

NEWLANDS GIRLS' SCHOOL

POLICY DOCUMENT



STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

LAST UPDATED/REVIEWED	(by) Headteacher	(date) June 2024
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POLICY TYPE	Statutory
REVIEW FREQUENCY	Biennial – next review date June 2026

RESPONSIBLE	
Leadership Team	Headteacher
Governing Committee	Full Governing Body

APPROVED:	Approved by:	Full Governing Body
	Meeting Date:	Monday 10 th June 2024

Courage Commitment Compassion

NEWLANDS GIRLS' SCHOOL GOVERNORS' POLICY ON STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

All staff at Newlands Girls' School are expected to comply with the following Code of Conduct. Teaching staff are furthermore expected to conduct themselves within the guidance of the 'personal and professional conduct' section of the Teachers' Standards.

Deviation from the aforementioned codes of conduct and practice may lead to disciplinary action being taken where appropriate. (Teachers' Standards, GOV.UK – DfE, see pages 5 and 14).

The guidance aims to:

- keep children safe by clarifying which behaviours constitute safe practice and which behaviours should be avoided;
- assist adults working with children to work safely and responsibly and to monitor their own standards and practice;
- support managers and employers in setting clear expectations of behaviour and/or codes of practice relevant to the services being provided;
- support employers in giving a clear message that unlawful or unsafe behaviour is unacceptable and that, where appropriate, disciplinary or legal action will be taken;
- support safer recruitment practice;
- minimise the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations made against adults who work with pupils;
- reduce the incidence of positions of trust being abused or misused.

Dress and appearance – staff should dress in ways which are appropriate to their role and this may need to be different to how they dress when not at work. Staff should ensure they are dressed appropriately for the tasks and the work. This usually means business dress for all teaching, support and administrative staff. For example: For male colleagues: Full trousers (no jeans/combat trousers/shorts), shirt (and in many situations, a tie) are expected. Full shoes at all times (no trainers). For female colleagues: Smart office/business wear are expected at all times. No clothing with thin 'spaghetti' straps or revealing necklines. No flip flop style shoes. Any staff member who chooses to dress in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations.

Attendance and Punctuality – Staff are expected to strive for 100% attendance and punctuality including INSET days, except for sickness, approved discretionary grounds, or where punctuality is concerned, unforeseen or circumstances outside of the individual's control. Staff absence is to be registered with the Cover and SIMS Administrator and they are to be notified by 7.30am at the latest. Holidays are to be taken as per the school's published term dates.

School Policies and Procedures – All policies should be observed by all. It is the responsibility of staff to familiarise themselves with these. Some policies will require staff to acknowledge they have read them. Copies may be found on the school website.

Duty of Care – All staff have a duty of care to keep young people safe and to protect them from sexual, physical and emotional harm. Children have a right to be safe and to be treated with respect and dignity. Staff should understand their responsibilities and always act in the child's best interests. They should work and be seen to work in an open and transparent way. Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intervention.

Equality – Professional standards should always be maintained when dealing with both staff and pupils regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, race, religion and/or sexual identity. All staff must treat all children equally and with respect. (This is reinforced by our Equality and Objectives Statement).

Confidentiality – Staff are expected to treat any information they may receive about pupils in a discreet and confidential manner. Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil or her/his family for their own, or others' advantage. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the pupil. Individual pupils should never be discussed by staff in front of other pupils. Staff should make it clear to pupils that any disclosures implying threats to the welfare or safety of the pupil, cannot be kept confidential, and may need to be discussed with an appropriate adult.

Professional Boundaries – Staff are in a position of trust and the relationship with pupils is not one of equals. Staff should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. They should report and record any incident with this potential. Power and trust should not be misused. The aim is to offer friendly care and not to imply a special friendship with any pupil.

Gifts, Rewards and Favouritism - Staff should ensure that the motivation behind the giving of gifts/awards or rewards is clear to all pupils in order to avoid any misunderstandings of intent. Staff must not give children gifts personally - any appropriate gifts should come from the school as an organisation. The giving of gifts or rewards to pupils should be part of an agreed policy for supporting positive behaviour or recognising particular achievements.

Staff must not accept cash, or personal gifts with a significant monetary value, under any circumstances, although items of nominal value (approximately £25 or below) or free promotional pens, calendars, diaries or similar items may be accepted. For full details please refer to the Policy on Hospitality, Gifts and Bribery.

Infatuations - Occasionally, a pupil may develop an infatuation with a staff member who works with them. All staff should deal with these situations sensitively and appropriately to maintain the dignity and safety of all concerned. Should any pupil become infatuated with a member of staff, this must be reported to the Headteacher immediately. The maintenance of professional boundaries at all times should, however, go some way to avoiding this situation.

Behaviour Management - All pupils have a right to be treated with respect and dignity even in those circumstances where they display difficult or challenging behaviour. Staff should not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a child. Where pupils display difficult or challenging behaviour, staff must follow the Behaviour Policy.

General conduct - All staff are expected to carry out their duties within the spirit of mutual respect, co-operation and support. A staff member should not deliberately behave in such a way as to bring Newlands Girls' School into disrepute.

Personal Conduct – Staff are expected to behave in a manner both within and outside of working hours which would not lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or act as a role model. All adults working with pupils have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of pupils.

Home Visits – Staff are not permitted to visit the home of a pupil unless pre-arranged with the Headteacher and the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The appointment must be logged with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and on Arbor. No young person should ever be invited into the home of a staff member.

Social Contact with pupils – All social contact outside of school hours with pupils should be avoided. Home or mobile phone numbers, addresses or email addresses should not be exchanged. Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. There will be occasions when there are social contacts between pupils and staff, where for example the parent and teacher are part of the same social circle. These contacts will be easily recognised and openly acknowledged. Nevertheless, there must be awareness on the part of those working with pupils that some social contacts can be misconstrued as being part of a grooming process.

Sexual Contact - sexual activity between an adult and a pupil with whom they work (including verbal comments, letters, emails, phone contact, and physical contact) may be regarded as a criminal offence and will always be a grave breach of trust and a matter for disciplinary action. 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', defines sexual abuse as "forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware". It is an offence under section 16 of The Sexual Offences Act 2003 for a person aged 18 or over to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of the 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 she/he does not teach the child.

Physical Contact with Pupils – should be avoided unless within the guidance of the Behaviour Policy. Possible exceptions using professional judgement might be greetings or congratulations such as handshakes; the guiding of a pupil to where they need to be or a hug in an appropriate situation. There should never be any physical contact when pupils are getting changed or showering and respect and privacy must be shown to them at this time.

First Aid – should only be administered by trained members of staff whose names are displayed around the school.

One to One Situations – should be conducted in an open and transparent fashion i.e. with the knowledge of, or with other staff nearby, and if necessary with an open door.

Transporting Pupils - staff should not travel alone with pupils unless in an emergency or where the child is at risk. If staff are expected to use their own vehicles for transporting pupils they should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy, appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded. Seat belts are to be worn.

Curriculum - Many areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit, or of an otherwise sensitive nature. The curriculum can sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussion about subject matter of a sexually explicit or otherwise sensitive nature. Responding to pupils' questions can require careful judgement.

The Use of Personal Living Space - No pupil should be invited into, the home of an adult who works with them, unless the reason for this has been firmly established and agreed with parents/carers and a member of SLT. Under no circumstances should pupils assist with chores or tasks in the home of a member of staff who works with them.

Educational Visits and After-School Activities - Organisers must conduct risk assessments and adhere to Health and Safety guidelines. Staff/pupil ratios should be considered and where overnight stays are involved, the gender mix should be carefully organised. No pupils of the opposite sex should be allowed to enter the bedroom area of another pupil. Members of staff may consume a small amount of alcohol **only** when designated "off-duty" and others are designated "on duty". Staff should not smoke or vape in the presence of pupils.

Communication with Pupils (including the Use of Social Media Platforms) - Staff must ensure that they establish safe and responsible online behaviours. These should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. Staff should not share any personal information with a child or young person. Staff should ensure that all digital communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.

Photography and Videos – Staff should be clear about the purpose of recording images and about what will happen to them once the activity is concluded. Informed written consent from parent/carers is sought. Staff must ensure that children are not exposed to any unsuitable material and that any films, You-tube clips or other materials shown to pupils are age appropriate. Staff must not access any inappropriate material for their own consumption. Staff are advised not to post their personal details or inappropriate materials on social networking sites. Accessing, making and storing indecent images of children is illegal and will lead to criminal investigation.

Use of Office/Workshop Space

All areas of the school, including personal offices/workshops, should be used in an entirely professional manner. Work areas should be kept neat and functional; no personal items which could be deemed inappropriate or illegal should be brought on the premises. Personal office spaces could be inspected at any time and any breach of the Staff Code of Conduct or the law could result in disciplinary action.

Contact with the Media – Only designated persons are entitled to communicate with the press, radio or television companies.

Whistle Blowing – Whistle blowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. Newlands Girls’ School has a clear and accessible whistleblowing policy that meets the terms of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. The policy is called Raising Concerns at Work (Whistleblowing).

In accordance with this policy, staff should report any behaviour by colleagues that raises concern to either the Headteacher or to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, as appropriate. Staff should be aware of safeguarding procedures including those for dealing with allegations against adults. Staff who are the subject of an allegation should contact their professional association. Staff are responsible for recording any incident and passing on any information where they have concerns about any matter pertaining to the welfare of any or child to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Low-level concerns can arise in several ways from various sources, e.g. suspicion, complaint or a disclosure. If ANY staff member has a worry they should confidentially share low-level concerns with the DSL and Headteacher. The Headteacher will be the ultimate decision-maker in respect of all low-level concerns, although they may wish to consult the DSL to take a more collaborative approach. If the DSL or Headteacher is in any doubt as to whether a low-level concern meets the harm threshold, then the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be contacted. 'Humiliating pupils' could be an example of a low-level concern. Concerns about the headteacher should be sent to the Chair of Governors.

If a member of staff is in doubt with regard to any part of this Staff Code of Conduct, and how they apply in any particular situation, they should consult with the Headteacher or a Designated Safeguarding Lead.

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STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

I have read and understood the above contents of the Staff Code of Conduct Policy.

I confirm that, in case of my needing further clarification on any point, I have consulted a member of the Leadership Team.

Name (Print) _____

Signed _____ Date: _____