

# Staff Code of Conduct



St John's School  
LEATHERHEAD

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Responsible person:	HR and Compliance Director
Policy number:	7e
References:	Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy and Procedures (7a 8a) Low-Level Concerns Policy (7k) Health and Safety Policy (11), Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 Anti-Corruption and Bribery Policy (L13), The Bribery Act 2010 Conflict of Interest Policy (L42) Online Safety Policy (7g) Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure (L36) Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure (L35) <a href="#">DfE Teachers' Standards</a> <a href="#">DfE Staffing and employment advice for schools</a> (2021) <a href="#">Keeping Children Safe in Education</a> (2023) <a href="#">Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales</a> (2021) The Sexual Offences Act 2003

**Annex A:** [Ongoing Duty of Disclosure Form](#)

## 1. SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff working at the School whether paid or unpaid, whatever their position, role or responsibilities. 'Staff' includes employees, governors, contractors, work experience and placement students, volunteers, casual workers, agency workers, student placements, including those undertaking initial teacher training and apprentices. This policy sets out clear guidance on the standards of behaviour expected from all Staff at the School.

**On joining the School, and every academic year thereafter, all Staff will be asked to read and acknowledge their acceptance of this policy and complete two declarations:**

- (a) the [Ongoing Duty of Disclosure Form](#) to confirm that there are no reasons why they should not be working with children (e.g., no new criminal convictions since last DBS check) and declare any relationships with pupils/families outside of School; and
- (b) their Conflict of Interest Declaration.

## 2. PRINCIPLES and PURPOSE

2.1 It is the duty of every member of staff to observe the following policy and rules contained herein.

2.2 All members of staff have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. As part of its whole school approach to safeguarding, the School promotes an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the School (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately. It is critical that **all** concerns about adults (including low-level concerns, and allegations that do not meet the harm threshold) are shared responsibly with the safeguarding team.

2.3 The purpose of this policy is to:

- Confirm and reinforce the professional responsibilities of all staff;
- Clarify the legal position in relation to sensitive aspects of staff, pupil and parent relationships and communications including the use of social media;

- Set out the expectation of standards and behaviour to be maintained within the School;
- To help adults establish safe practices and reduce the risk of false accusations or improper conduct;
- Maintain the School's reputation and protect staff from accusations of partiality in commercial matters; and to
- Advise and, thereby, protect staff in their work.

2.4 A breach of your contract of employment or this policy will be treated as misconduct and will render you liable to disciplinary action, which may lead to dismissal.

### **3. EXPECTATIONS OF BEHAVIOUR and CONTRACTUAL DUTIES**

3.1 Staff are expected to adopt high standards of personal conduct (including online) in order to maintain the confidence and respect of all those with whom, and for whom, they work.

- Staff should understand the need to act as good role models for pupils. They also have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of pupils.
- Staff should understand and be aware that safe practice also involves using judgement and integrity about behaviours outside the work setting. Behaviour in their personal lives may have an impact on their work with pupils and the reputation of the School.
- Staff have an individual responsibility at all times to ensure appropriate use of school property and resources.
- Staff should be aware that any unlawful discriminatory behaviour or other conduct which brings the School or profession into disrepute will result in disciplinary action.

#### **3.2 Attendance and Punctuality**

Staff should make every effort to attend when required to do so. If a member of staff is going to be unavoidably late/delayed or is ill, they must report the absence as soon as possible to their Line Manager.

Planned absence must be authorised in advance by line managers and in some cases the Head.

#### **3.3 Correspondence Policy**

Staff should endeavour to reply and acknowledge any contact/correspondence from parents within 24 hours (not including weekends); staff should contact parents between 0730 and 2130 on school working days. An acknowledgement should set a timescale for a fuller reply, depending on the complexity of the enquiry. Queries should be managed to completion within five school working days whenever possible. It is considered poor practice to not respond to parent correspondence within 48 hours. Consistent poor performance in respect of parent communications may be treated as misconduct or capability.

All written communication between staff and pupils or parents must be professional in tone and content. These communications may only take place on official (monitored) school systems. Personal email addresses, text messaging or social media must not be used for these communications.

Staff must not contact pupils at home unless absolutely necessary. In such circumstances the School email system or Microsoft Teams must be used and communication should be restricted to the hours **0730-1930**.

See also section 16 [Social Contact including Social Media](#).

#### **3.4 Security**

In the interests of security, all staff and visitors must at all times wear visibly their identity badge whilst in School, including during holiday periods and outside of normal school hours. In the interests of safeguarding and protecting children, staff should feel able to challenge any adult they see on site who is not wearing an identity badge and escort them to Reception if necessary.

### 3.5 **Personal Appearance**

Staff are role models for the pupils and the School regularly receives visitors so whilst not wishing to impose unreasonable obligations on staff they are, nonetheless, required to look smart and professional in appearance, as appropriate to their role.

Political or contentious slogans on clothing or badges are not permitted.

Uniforms are provided for some positions and personal protective clothing issued as required. It is your duty to inform your Line Manager if any item of personal protective clothing is inadequate.

Final decisions about the appropriateness of dress in any individual case are ultimately at the discretion of the Head. Any member of staff who has concerns about appropriate dress is expected to raise these initially with his/her line manager and vice versa.

### 3.6 **Smoking**

To promote a healthy and pleasant working environment and because of the fire risk, smoking (in any form, including the use of vapes and e-cigarettes) is not allowed anywhere on site.

### 3.7 **Alcohol and Substance Misuse**

All members of staff are expected to convey by action, word and deed that they do not in any way encourage or condone the abuse or misuse of alcohol, drugs and controlled substances. Section 3.8 below provides clear guidance in respect of the provision and consumption of alcohol at School events and functions, off-site activities, and trips.

Use of any substance that could adversely affect an individual's work performance, capacity, attendance, conduct and/or health and safety should become a matter of concern to the Head.

The School's policy *Managing the Misuse of Alcohol, Drugs and Addiction* applies to all staff and visitors (including contractors) and covers the use and misuse of a range of substances (including alcohol, illegal drugs<sup>1</sup>, medicines, new psychoactive substances<sup>2</sup> ("legal highs") and so-called 'performance enhancing' drugs, anabolic steroids and other substances held for the purpose of misuse, such as solvents, lighter fluid, glue and laughing gas/nitrous oxide (whether legally acquired or not). The policy aims to promote awareness and prevent substance misuse, safeguard employees, provide appropriate support and advice on how best to support and respond to employees, and engender a climate that encourages openness and honesty (within the boundaries of strict personal confidentiality and legal requirements) and that gives employees, the Head and Governing Council confidence to deal with substance misuse problems by following a clear procedure.

For the rules in relation to pupils' alcohol and substance misuse please consult the School's policy on *Drugs, Tobacco, Alcohol and Controlled Substances*.

### 3.8 **Provision of Alcohol at School Events and Functions**

Any proposals for School functions or events at which alcohol is to be provided require prior written approval by the Head. Provision of alcohol must be in accordance with the School's Premises Licence.

The Head's approval will include a detailed outline of the rules, expectations and etiquette expected of staff at the function/event, such as:

- A written and/or in person briefing of staff, pupils and parents affected which sets rules and expectations must take place in advance.
- Members of staff designated as "on duty" and providing supervision of pupils during the event must not consume any alcohol; including (for the avoidance of doubt) home and away sports fixtures and travel to and from events.

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<sup>1</sup> Including but not limited to cannabis, cocaine, ecstasy and heroin (Misuse of Drugs Act 1971)

<sup>2</sup> Psychoactive Substance Act 2016

- Staff attending functions as guests should consume no more than two alcoholic beverages per person.
- Alcohol may only be served by School staff and there must be no self-service.
- Any alcohol removed from School functions/events by staff will be treated as theft, an act of gross misconduct (as set out at 8.2.10 below).

The School's Educational Visits Policy clarifies that for trips and off-site activities it is the role of the trip leader to ensure that pupils do not consume any alcohol and that staff on duty do not consume any alcohol and are not under the influence of any alcohol. Staff who are not on duty are permitted to drink a maximum of two alcoholic beverages as they may be called upon to assist those on duty at short notice.

#### **4. CONTRACTUAL DUTIES**

In addition to the expectations above it is the contractual duty of every member of staff to observe the rules set out below:

- 4.1. observe the terms and conditions of your contract of employment;
- 4.2. ensure that every pupil feels safe and protected from any form of abuse and actively commit to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people;
- 4.3. ensure that you understand and follow this Staff Code of Conduct;
- 4.4. observe all other School policies and procedures published on SharePoint/Teams/Every or otherwise notified to you from time to time;
- 4.5. act at all times in good faith and in the best interests of the School, its pupils, parents, guardians or carers and staff;
- 4.6. uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour; and
- 4.7. have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out your professional duties and responsibilities.

#### **5. DUTY OF CARE**

All staff have a duty to keep young people safe, to protect them from physical and emotional harm. This duty is in part exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between staff and pupils and behaviour by staff that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement.

All staff should put the wellbeing, development and progress of all pupils first by:

- taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils under their supervision (including online);
- using professional expertise and judgment for the best interest of pupils in their care;
- demonstrating self-awareness and taking responsibility for their own actions and for providing help and support to pupils;
- reporting low-level concerns (as defined in KCSIE 2023) or allegations about the practices of teachers, other professionals or any member of staff, supply staff or contractor where these may have a negative impact on pupils' learning or progress, or may put pupils at risk;
- being familiar with the School's *Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy and Procedures*; reading and understanding Part One of KCSIE as a minimum (and other Parts and Annexes as applicable to the scope of their role);
- knowing the role, identity and contact details of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL);
- knowing the role, identity and contact details of the Nominated Safeguarding Governor(s); and
- demonstrating respect for diversity and taking steps to promote equality.

- have an understanding of the School's online safety measures including internet filtering and monitoring processes, and know where and how to escalate concerns.

## **6. DUTIES UNDER HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATION**

The School has a duty of care towards its employees under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 which requires it to provide a safe working environment and guidance about safe working practices. The Act also imposes a duty on employees to take care of themselves and anyone else who may be affected by their actions or failings. In this respect, the duty of care towards both staff and children can be demonstrated through implementation of this policy and other policies such as *Supervision of Pupils* and *Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy and Procedures*.

Fire and evacuation procedures must be adhered to and Staff are required to familiarise themselves with the procedures and their responsibilities as set out in the School's *Health and Safety Policy*.

## **7. BUSINESS ETHICS**

- 7.1 Staff must always seek to uphold and enhance the standing of the School and should never use their authority or office for personal financial or other gain.
- 7.2 Proper care must be taken of School property.
- 7.3 School premises must not be used to carry out any work or activity other than pursuant to your terms and conditions of employment. School resources cannot be used for party political purposes.
- 7.4 In certain circumstances, the private use of School property, facilities, or use of School equipment may be undertaken with prior approval from the Finance Director. The expectation is that facilities will be let on commercial terms.
- 7.5 Although a close and co-operative relationship with a supplier is often mutually beneficial, impartiality must be maintained, and fair competition should not be compromised.
- 7.6 Any work or activity outside of School which may conflict with the interests of the School or which makes use of School resources or property must always be agreed in advance with the Finance Director and declared in accordance with the *Conflict of Interest Policy*.
- 7.7 It is acknowledged that parents, pupils, suppliers and contractors may provide staff with gifts including inter alia; bottles of wine, books and vouchers. However, in accordance with The Bribery Act 2010, such gifts must be recorded by staff and made available for inspection on request by the Head. The Bribery Act 2010 applies to individuals as well as corporate bodies and specific guidance on this matter is provided in the School's *Anti-corruption and Bribery Policy*.
- 7.8 You must not make excessive personal use of the school telephone, email or internet facilities without prior permission except in an emergency.

## **8. MISCONDUCT**

- 8.1 The following is a non-exhaustive list of offences which amount to misconduct falling short of gross misconduct:
- Unauthorised absence from work;
  - Lateness;
  - Inappropriate standard of dress;
  - Inappropriate standard of language;
  - Smoking on School premises;
  - Contravention of minor safety regulations;
  - Disruptive behaviour.
  - Refusal to follow reasonable instruction from Line Manager.

**8.2 Gross misconduct:** You must not commit any act of gross misconduct. Any such act will result in your dismissal without notice. Gross misconduct includes but is not limited to the examples set out below, offences of a similar nature and attempts to commit such offences.

Examples of gross misconduct:

- 8.2.1 failure to comply with this Policy;
- 8.2.2 failure to comply with the School's *Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy and Procedures* and a failure to commit to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people;
- 8.2.3 failure to notify the School of any child protection investigation of you or any member of your household;
- 8.2.4 failure to immediately notify the School of any arrest, charge or conviction of any criminal offence brought against you during your employment;
- 8.2.5 failure to immediately notify the School if you are or become the subject of a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) or any successor body;
- 8.2.6 failure to immediately notify the School of any change in circumstances which has or will result in you, or any member of your household being disqualified from providing childcare in connection with early or later years provision or from being directly involved in its management;
- 8.2.7 indecent, violent or offensive behaviour whether committed at or outside work;
- 8.2.8 inappropriate conduct with a pupil of the School, or a pupil of another School;
- 8.2.9 misuse of or deliberate damage to School property;
- 8.2.10 fraud, theft or dishonesty;
- 8.2.11 failure to obey a lawful order;
- 8.2.12 being on duty whilst unfit due to the influence of drugs and / or alcohol;
- 8.2.13 possession, use, supply or attempted supply of illegal drugs;
- 8.2.14 actions that could be interpreted as glorifying or supporting terrorism, extremism or organisations promoting terrorist or extremist views, or encouraging others to do so;
- 8.2.15 bullying or harassment;
- 8.2.16 accepting or giving bribes or other secret payments or other breach of the School's *Anti-corruption and Bribery policy*;
- 8.2.17 accepting a gift in contravention of the School's *Anti-corruption and Bribery policy* without the prior consent of the Head or Finance Director;
- 8.2.18 conduct (whether committed at or outside work) which is likely to damage the School's reputation or bring it into disrepute;
- 8.2.19 discrimination (including harassment or victimisation) and the use of discriminatory language on grounds of sex, pregnancy and maternity, marital or civil partnership status, race, disability, age, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion or belief;

- 8.2.20 disregarding health and safety rules / requirements (including the School's Health and Safety Policy) and endangering yourself or others;
- 8.2.21 giving false information as to qualifications or entitlement to work (including immigration status);
- 8.2.22 wilful neglect or refusal of duty;
- 8.2.23 misuse of confidential information;
- 8.2.24 use of school resources to view, retrieve or download pornographic material, or any other material which the School reasonably believes is unsuitable;
- 8.2.25 causing loss, damage or injury through serious negligence;
- 8.2.26 making a disclosure of false or misleading information under the School's *Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure* maliciously, for personal gain, or otherwise in bad faith; or
- 8.2.27 making untrue allegations in bad faith against a colleague.

## 9. PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR TEACHERS

Teaching staff should be familiar with the DfE's Teachers' Standards<sup>3</sup> which state that a teacher is expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct.

*Teachers uphold the public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside the school, by:*

- *treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's position;*
- *having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions;*
- *showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others;*
- *not undermining the fundamental British values, which are defined as comprising: democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; and*
- *ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.*

## 10. EXERCISING PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT

This policy 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. There will be occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or take action in the best interests of the child or young person where no guidance exists. Staff are expected to make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interest and welfare of the pupils in their charge. If staff are involved in cases where no guidance exists, then they should discuss the circumstances with the DSL. A written record should be kept by the member of staff that includes justification for any action taken.

## 11. CONFIDENTIALITY and DATA PROTECTION

Members of staff may have access to personal details about pupils and their families in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities. In some circumstances staff may be given highly sensitive or 'Critical School Personal Data' and staff should have particular regard to the need for security and confidentiality in these cases. In circumstances where the child's identity does not need to be disclosed, the information should be used anonymously. Particular care must be taken when discussing pupils around the School and in the Staff Room.

<sup>3</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/665520/Teachers\\_Standards.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/665520/Teachers_Standards.pdf)

Please see the *Data Protection Policy and Compliance Procedures for Staff* for further detail.

## 12. POWER AND POSITIONS OF TRUST

As a result of their knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, staff working with children and young people in education settings are in positions of authority and trust in relation to the young people in their care. A relationship between a member of staff and a pupil cannot be a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people and staff have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification. Staff should always avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others, and report and record any incident with the potential to be misunderstood to the DSL.

## 13. PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH PUPILS (INCLUDING RESTRAINT)

The School operates a policy of limited touch with pupils. There are occasions when it is appropriate for staff to have physical contact with pupils (e.g. music tuition, sports coaching, drama direction or consoling a child who has experienced bereavement). When physical contact is made with pupils such contact should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration, and appropriate given their age, stage of development, gender and background.

It is not possible to be exact about the appropriateness of each occurrence of 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. In assessing whether physical contact with a pupil is appropriate staff should use their professional judgement at all times and ensure that the touch is an exception and never for the staff member's own need.

This means that School staff should:

- be aware that even well-meaning contact may be misconstrued by the pupil, an observer or anyone to whom this action is described;
- never touch a pupil in a way which may be considered indecent;
- always be prepared to explain their actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny;
- never indulge in horseplay, tickling or fun fights.

Extra caution must be taken where it is known that a child has suffered previous abuse or neglect. In the child's view physical contact may be associated with previous abuse.

If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be recorded as soon as possible and reported to the DSL.

The use of physical intervention should, whenever possible be avoided. However, staff may use reasonable force to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property or from causing disorder. When used, it should be undertaken in such a way that maintains the safety and dignity of all concerned. The scale and nature of the intervention must be proportionate to the behaviour and nature of the harm that may be caused. Staff should report any cases of physical intervention to the DSL as soon as possible. For more information, please refer to the School's *Physical Intervention and Restraint Policy*.

If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be recorded as soon as possible, the DSL informed and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the pupil's file.

***Physical education, music, drama and other activities requiring physical contact:*** Where exercises or procedures need to be demonstrated, extreme caution should be used if the demonstration involves contact with pupils and, wherever possible, contact should be avoided. It is acknowledged that some staff, for example, those who teach PE and games, or who offer music and drama tuition, will, on occasions, have to initiate physical contact with pupils in order to support a pupil 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.

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 non-verbally by the child.

#### **14. LANGUAGE**

All staff have a responsibility to ensure that the views they express are appropriate.

Staff should:

- avoid words or expressions that have any unnecessary sexual content or innuendo; avoid displays of affection either personally or in writing (e.g. messages in birthday cards, emails, text messages, match reports);
- avoid any aggressive or threatening words;
- avoid words or actions that are over-familiar;
- not swear, blaspheme or use any form of offensive language in front of pupils;
- avoid the use of sarcasm or derogatory words when punishing or disciplining pupils;
- avoid making unprofessional personal comments about anyone;
- avoid expressing political views/avoid party political comments;
- avoid discussing and commenting on other members of staff accept when relating to School business;
- avoid language that promotes gossip and rumour; and
- be aware that some parts of the curriculum may raise sexually explicit matters.

Care should be taken in subjects where classroom dynamics might be different e.g. sport, drama or art. Staff should have clear lessons plans and should take care to avoid over-stepping personal and professional boundaries.

#### **15. SEXUAL CONTACT WITH YOUNG PEOPLE**

It is a criminal offence<sup>4</sup> of an abuse of a position of trust to have any sexual relationship with any pupil at the School under the age of 18. Therefore, staff must not have any type of sexual relationship with a pupil or pupils. Whilst it is not a criminal offence, it is a breach of this policy and considered to be gross misconduct to have a sexual relationship with any pupil of the School, even if the pupil is aged 18 or over. Any sexual contact with a pupil within two years of the pupil leaving the School would also be considered inappropriate and a breach of this policy.

In addition, staff must not:

- have sexually suggestive or provocative communications with a pupil;
- make sexual remarks about a pupil;
- discuss their own sexual relationships in the presence of pupils;
- encourage a relationship to develop in a way which might lead to a sexual relationship or be considered inappropriate.

Any of the above behaviours will be considered a serious breach of trust and will normally lead to disciplinary action and also, potentially, to criminal prosecution.

It is a criminal offence to form relationships with children who are pupils or students at another school and under the age of 16. It may also be criminal offence if a pupil at another school is under the age of 18. Any such relationship would be regarded as gross misconduct because such behaviour would

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<sup>4</sup>Section 16 of The Sexual Offences Act 2003 provides that it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over (e.g. a teacher or youth worker) to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual. A situation where a person is in a position of trust could arise where the child is in full-time education and the person looks after children under 18 in the same establishment as the child, even if s/he does not teach the child.

bring into question the staff members' professional conduct and would raise concerns that the member of staff could not maintain professional boundaries with pupils at St John's. Ultimately, it would bring the School into disrepute. Therefore, whilst not necessarily a criminal offence, the School considers it entirely inappropriate for staff to develop inappropriate relationships with a pupil at any school, irrespective of their age.

A pupil might develop an infatuation with a member of staff. Such a situation should be handled delicately to maintain the dignity of all concerned. In particular, staff should be aware that such scenarios carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against staff. If a member of staff becomes aware that a pupil is infatuated with them or a colleague, then they should discuss the matter with the DSL as soon as possible.

## **16. SOCIAL CONTACT including SOCIAL MEDIA**

### **16.1 Social contact between staff and pupils**

Staff should not seek to establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a personal friendship.

Staff should not share any personal information with a pupil. They should not request or respond to any personal information from a pupil beyond that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. All communications should be transparent and open to scrutiny so that they cannot be misconstrued as grooming.

#### **Staff must not:**

- share any personal details (home/mobile phone number or personal email, social media handles) with any pupil;
- connect with pupils on social media sites unless the need to do so is agreed with the DSL;
- send to pupils text messages, personal emails or make contact through blogs, websites or apps;
- make arrangements to meet pupils, individually or in groups, outside of school other than on trips/activities authorised by the Head/Deputy Head (Co-curricular and Logistics);
- contact pupils at home unless absolutely necessary. In such circumstances the School email must be used and communication should be restricted to the hours 0730 to 1930;
- invite pupils (groups or individuals) to any staff home unless it has been approved. For information on pupils and School staff accommodation please [see 16.3](#) below;
- engage in secretive social contact with pupils or their parents, guardian or carers.

Staff may email pupils on the School's email network. They may send pupils cards or messages on the School's email system which express congratulations. Tutors, Matrons and SHS may well send birthday/Christmas cards to pupils. However, in these cases it is important that the use of such forms of personal communication is routine, appropriate, consistent and that it maintains professional standards.

For the avoidance of doubt, staff are not permitted to engage in private tutoring of current St John's pupils.

Staff should understand that KCSIE now requires the School to conduct an online search during the recruitment shortlisting process and this may include searches of your social media profile when applying for internal promotions as part of its due diligence.

### **16.2 Social contact between staff and parents/guardians or carers**

Members of staff who are friends with parents, guardians or carers of pupils, may have contact with those pupils outside school. However, if in communication with pupils in this context, members of staff should still respect the advice in this policy. Staff should ensure that they maintain a professional image and avoid discussing School business or gossip. All such relationships should be declared using the Ongoing Duty of Disclosure form. Link to: [ONGOING DUTY OF DISCLOSURE FORM](#)

Staff need to be careful when using Social Media and deciding whether to add parents to their social networks. Staff should be especially careful that any publicly available profile of themselves befits their role in School. Avoid using social media in a way which could compromise suitability to work in a position of trust with children.

### **16.3 Meetings in staff houses**

Some School accommodation (the Head, Boarding SHS, Assistant Boarding SHS and Chaplain) have private living quarters that include designated public areas into which pupils and parents can be invited under supervision, noting the requirement at 20.10 of the [National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools](#) that boarders should not have access to staff residential accommodation other than in exceptional circumstances. A one-to-one situation should be avoided with boarders, with another adult always present. There can be no inappropriate favouritism or inappropriate one-to-one contact between staff and boarders.

Pupils should not be invited into the personal living space of any member of staff. It is accepted that children of staff at the School (whether in School accommodation or not) may at times invite their friends to their homes. In these cases, staff are reminded to comply with this code and to report any instances that would result in concern.

In some circumstances it will be necessary for staff to visit pupils at home (e.g., supporting academic needs of a pupil who is ill or a serious pastoral issue). In these circumstances staff should discuss the purpose of any visit with the DSL. General guidelines for such visits are such follows:

- try to have a colleague accompany you;
- do not visit unannounced;
- keep a record of times and dates of visits (including arrival and departure time) and record onto CPOMS;
- have a mobile phone and emergency contact;
- discuss any concerns with the DSL.

### **16.4 Educational visits (including overnight supervision)**

During school activities that take place off the School site or on the School site but out of hours (including boarding, social events such as society dinners) all staff remain in a position of authority and trust. Therefore, they need to ensure that their behaviour cannot be interpreted as seeking to establish inappropriate relationships or friendship and they must maintain high standards of professional conduct and remember their position as a role model at all times.

When out of school activities include overnight stays, careful consideration of issues, including gender and age, needs to be given to sleeping arrangements. Staff should be accommodated in separate rooms and, where possible, access separate washing and toilet facilities.

When on trips, staff must not take pupils to their own private accommodation.

When organising a trip, staff will need to consider safeguarding as a matter of priority. Any people accompanying an overnight trip aged 16 and over as a volunteer helper must have all safeguarding checks in place. In particular overnight trips where external trainers are being used, staff should check with the organisation delivering the programme that their staff satisfy safeguarding criteria. This may not be possible when running overseas trips but all adults accompanying must be vigilant and ensure that adequate supervision is in place. Any safeguarding concerns should be raised with the DSL. Staff should respect the advice in this policy when supervising overnight visits. Educational visits must not take place unless they have been risk assessed using Evolve and approved by the Deputy Head (Co-curricular and Logistics).

### **16.5 One-to-one meetings**

Staff teaching one pupil or conducting a one-to-one meeting may be more vulnerable to allegations. As such they should be mindful of this fact and take the following into account:

- avoid meetings with pupils in remote, secluded areas of the School or at times when other staff are not in the locality;
- ensure there is visual access; use a room that has sufficient windows so the occupant can be seen, or keep the door open, blind open, or inform a colleague that the lesson/meeting is taking place;
- arrange the meeting during normal school hours when there are plenty of people about;
- do not continue the meeting longer than is necessary to achieve its purpose;
- avoid sitting or standing in close proximity to the pupil, except as necessary to check work;
- avoid using 'engaged' or equivalent signs on doors or windows;
- avoid idle discussion;
- avoid all unnecessary physical contact and apologise straight away if there is accidental physical contact;
- avoid any conduct that could be taken as sexual advance;
- report any situation where the pupil becomes distressed or angry;
- report any incident that causes you concern to the DSL.

## **17. TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEOS**

Staff should not use personal mobile phones/tablets to take images of children and should only use School phones, tablets, video and photography equipment. School cameras can be borrowed from the MIS Manager, Sally Hunt.

If no school equipment is available and a personal mobile phone/camera is used to take photographs of pupils, the images should be transferred straight onto the School network and deleted from the personal device/personal cloud storage areas and staff should report to the Director of Safeguarding that this has taken place.

All images of children should be stored securely and only accessed by those authorised to do so.

When taking photos or videos the following should be considered:

- the purpose of the activity must be clear;
- all images should be open to scrutiny to ensure that they are appropriate;
- images should not be made during one-to-one situations;
- ensure that the pupil or pupils are appropriately dressed;
- ensure that the pupils understand why the picture is being taken;
- images must not be taken secretly.

## **18. STAFF ACCEPTABLE USE OF IT**

18.1 "IT" includes (but is not limited to) the School's computers and telecommunications systems, networks, hardware, software, servers, file storage systems, email, internet and web services, applications, file sharing, instant messaging software and social networking sites.

Staff use of the School's IT systems (including connecting personal devices to the network) is subject to the following conditions:

- Staff use of IT is monitored for security and/network management reasons. Staff may also be subject to limitations on use of such resources.
- An appropriate web filtering and monitoring system is employed within School to support safeguarding and enforce some restrictions including user authentication. Personal devices connected to the School network will be required to have a 'Smoothwall' certificate installed onto them. Staff must not attempt to circumvent the content filters or other security measures installed on the School's IT systems, and not attempt to access parts of the system that they do not have permission to access.
- The distribution of any information through the School's network is subject to the scrutiny of the School. The School reserves the right to determine the suitability of this information.

- The use of IT is subject to UK law and any illegal use will be dealt with appropriately. For example the Police can have a right of access to recorded data in pursuit of a crime.
- The School has the right to refuse access to the network for any device, if the School is not satisfied that appropriate anti-virus or security software has been installed.
- Staff must not share usernames or passwords with anyone else.
- Staff must not attempt to install software on, or otherwise alter, School IT systems.
- Remember that the School monitors use of the School's IT systems, and that the School can view content accessed or sent via its systems.

## 18.2 Online behaviour

Accessing child pornography or indecent images of children on the internet, and making, storing or sharing such material is illegal, and, if proven, will invariably lead to the individual being barred from working with children and young people.

As a member of the School community you should follow these principles in all of your online activities<sup>5</sup>:

- Ensure that your online communications, and any content you share online, are respectful of others.
- Do not access, create or share content that is illegal, deceptive, or likely to offend other members of the School community (for example, content that is obscene, or promotes violence, discrimination, or extremism). Accessing pornographic material is considered an act of gross misconduct ([see 8.2 above](#)) which will result in your dismissal without notice.
- Respect the privacy of others. Do not share photos, videos, contact details, or other information about members of the school community, even if the content is not shared publicly.
- Do not access or share material that infringes copyright, and do not claim the work of others as your own.
- Do not use the internet to distribute malicious software, to damage, interfere with, or gain unauthorised access to the computer systems of others, or carry out illegal activities.
- Adhere to section 16 above in terms of social contact with pupils including social media. Staff should not use their personal email, or social media accounts to contact pupils or parents, and pupils and parents should not attempt to discover or contact the personal email addresses or social media accounts of staff.
- Any staff engaged with or operating other business activities online should ensure that these comply with the Conflict of Interest Policy, are declared accordingly, that social media privacy settings are robust and consider [section 16](#) above.

## 18.3 Users of School IT systems should:

- Record any instances where you have accessed inappropriate sites by accident. For example this may be through mistyping an address or spam email link.
- If you become aware that there has been unauthorised access to your computer, raise it immediately with the IT Support Department because of the implications for the security of School, and personal data.
- Lock computers and devices whenever they are unattended and log out when you have finished.

## 18.4 Filtering and Monitoring

The School is obliged to have a filtering and monitoring system in place to monitor IT and internet use to fulfil its safeguarding duty and responsibilities under UK law. Inappropriate use of IT can expose the School and the user to significant liability. For further detail please see the *Online Safety Policy* and the *Monitoring Policy*.

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<sup>5</sup> Including non-School online activity such as personal social media accounts and other business activities.

## 18.5 Reporting

If you become aware of a breach of this 'acceptable use' policy or the *Online Safety Policy*, or you are concerned that a member of the school community is being harassed or harmed online you should report it to the Head or HR and Compliance Director and/or refer to the *Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure*. Reports will be treated in confidence.

If you have any questions or concerns about your own or another's use of the internet to view pornography, or behaviour in chatrooms, you can get confidential advice at the helpline *Stop it Now UK*, online ([www.stopitnow.org.uk](http://www.stopitnow.org.uk)) or by phone at 0808 1000 900. You should also report any content which concerns you to the Internet Watch Foundation, [www.iwf.org.uk](http://www.iwf.org.uk)

## 19. PUPIL BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

All pupils have a right to be treated with respect and dignity, even in circumstances where they display difficult and challenging behaviour. Corporal punishment is unlawful in all schools. Staff should not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a child. Whilst the use of humour can help diffuse a situation, the use of demeaning or insensitive comments towards pupils is not acceptable in any situation. Any incidents of bullying should be dealt with swiftly in accordance with the *AntiBullying Policy and Procedure*. Where a pupil's behaviour causes concern, the School's *Behaviour, Rewards, and Sanctions* policy should be referred to. If staff still have questions, they should address these to the Deputy Head (Pastoral).

## 20. SEARCHING PUPILS AND THEIR BELONGINGS

School staff can search a pupil for any item if the pupil agrees. The Head, and staff authorised by her, have a statutory power to search pupils or their possessions, without consent, where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may have a "prohibited item". It is important that staff consult the School's *Searching and Confiscation Policy and Procedure* for more detailed guidance.

## 21. CURRICULUM

Some areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit or of an otherwise sensitive nature (e.g. depression, self-harm, eating disorders, domestic violence, bullying etc.). Care should be taken to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the learning outcomes identified when planning lessons.

The curriculum will sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussions about subject matter of a sensitive nature. Responding to pupils' questions will require careful judgement and staff should take guidance from senior staff before delivering lessons with this potential.

Be aware that such discussions might affect particular pupils more than others (for example, if a pupil has suffered a related traumatic incident). Where a discussion has caused discomfort or resulted in safeguarding concerns, report the discussion to the DSL as soon as possible.

## 22. ADMINISTERING FIRST AID TO PUPILS

Under normal circumstances first aid will be administered by a member of the Health Centre or a trained medical professional. Where this is not possible (e.g. sports fixtures or educational trips) staff administering first aid should try to ensure that another member of staff is aware, record their action and inform the Health Centre.

## 23. PUPILS' ENTITLEMENT TO PRIVACY

Children are entitled to privacy when changing or showering. However there still needs to be an appropriate level of supervision to ensure safety. Staff should:

- avoid observing changing or showering;
- avoid physical contact or visually intrusive behaviour when children are undressing or undressed;
- knock first, then announce when entering changing rooms and avoid remaining unless required;
- never shower or change in the same place as children; and

- never assist with any personal care task which the pupil can undertake themselves.

Where assistance is required (for example an injury and assisting with removing wet clothes) staff should explain to the child what is happening and ensure that another adult is in the vicinity and is aware of the task to be undertaken.

#### **24. TRANSPORTATION**

When driving a minibus staff should not behave in an illegal or unsafe manner for example exceeding the speed limit, being under the influence of drugs or alcohol or using a mobile phone. Please refer to the *Drivers' Code of Practice* for fuller guidance.

It may be necessary, on occasions, for staff to convey pupils in their private vehicles. There are measures which could minimise the risk of false or mistaken allegation in this situation.

- Refer the use of any private vehicle use to the DSL;
- Pupils should sit in the rear of the car and not alongside the driver;
- Ensure that another adult is in the car if at all possible. If another adult is not available, inform another member of staff about the purpose, destination and timings of the journey;
- If the same pupil is to be transported alone more than once, advice and permission should be sought from the DSL;
- Always use a school vehicle as an alternative if at all possible;
- If you have to use your own vehicle in an emergency, make sure you have appropriate vehicle insurance. Refer to any guidance issued by your Association or Trade Union on this matter.

#### **25. GIFTS AND REWARDS GIVEN TO PUPILS**

Staff must be careful when giving gifts and rewards to pupils. Selection processes should be fair and the gift or reward of little monetary value. Decisions must avoid perceptions of favouritism or bias that could be misconstrued. If you are unsure you should refer to the DSL.

[See 7.7 above](#) for gifts given to staff.

#### **26. WHISTLEBLOWING**

The School has a *Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure*. Where a member of staff has good reason for concern regarding the conduct or competence of a colleague, they should follow the procedures in the policy. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

All staff have a duty to report themselves if there is any reason why they may not be able to carry out their duties effectively or if there is anything that may affect their ability to work safely with children. Staff need to be aware of their responsibilities under the Prevent duty. Any worries about pupils should be viewed as safeguarding issues and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead following the procedures set out in the *Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy and Procedures*.

For both pupils and staff there will be immunity from retribution or disciplinary action for whistleblowing in good faith. Whistleblowing regarding the Head should be made to the Chair of the Governing Council in the first instance.

When a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with the School, and they feel it is necessary to seek advice outside the School, advice can be sought from Public Concern at Work on 020 7404 6609, or [helpline@pcaw.co.uk](mailto:helpline@pcaw.co.uk). If staff have concerns over how child protection issues are being handled, then they can talk to the NSPCC whistleblowing advice line: 0800 028 0285 or [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

#### **27. DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF**

All staff must be aware of the School's *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures (section 12)* which sets out the procedure for referral to the LADO. In addition, the School's internal *Procedure for dealing with safeguarding concerns and allegations against adults who work with*

*children (7j)* is published on SharePoint and Teams. If at any time employees have concerns about appropriate conduct, dealings with pupils at St John's or the behaviour of a colleague whether at work or in their private life, they should be discussed with the Head, Designated Safeguard Lead (DSL) or a senior member of staff.

## **28. BOARDING STAFF**

When on duty in a boarding house staff must respect pupils' privacy and always knock and ask for permission to enter a room or study. Staff should avoid entering bathrooms or toilets except in an emergency. Residential staff should only invite pupils into their accommodation as per the guidelines in section 16.3 above.

The School's *Supervision of Pupils Policy* makes it clear that at all times boarders must know which member of staff is responsible for them and has the means to contact them if necessary. The policy also clarifies the nature of the responsibility which older pupils, e.g. House Prefects have for younger pupils.

All adults visiting boarding accommodation (including visitors to residential private accommodation) must be kept under sufficient staff supervision.

There are written agreements between the School and any adult not employed by the School but living in a building with boarding accommodation (e.g. partners/adult children of boarding house staff). These agreements give clear guidance on contact with boarders and their responsibilities to supervise their visitors.

## **29. STAFF RELATIONSHIPS**

Personal relationships between colleagues who work together can give rise to conflicts of interest. Therefore, employees who have entered into a close personal or romantic relationship with a colleague are required to disclose this fact to the HR and Compliance Director and the Head. Any information declared or disclosed will be recorded on both employees' personnel files, stored confidentially and securely. The disclosure of personal or romantic relationships between colleagues is considered to ensure the existence of the relationship does not negatively impact on the operation and functioning of the School.



## ANNEX A: ONGOING DUTY OF DISCLOSURE FORM

PLEASE COMPLETE THE MICROSOFT FORM by clicking [HERE](#):

Explainer:

All staff are required to complete this form at the start of the new academic year and at any time that their circumstances change. Should you have any queries about any of the information required or if you wish to discuss any aspects of this further please do contact the DSL or HR on a confidential basis.

The form requires you to confirm and declare that:

“I understand the Staff Code of Conduct in respect of contact with pupils outside of school and comply with this policy.

If I have a relationship with a pupil/family outside of school, I understand that this should be discussed with the Head and Director of Safeguarding to clarify whether it is appropriate to teach or tutor the pupil as part of my regular timetable.

I confirm that if these circumstances change at any time, I will complete a new form to ensure that the school is aware of any change in relationships, including new ones.”

And, to answer a series of questions about **relevant convictions, then confirm:**

“... that I have completed this form to the best of my knowledge and that I have not knowingly withheld any relevant information. I understand that a failure to disclose relevant information now, or the provision of false information, may result in disciplinary proceeding and potentially the termination of my employment.

I agree to disclose to the School any change in my circumstances which may affect the answers I have provided above.”

Data protection: You are required to provide the information requested in this form so that the School can meet its legal obligations. The School will process personal information in accordance with its Staff Privacy Notice.