

## **STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT AND EXPECTED BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

Slindon College aims to offer a safe and supportive environment for all pupils, staff, and visitors. This policy applies to all staff and volunteers, regardless of their role in the College. If a member of staff breaches this code it may lead to disciplinary procedures.

This code provides advice about safe practice and which behaviours should be avoided. It also advises on what constitutes illegal behaviour and what might be considered misconduct. It cannot cover every eventuality and therefore it does not replace the general requirements of the law, common sense and good conduct.

This code of conduct has been adopted by the Governing Body in order to meet its duty to establish procedures for the regulation of the conduct of staff at the College. If employees / volunteers are uncertain about what to do in a particular situation or require further information or guidance on the appropriate course of action to take in any situation they must contact the Headmaster for advice before they take any action.

Off-duty hours are an employee / volunteer's own personal concern. It is important, however, that people do not put themselves in a position where their duty to the College and their private interests conflict.

Employees and volunteers are expected to abide by the policies of the College. They must take care to ensure that their own personal or political opinions do not interfere with the provisions of balanced professional advice or their duty to carry out those policies.

### **The College believes;**

- A child's welfare is of the highest priority
- Staff should avoid conduct that would lead anyone to question their motivation and intentions.
- Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from a senior manager over any incident which may give rise to concern.
- Records should be made of any such incident and of decisions made/further actions agreed.
- All staff and volunteers should know the name of their Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL or DDSL).
- All staff and volunteers must ensure they are totally familiar with safeguarding and child protection arrangements.
- It has a legal and ethical responsibility to carry out its business in a fair and open manner.
- Any breach of the law and other professional guidelines or policies could result in criminal or disciplinary action.

### **This policy aims to**

- safeguard young people,
- enable staff, irrespective of their roles and responsibilities, to ensure a safe learning and working environment and protect pupils from physical and emotional harm,
- reduce the risk of staff being falsely accused of improper or unprofessional conduct,
- protect the College from instances or allegations of bribery and corruption.

### **Expectations of staff**

The College expects extremely high standards of staff. All staff and volunteers have a duty and responsibility to keep children safe and protect them from physical and emotional harm. This is done through respectful, caring and professional relationships between staff and pupils and behaviour by staff that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement. Adults are expected to act and be seen to act, in the pupils' best interests at all times. Adults must avoid conduct that would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions and follow the College safeguarding procedures, which are reviewed regularly, at all times. The College takes all possible measures to ensure adults are not placed in situations that may result in them being vulnerable.

### **Confidentiality**

Members of staff / volunteers must not use information obtained in the course of their duties to the detriment of the College or for personal gain or benefit; nor should they impart this information to others who might use it in such a way.

Members of staff may have access to confidential information about pupils during the course of their work in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities. In some circumstances this may be highly sensitive or private information. Staff must never use confidential or personal information about a pupil, a parent or another staff member for their own, or others' advantage.

Confidential information should never be shared with any person other than on a need to know basis. In circumstances where identity does not need to be disclosed, the information should be used anonymously. On occasion information about a person may need to be shared, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, staff have a duty to pass the information on without delay, but only to those with designated child protection responsibilities (see Safeguarding Policy).

If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from a senior member of staff or the DSL. Although it is important to listen to and support children, staff must not, under any circumstances, promise confidentiality or request pupils/students to do the same. Confidential information belonging to the College must not be disclosed to any person not authorised to receive it.

Members of staff/volunteers must not disclose personal or financial information about any other member of staff to any unauthorised person, external organisation or agency without the express consent of the individual concerned or that of the Headmaster.

At all times staff must work within the requirements of the Data Protection Act, General Data Protection Regulations and the Freedom of Information Act. Staff should take care not to gossip either with colleagues or parents or others outside the College.

### **Convictions**

Staff must notify the College in writing if charged with any criminal offence or if convicted of any criminal offence and this includes cautions.

### **Behaviour**

All staff should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their peers, pupils and the public in general. An individual's behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, should not compromise her/his position within the work setting so it is important to exercise due care and attention when outside of the College environment.

Staff should always behave and act as a role model to pupils. Staff should not drink alcohol or smoke cigarettes when pupils are in the vicinity. This is especially so when supervising pupils or on College trips. This applies even when there are no pupils present, or if a member of staff is on-call, as they may be called to act in case of an emergency.

### **Professional behaviour**

'Professional behaviour' is a generic term, but includes such aspects as:

- acting in a fair, courteous and mature manner to children, colleagues and others
- co-operating and liaising with colleagues, as appropriate, to ensure pupils receive a coherent and comprehensive education
- endeavouring to assist the College to achieve its corporate and strategic objectives – in particular, by adopting a positive attitude to marketing and the achievement of quality and equality
- having respect for College property
- maintaining the image of the College through standards of dress, general courtesy, correct use of College resources
- taking responsibility for the behaviour and conduct of pupils in the classroom and sharing such responsibility elsewhere on the premises;
- being fit for work (ie not adversely influenced by drugs, alcohol, etc.);
- being familiar with job requirements (eg proper preparation, use of suitable methods/systems, maintenance of appropriate/required records, etc), including keeping up-to-date with developments relevant to the job.
- being familiar with communication channels and College procedures applicable to both pupils and staff;
- ensuring all assessments/exams/tests are conducted in a fair and proper (prescribed) manner, and that procedures are followed with respect to confidentiality and security;

- respecting the rights and opinions of others.

### **Sexual behaviour**

The law states that where a person aged 18 or over is in a position of trust with a child under 18, it is an offence for that person to engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of that child, or to cause or incite that child to engage in or watch sexual activity. Where a person is aged 18 or over is in a position of trust established with a person who has only recently left the College, any attempt to engage in sexual activity with that person will be a cause for concern and will be treated as a breach of trust established in that prior relationship.

Staff must never use their status and standing to form or promote a relationship that is of a sexual nature with a child or attempt to initiate a relationship with an ex-pupil, which is of a sexual nature. Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a pupil or any other child is both inappropriate and illegal.

Children are protected by law in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour. They are additionally protected by specific legal provisions regardless of whether or not they consent. The sexual activity referred to does not just involve physical contact including penetrative and non-penetrative acts. It may also include non-contact activities, such as causing pupils to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of pornographic material or conversation that could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative- ie verbal comments, letters, notes, electronic mail, phone calls, texts, physical contact.

Adults who embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' where the sole purpose is to gain the trust of a child, and manipulate that relationship so sexual abuse can take place or where the sole purpose may be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative- ie verbal comments, letters, notes, electronic mail, phone calls, texts, physical contact should know that such behaviour is an offence and will be reported to the police immediately. Staff should be aware that conferring special attention and favour upon a pupil might be construed as being part of a 'grooming' process.

### **Physical contact**

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role.

A complete 'no touch' approach is impractical, and may, in some circumstances be inappropriate. When physical contact is made with pupil this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate. Staff should use their professional judgement at all times about the appropriateness of any physical contact.

Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be made clear to senior staff.

Any member of staff making physical contact with pupils should be prepared to explain their actions.

### **Care, Control and Physical Intervention**

Staff may legitimately intervene to prevent a pupil 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 should have regard to the health and safety of themselves and others.

Under no circumstances should physical force be used as a form of punishment. The use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence.

In all cases where physical intervention is deemed necessary, the incident and subsequent actions should be documented and reported. Staff should always use minimum force for the shortest period necessary

### **One to One Situations**

Staff who work in one to one situations with pupils can be more vulnerable to allegations. Teachers, therapists and peripatetic staff should recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. No member of staff should be in an enclosed room without a window and with the door closed at any time. Every attempt should be made to ensure the safety and security needs of both staff and pupils are met and College policy is followed.

Staff should avoid meeting with pupils in secluded areas of the College and always ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in one to one situations, whenever possible. If it is either impossible or inappropriate to have a door open, staff should ensure that another appropriate adult knows where you are and that you are alone with a pupil.

### **Transporting Pupils or students**

In certain situations, for example, out of College activities, staff or volunteers may agree to transport a pupil. Any staff planning to transport pupils must report the nature of the journey, the route and the expected time of arrival to a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Staff must also ensure that a suitable risk assessment is in place prior to the journey.

Staff should ensure that their behaviour and that of the child is safe and that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. They should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.

### **Dress and Appearance**

The College is committed to promoting diversity and will therefore respect individual preference in terms of customs, culture, religion and tradition.

Staff should consider the manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role. To dress professionally shows pride, effort, respect for oneself and one's profession. Adults in College are role models for pupils, the image that staff project and the image of the College in the community is related to how adults in the College present themselves. It is therefore important to dress appropriately when acting in a professional capacity. Staff

should be neat, clean, smart and tidy, wearing clothes, including shoes, which are commensurate with their positions. A smart and professional appearance is expected at all times for staff. Staff should ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake. See Appendix 1.

For health and safety reasons jewellery should be kept to a minimum and be appropriate to the role and footwear should be suitable for the working environment.

### **Gifts and Hospitality**

All staff must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. We take a zero-tolerance approach to bribery and corruption and are committed to acting professionally, fairly and with integrity in all our business dealings and relationships wherever we operate and implementing and enforcing effective systems to counter bribery.

We do not allow any action that gives or intends to:

- give, promise to give, or offer, a payment, gift or hospitality with the expectation or hope that an advantage for Slindon College will be received, or to reward an advantage already received;
- give, promise to give, or offer, a payment, gift or hospitality to a government official, agent or representative to "facilitate" or expedite a routine procedure.
- accept payment from a third party that they know or suspect is offered with the expectation that it will obtain an advantage for them;
- accept a gift or hospitality from a third party if they know or suspect that it is offered or provided with an expectation that a business advantage will be provided by Slindon College in return;
- threaten or retaliate against another worker who has refused to commit a bribery offence or who has raised concerns under this policy.

A person may be guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantages to someone; or if they request, agree or accept, or receive a bribe from a third party. 'Third party' can be taken to mean any individual or organisation that you come into contact with during the course of their work for Slindon College and includes actual and prospective pupils and parents, suppliers, business contacts, agents, advisers, and government and public bodies. Bribery and corruption are punishable for individuals by up to ten years imprisonment and if we are found to have taken part in corruption Slindon College could face an unlimited fine and damage to its reputation.

Staff should take care not to accept any gift or hospitality that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. On occasion, children or their parents may wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff, for example at Christmas or as a thank-you, and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a

regular basis or gifts of any significant value. Any member of staff receiving gifts of a significant value must inform the Headmaster. Staff do not give personal gifts to pupils. It is acceptable for staff to offer prizes of small value in certain tasks or competitions and these should be known and not secret.

Staff/volunteers must not seek or receive preferential rates by virtue of their dealings on behalf of the College. Offers of hospitality, visits to exhibitions, business meals, social functions, etc should only be accepted if there is a genuine need to represent the College in an official capacity. Head Teacher should always be informed of such offers.

The College only makes charitable donations that are legal and ethical under local laws and practices. No donation must be offered or made in Slindon College's name or on behalf of Slindon College without the prior approval of the Bursar or the Headmaster

If you believe that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act, you should report your concerns to the Headmaster or to Bursar or refer to the College Whistleblowing procedure.

### **Communication with pupils and parents**

Communication between pupils and staff, 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, webcams, websites, social networking sites, online gaming and blogs.

Staff should never share any personal information with a pupil or parent and they should ensure all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.

It is important for staff to be circumspect in their communications to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming. Staff must never store images of pupils on personal cameras, devices or home computers.

No member of staff should share personal contact details with pupils, including e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers unless the need to do so is agreed with senior leaders and parents. Such details given to parents should only be done with the prior knowledge and consent of a member of the SLT.

E-mail or text communications between staff and pupils or parents outside agreed protocols may lead to disciplinary and/or criminal investigations. This includes communications through internet-based web sites, such as social networking or instant messaging.

### **Conduct outside work**

Staff must not engage in conduct outside work that could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the College or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the College community. In particular, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are regarded as unacceptable.

Staff may undertake work outside College, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the College nor be to a level which may contravene their working time expectations or affect their work performance.

### **Social Contact**

Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils, or their families, for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. Staff must be aware that social contact, in certain situations, could be misconstrued as grooming. Any planned social contact, such as during a College trip or as part of a reward scheme should be approved by a member of SLT. Staff should report and record any situation which they feel might compromise the College or their own professional standing.

### **Social Networking Sites**

Many staff use social networking sites for personal use. Staff should ensure their passwords are strong and secure at all times. Profiles and photos of staff should be 'locked down' as private so that pupils or parents do not have access to personal data or images.

Staff leave themselves open to a charge of professional misconduct if images of themselves or other members of staff in a compromising situation are made available on a public profile by anyone. If parents or pupils gain access to the profile of a member of staff by fraudulent means (impersonation or hacking) a member of SLT should be informed immediately.

In some cases, prior friendships may exist between staff and parents at the College. In this instance social networking is acceptable but caution must be exercised so that professional standards are maintained and staff do not compromise themselves or the College.

It is advised that staff follow the following procedures:

- Staff must not access social networking sites for personal use via College information systems or using College equipment;
- Staff are advised not to be friends with current or recent pupils. The potential for staff to be compromised in terms of wall content and open to accusations makes the risk not worth taking;
- Staff must not disclose any information that is confidential to their College or disclose personal data or information about any individual/colleague/pupil
- Staff must not disclose any information about the College that is not yet in the public arena;
- In no circumstances should staff post photographs of pupils
- Staff should not make defamatory remarks about the College/colleagues/pupils or post anything that could potentially bring the College into disrepute;
- Staff should not disclose confidential information relating to his/her employment at the College;
- Care should be taken to avoid using language or images which could be deemed as offensive to others;

### **The internet**

Under no circumstances should adults in the College access inappropriate images. Accessing child pornography or indecent images of children on the internet, and making, storing or disseminating such material, is illegal and, if proven, will invariably lead to the individual being barred from work with children and young people.

Using College equipment to access inappropriate or indecent material, including adult pornography, will be reported to the police immediately. Such action will lead to immediate suspension and possible dismissal, particularly if as a result pupils/students might be exposed to inappropriate or indecent material.

### **Appendix 1 – Dress Code**

The College does not wish to prescribe what staff should wear to College, but requires all staff to respect the following:

- Teaching and support staff in the classroom should be smart, appropriate and professional in appearance
- Clerical and other support staff should dress smart and appropriately in keeping with their role
- Appropriate footwear must be worn that look both smart and are safe for the working environment
- Staff should not wear clothing that shows too much cleavage, shoulder, above lower thigh or clothing through which underwear can be clearly seen
- Sports clothing, unless actively involved in physical education or sporting activity is not appropriate
- Staff with tattoos or body piercings need to ensure that these are kept covered as much as is practically possible
- Leisure clothing and jeans should not be worn unless it is appropriate for a College trip or activity, INSET days or charity mufti day.