils. They will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school
- Treat pupils and others with dignity and respect

- Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others
- 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
- Not express personal beliefs in a way that exploits pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within
- Adhere to the Teachers' Standards

Safeguarding

Staff have a duty to safeguard learners from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, or neglect.

Staff will familiarise themselves with our Child Protection & Safeguarding policy, Low-Level Concerns Policy and procedures and the Prevent initiative, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

Our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures are available at Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy new staff are either given hard copies of this or directed to the school website during Induction.

We make it clear in both induction, other training and guidance provided for staff (paid and unpaid) that they have a responsibility to speak up about safeguarding and welfare concerns within the school (please see Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy). This is one part of the way in which we establish a positive safeguarding culture. According to UK Whistleblowing Laws, the law provides immunity from retribution or disciplinary action against staff who whistleblow in good faith (please see our Whistleblowing Policy).

The staff and proprietor of Overley Hall School seek to run all aspects of School business with full regard for high standards of conduct and integrity. If members of the school community (including staff, proprietor, parents, Board members) become aware of activities which give cause for concern, these should be reported as in the Whistleblowing Policy

Allegations that may meet the harm threshold.

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that anyone working in the school, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place inside or outside of school

We will deal with any such allegation quickly and in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be the headteacher, or Proprietor or Chair of Support & Scrutiny Board (when Proprietor is unavailable) where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation.

Low- Level concerns about members of staff

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harm threshold, is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt'. For example, this may include:

- Being over-friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on a personal device
- Engaging in 1-to-1 activities where they can't easily be seen
- Humiliating pupils

Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy or using the Sensitive Information

forms in Reception. We also encourage staff to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage staff to report it.

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.

Whistle-blowing

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 headteacher If the concern is about the headteacher, or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the Proprietor or Chair of SAS Board.

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 school's detailed whistle-blowing process, please refer to our Whistle-Blowing policy on the school website.

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature that has a purpose or intent of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. It also includes treating someone less favourably because they've submitted or refused to submit to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature in the past, or harassment related to sex or gender reassignment. When this behaviour is unwanted, it includes (but isn't limited to):

- Unwanted physical conduct or 'horseplay' including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing
- Continued suggestions for sexual activity after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome
- Sending or displaying material that is pornographic, or that some people might find offensive
- Unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless)
- Offensive emails, text messages or social media content
- Comments and jokes of a sexual nature
- Sexually suggestive looks and staring
- Sexual propositions and advances
- Promising things in return for sexual favours
- Physical contact such as massaging, hugging or kissing
- Sexual contact on social media

Staff will help create a positive environment that works to prevent sexual harassment. This includes calling out sexual harassment that they witness. All witnesses will be provided with appropriate support and will be protected from victimisation.

If a staff member is concerned at any point about incidents of sexual harassment (either directed at them or someone else), they should report their concern to the Bev Doran or a member of the education management team. If the concern is about the headteacher or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the Proprietor (Mrs Brown) or Chair of Support and Scrutiny Board (Liz Hyner). The school will investigate any complaints in a timely, respectful and confidential manner.

All staff will receive training on recognising and responding to incidents of sexual harassment. The school will monitor the treatment and outcomes of any complaints of sexual harassment or victimisation received to make sure that they are properly investigated and resolved, those who report or act as witnesses are not victimised, repeat offenders are dealt with appropriately, cultural clashes are identified and resolved and workforce training is targeted where needed.

Staff/ Learner relationships

Staff will observe proper boundaries with learners 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 learners 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
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of school hours if possible.

Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff, parents and learners. This includes social media profiles.

While we are aware many learners and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for

example, at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to learners are not acceptable unless agreed by the senior leadership team and documentation made.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a learner may be misinterpreted, this should be reported to the Headteacher in line with procedures laid out in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy or using a Sensitive Information Form found in reception.

Communication & Social Media

School staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name, as some 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, in order to develop any sort of relationship. They will not make any efforts to find pupils' or parents' social media profiles.

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 found on the school website.

Staff should not contact pupils or parents from their personal mobile phones or give their mobile phone number to pupils or parents of pupils unless in extraordinary circumstances and with prior permission from senior management. Instead of this a school telephone/ mobile should be used. Staff should avoid storing parent telephone numbers on their mobile phones, send to or accept from colleagues, pupils, or parents of pupil's texts or images which may be deemed inappropriate.

Staff should not make reference to Overley Hall School on any personal electronic communications or social network including job status. Staff should only engage in electronic communication via the school email network, and not through inappropriate methods such as networking sites, blogging, chat rooms and private

email.

Staff should not request or respond to any personal information from children other than which may be necessary in their professional role.

Acceptable use of technology

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, gamblingand viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.

Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school equipment for personal usein front of learners. Any personal use must be in the employee's own time (before or after working hours or during unpaid lunch breaks). All personal use must comply with the standards and restrictions set out in this Code. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take picturesof learners.

We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT

system.

Confidentiality

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the school, staff, learners and their parents.
This information will never be:

- Disclosed to anyone without the relevant authority and in-line with GDPR
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child is at risk of harm, as detailed further in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

Honesty and integrity

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with learners, handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities.

Staff will not accept bribes. Gifts that are worth more than £15 must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the school is correct. This should include:

- Background information (including any past or current investigations/cautions related to conduct outside of school)
- Qualifications
- Professional experience

Where there are any updates to the information provided to the school, the member of staff will advise the school as such as soon as reasonably practicable. Consideration will then be given to the nature and circumstances of the matter and whether this may have an impact on the member of staff's employment.

Dress code

Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner.

Any form of dress should not interfere with the teaching and learning process, and learners should be able to see a member of staff's face.

Jewellery should be discreet and visible piercings restricted to ears. The number of earrings worn should be minimal and discreet in style. All staff are expected to be well-presented and maintain a good standard of personal hygiene.

Reasonable adjustments to our dress code may be made for staff with disabilities.

Outfits should not be overly revealing, clothes will not display any offensive or political slogans. Hats or caps will not be worn during working hours within the school and suitable footwear should be worn at all times.

Discussions around suitable clothing maybe required in certain circumstances.

Changes to the dress code may be required during times when learners are

experiencing long periods of anxiety.

Conduct outside of work

Staff will not act in a way that will 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, any conduct of this nature could lead to disciplinary action.

School property

Staff must take proper care when using School property and must not use School property for any unauthorised use or for private gain.

Use of premises

Staff must not carry out on School premises any work or activity other than that related to their terms and conditions of employment without prior permission from the Headteacher.

Alcohol and drugs

No member of staff should drive a school vehicle or be on duty supervising pupils whilst under the influence of alcohol, drugs or any other substance that may impair judgement. Staff must not have used any of these within the previous 24 hours if driving pupils or driving any school vehicle.

Alcohol and drug testing

The school reserves the right to ask members of staff to undertake an appropriate test if there is reason to suggest that they are under the influence of alcohol, drugs and/or any other substance which may impair judgement. Any unreasonable refusal by a member of staff to undergo the appropriate test is likely to lead to disciplinary action.

Inappropriate material

Staff must ensure that pupils are not exposed to inappropriate or indecent images. Inappropriate images such as pornography should not be brought onto School property or accessed via the School network. You should not allow unauthorised access to School equipment and should keep your computer password safe.

If you discover material on either staff or learner electronic devices that is potentially illegal or inappropriate you must immediately isolate the material and contact the DSL. Staff should not attempt to investigate the matter or evaluate the material themselves.

Pupils must not be exposed to unsuitable material on the internet and staff should ensure that any film or material shown is age appropriate. There are no circumstances that will justify adults possessing indecent images of children.

Accessing, making and storing indecent images of children is illegal. This will lead to a criminal investigation and the individual being barred from working with children if proven.

Personal living space.

No learner should be invited into the home of a member of staff (paid or unpaid) unless the reason has been firmly established and agreed with the learners parents/carer and senior managers. Under no circumstances will children or young people help with chores or tasks inthe home of staff or relations of staff.

Staff should:

- Be vigilant in maintaining their privacy and mindful about placing themselvesin vulnerable situations
- Be mindful of the need to maintain professional boundaries
- Refrain from asking pupils to undertake personal jobs or errands

Sexual contact

All adults should clearly understand the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their contacts with pupils. Intimate or sexual relationships between children/ young people and the adults who work with them will be regarded as a grave breach of trust, will always be a matter for disciplinary action and maybe regarded as a criminal offence Allowing or encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which might lead to a sexual relationship is also unacceptable.

Staff must not:

- Have sexual relationships with learners
- Have any form of communication with a learner that could be interpreted as

sexually suggestive or provocative i.e. verbal comments, letters, notes, texts physical contact

- Make sexual remarks to, or about, a child/young person
- Discuss their own sexual relationships in front of pupils

All learners are protected by specific legal provisions in this respect regardless of whether the learner consents or not. The sexual activity referred to does not just involve physical contact including penetrative or non- penetrative acts but may also include non-contact activities (e.g. causing children to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of pornographic material).

Adults should be aware of not displaying grooming like behaviour where they consistently confer inappropriate special attention and favour upon a child; this will give rise to concern.

Staff should:

- Ensure that their interactions with learners take place within the boundaries of a respectful professional relationship
- Take care with their language and conduct so that it does not give rise to comment or speculation.

Behaviour management of pupils including physical intervention.

All of the staff at Overley Hall School are highly trained to support our young people in the most appropriate way (please see Behaviour Policy). A person will not be deemed to have used inappropriate restraint if the action was taken for reasons that include averting a child from immediate danger of personal injury to, or in immediate danger of death of, any person including the young person. The law and guidance for school's states that adults may reasonably intervene to prevent a child from:

- Committing a criminal offence
- Injuring themselves or others
- Causing damage to property
- Engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline

Staff are well aware of the regulation regarding the use of force by teachers, as set out in Useof Reasonable Force in Schools (2013). Staff at Overley Hall school do not slap, hit or push children and only intervene with physical restraint such as holding, to prevent injury to the learner, other learners or adults and/or serious damage to property.

The actions that are taken are within Government guidelines with de-escalation strategies always used when behaviours start to escalate. All relevant behaviour instances that result in any physical restraint should be recorded on behaviour watch, and the headteacher, Assistant head or speech and language therapist should be informed. Once the debrief has occurred the parentsand social worker should be informed on the same day.

Punishments that are humiliating or dreading should not be used for example:

- any form of hitting
- deprivation of food or drink
- enforced eating or drinking
- prevention of contact with visit/telephone by parents
- requirement to wear distinctive clothing or night clothing during the day
- withholding aids or equipment needed by the child.

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 (on the sameday)
- adhere to the schools Behaviour Policy
- be mindful of factors that may impact on a pupils' behaviour e.g. change of routine

Physical contact with children

Staff should:

- Be aware that although well intentioned any physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, observer or anyone to whom this action is described
- Be sensitive to factors (inside and outside of school) that may be affecting the

learner which may impact their behaviour

- Not shout at learners other than as a warning in an emergency situation
- Seek to defuse situations
- Never touch a child in a way that may be considered indecent
- When having to use a physical hold do so for the shortest time possible
- Encourage learners to be as independent as possible
- Work taking into account the school Behaviour and Health and Safety Policy
- Take into account the religious/ cultural backgrounds of all learners.

Intimate care

It is the aim that staff empower learners to be as independent as possible, even so, some of our learners require support with their toileting and intimate care regime. When staff are supporting a learner in this way they should try to ensure that another member of staff is aware of where they are going and ensure whenever possible they are audible.

Learners are entitled to safety, privacy and dignity at all times and especially when in a stateof undress.

Staff should:

- Adhere to the school's intimate care guidelines
- Make staff aware of the task being undertaken
- Explain to the learner what is happening as it occurs
- Avoid any visually intrusive behaviour
- Be aware of the individual's supervision needs and only remain in the room iftheir needs require it.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually but can be revised earlier if required. At the annual review of this policy the level of implementation and efficiency during the last year will be discussed. Any deficiencies or weaknesses recognised in this policy will be remedied immediately. All staff will be made aware of any changes to this policy and a copy made available to them in either hard or electronic format.

Our Support and Scrutiny Board will ensure this code of conduct is implemented effectively and will ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard children and deal with any concerns.

Links with other policies.

This policy links with the majority of Overley Hall policies although directly links with:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Behaviour Support policy
- Staff disciplinary procedures
- Staff grievance procedures and policy
- Online-safety policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Counter-bullying policy
- Health and Safety Policy