



Idsall Professional Code of Conduct for Staff

Sponsorship & Review

1 Sponsor

Mr R Thorley, Deputy Head

2 Written

March 2016

3 Review Date

June 2017

Professional Code of Conduct for Staff Working in Schools

NB The Idsall School converted from a Shropshire Local Authority maintained school to an Academy Trust School with effect from 01.06.2014. From this date staff employed at the school are direct employees of the Idsall Academy Trust through the school's Governing Body.

All staff at Idsall School are covered by this Professional Code of Conduct. The code reflects that all staff working in education 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 Professional Code of Conduct has been update in line with the "Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults working with Children and Young People in Education Settings" (2009) and the Safer Recruitment update of "Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults working with Children and Young People in Education Settings" (October 2015).

1. Introduction

- 1.1 All employees should be aware of the **standards of conduct** expected of them by their employer. Although it is impossible to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all eventualities, the Code sets out the principal areas where concerns are likely to arise and staff awareness is necessary. The Code applies to all staff working in the school although particular reference is made to teaching staff.
- 1.2 Staff must comply with requirements placed on them by their **contract of employment**, conditions of service, schools' Articles of Government and relevant policies of the Governing Body. The Code is supplementary to documents detailing terms and conditions of employment, including statutory provisions, issued at the time of appointment.
- 1.3 **Failure to observe** the provisions of the Code may be relevant in considering action under disciplinary procedures. Should this occur, full consideration will be given to all the relevant facts and circumstances of the case in accordance with the principles of natural justice and following agreed procedures.
- 1.4 The school has a high reputation for the quality of its work and the professionalism of its staff. This Code will serve to confirm the **current good practice** of staff working in Idsall School. Should staff have any doubts about the issues raised they should consult the Headteacher.
- 1.5 You must take reasonable precautions for the health and safety of yourself, other employees, students, or anyone else that might be harmed, or placed in danger by your actions when at work.
- 1.6 You should always observe high standards of behaviour, attendance and punctuality, as befits a professional person; in particular, you should not do anything which prevents you from carrying out your job properly and efficiently, nor should you demonstrate inability or unwillingness to keep to acceptable and professional standards of conduct and performance.

2. Duty of Care: Conduct In Relation To Pupils

- 2.1 Staff are accountable for the way in which they: exercise authority; manage risk; use resources; and safeguard children.
All staff have a responsibility to keep pupils safe and to protect them from abuse (sexual, physical and emotional), neglect and safeguarding concerns. Pupils have a right to be safe and to be treated with respect and dignity. It follows that trusted adults are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure their safety and well-being. Failure to do so may be regarded as professional misconduct. The safeguarding culture of a school is, in part, exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between adults and pupils and behaviour by the adult that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement.

- 2.2 The law recognises that staff act **in loco parentis** in respect of pupils in their charge and must act in the role of reasonably prudent parent in the school context. Through their actions staff must act in accordance with this duty of care to ensure at all times that the safety and welfare of pupils is accorded the highest priority. In this and other ways staff should always maintain standards of conduct which sustain their professional standing and that of the school.
- 2.3 **Interaction with pupils** should always be appropriate to their age and gender. Staff should not touch pupils, however casually, in ways or on parts of the body that might be considered indecent, unnecessary or familiar or use inappropriate language. Particular care may be necessary when supervising pupils in out of school activities. Further advice on the practical arrangements applying in this area is available in the booklet "Guidance for School Visits and Journeys" provided by Shropshire Local Authority.
- 2.4 **Teaching materials** should be appropriate to the age and gender of pupils. Particular care should be taken that sex or health education materials are appropriate and consistent with the school's policies.
- 2.5 When holding **meetings with pupils** on sensitive issues, staff should exercise proper professional judgement over the arrangements for the meeting. They should safeguard their own position by, for instance, considering the need for a second adult to be present.
- 2.5 **Corporal punishment** defined as any intentional application of force as punishment is illegal and may render a member of staff liable to criminal action as well as action under the school's disciplinary procedures. Corporal punishment includes any form of physical chastisement.
- 2.6 **Physical intervention** will not constitute corporal punishment where its purpose is to avert an immediate danger of injury to, or an immediate danger to the property of, any person including a pupil. In such circumstances, the element of restraint should be the minimum necessary to prevent injury or remove the risk of harm.
- 2.7 There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with children, however, it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role and in relation to the pupil's individual needs and any agreed care plan.
It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one pupil, in one set of circumstances, may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child.
Any physical contact should be in response to the child's needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Adults should therefore, use their professional judgement at all times and comply with accepted good practice. Particular care should be taken in helping pupils with physical or other disabilities (eg in lifting). Further guidance is available in Codes of Practice produced by the professional associations representing staff in these subject areas.
- 2.8 Idsall School follows standard procedures on **first aid** and ensures it has an adequate number of qualified first aiders. Parents should be informed when first aid has been administered.
- 2.9 Following any incident where a member of staff has reason to believe that their actions may be open to **misinterpretation**, the Headteacher or other member of the senior management team should be immediately notified and a written report submitted as soon as possible following the incident.
- 2.10 Guidance on procedures regarding **suspected or alleged child abuse** is contained in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures and a procedure for managing allegations has been adopted by the Governing Body. Within the school, either the Headteacher or another teacher will have designated responsibility for child protection. In the event that a member of staff suspects or receives allegations that a child is the subject of abuse, a report should immediately be made in strict confidence to the Headteacher or designated teacher who will take action as required by the adopted 'managing allegations' procedure including consideration by the Local Authority's Initial Assessment Team as appropriate.

- 2.11 Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a pupil is unacceptable. It is an offence for a member of staff in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity with a pupil, any sexual activity with a child could be a matter for criminal and/or disciplinary procedures.
- 2.12 Agreed guidelines on procedures **where staff are accused of physical or sexual abuse** of pupils are contained in the document "Teachers Facing an Allegation of Physical/Sexual Abuse: Guidelines on Practice and Procedure", which is available in all schools.

2.12 **Social Contact Outside of the Workplace** (including the use of technology) –

It is acknowledged that staff may have genuine friendships and social contact with parents of pupils, independent of the professional relationship. Staff should, however, also be aware that professionals who sexually harm children often seek to establish relationships and contact outside of the workplace with both the child and their parents, in order to 'groom' the adult and the child and/or create opportunities for sexual abuse.

Communication between students and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites, social networking sites, online gaming and blogs. Adults should not share any personal information with a student. They should not request, or respond to, any personal information from the student, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. Adults should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.

Adults should also be circumspect in their communications with students so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming. They should not give their personal contact details to students including e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers, unless the need to do so is agreed with senior leadership and parents. E-mail or text communications between an adult and a student outside agreed protocols may lead to disciplinary and/or criminal investigations. This also includes communications through internet based web sites, such as social networking, instant messaging or gaming.

Communication with ex-students who are over 18 is left to staff discretion. Please be conscious of the fact that ex-students may be in contact with current students.

Be aware that actions that bring the school into disrepute could lead to disciplinary procedures being taken.

2.12 **Social Networking Sites and Online Gaming** –

Staff may use social networking sites for personal use. Staff should ensure that they establish safe and responsible online behaviours, working to local and national guidelines and acceptable use policies which detail how new and emerging technologies may be used. Communication with children both in the 'real' world and through web based and telecommunication interactions should take place within explicit professional boundaries.

The school recommends that profile and photos of the member of staff are 'locked down' as private so that students or parents do not have access to your personal data or images.

Staff should deny current or recent students access to your profile so you do not put yourself in a vulnerable position.

Staff should be aware that they leave themselves open to a charge of professional misconduct if images of a member of staff in a compromising situation are made available on a public profile by anyone.

If a student does gain access to the profile of a member of staff by fraudulent means (impersonation or hacking) senior leadership should be informed immediately.

Where relationships exist between staff and those who are also parents at the school, or personal friends who are parents at the school, social networking is acceptable but caution must be exercised so that professional standards are maintained and staff do not compromise themselves or the school.

As soon as a member of staff becomes aware that they are in an online game with a student of Idsall School, the member of staff should cease to play against that student and should not enter any games containing that player as part of the group.

Under no circumstances should staff seek out students and/or share their own gamer tags/ID with students, or use school equipment to play online games.

3. Conduct In Relation To The School

- 3.1 Staff may have access to confidential information about pupils and their families which must be kept confidential at all times and only shared when legally permissible to do so and in the interest of the child. Records should only be shared with those who have a legitimate professional need to see them.
Staff should make sure that they do not **disclose confidential information** to anyone who has no right to receive it and do not say or write anything that would constitute a breach of confidence. Confidential information relating to employment or the school should only be communicated on a need to know basis or with the specific permission of the Head.
Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil or her/his family for their own, or others advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other organisations). Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the child. Confidential information should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need-to-know basis. In circumstances where the pupil's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously. There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a pupil, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a responsibility to pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated safeguarding responsibilities.
- 3.2 All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain confidence and respect of the general public and those with whom they work. Staff should be aware that their behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, could compromise their position within the work setting in relation to the protection of children, loss of trust and confidence, or bringing the employer into disrepute. Such behaviour may also result in -, prohibition from teaching by the NCTL, a bar from engaging in regulated activity, or action by another relevant regulatory body.
- 3.3 **Use of materials and equipment** provided by the school should not be used for purposes unconnected with employment. Staff should always use public funds to the best advantage of the school and its community and adhere to high standards of probity in their use.
- 3.4 Staff should comply with the **standing orders** applicable to the school details of which are held within the school. These standing orders cover the declaration to the Headteacher of any indirect or direct financial interest in any contract or other matter involving the school. This is particularly relevant in cases of tendering or in the selling of surplus equipment or property. The Headteacher should disclose such interest to the Chair of Governors.
- 3.5 Staff should not solicit or accept **any gift, loan, fee, hospitality or other reward** which influences the way in which they carry out their duties. 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. There are occasions when pupils or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff e.g. at Christmas or as a thank-you and this is usually acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.
Similarly, it is inadvisable to give such personal gifts to pupils or their families. This could be interpreted as a gesture either to bribe or groom. It might also be perceived that a 'favour' of some kind is expected in return. They should not influence or be influenced unfairly in the way they carry out their duties by ties of kinship or friendship, or by some other association or loyalty.
- 3.6 Care should be taken to avoid any **conflict of interest** between activities outside the school and professional responsibilities. Staff should not undertake work or engage in activities in their own time through which they seek to exercise unfair advantage by virtue of their position. In no case should outside activities bring the school into disrepute.
- 3.7 Staff should not, without authority, undertake **activities unconnected with their professional role** during working hours. Policies relating to Leave of Absence are laid down in the specific policy adopted by the Governing Body and should be followed.
- 3.8 Staff in full-time employment should inform the Headteacher where they are undertaking **paid work which may impinge on their normal duties**, including activities such as lectures, private tuition,

publications, press articles or radio/TV appearances. Where work is undertaken in the employee's own time any fees paid may be retained by the employee. However, where the event, or preparation for it, takes place in working time and/or involves the use of school resources, it is necessary to seek approval to use such resources and agree the proportion of any fee to be paid to the school for such use.

- 3.9 The payment of fees to **teachers acting as examiners** is covered by the specific provisions of the Conditions of Service for Schoolteachers in England and Wales (Burgundy Book) and the regulations of Examining Bodies.
- 3.10 In addition to financial interests, staff should exercise professional judgement in disclosing to the Headteacher or their line manager, **non-financial interests** which may conflict with the interests of the school. Such disclosure will depend upon circumstances (eg in making appointments) and may include personal acquaintances, membership of voluntary or other organisations or any official position or public appointment.
- 3.11 **Dress Code** – as we expect students of Idsall School to wear our uniform and conform to a smart standard of attire it is expected that all staff should dress in a professional manner when discharging their duties. A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression and some individuals will wish to exercise their own cultural customs. However staff should select a manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role and which may be necessarily different to that adopted in their personal life. Staff should ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake. Those who dress or appear in a manner which could be viewed as offensive or inappropriate will render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegation. If any member of staff has a concern regarding this matter they should approach the Headteacher for clarification.