

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

Responsible: Senior Deputy
Updated: February 2025
Reviewed: Annually in the Spring term by SLT

INTRODUCTION

Clayesmore School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The School does not distinguish between its pupils on grounds of age, in that it does not consider that its child protection responsibilities should end once a pupil attains the age of 18. As such, any reference to a “child” in this policy or any others includes any child who is a pupil of the school and includes any pupil aged 18 years or over.

It is also important to note that Clayesmore applies its safeguarding policies to young people visiting the school; for example those who are attending the school on a short course or taster day, those children who are being educated remotely, and not only to our full time pupils.

This document seeks to clarify what is expected in terms of professional behaviour; it gives clear advice about what constitutes illegal behaviour and what might be considered as misconduct. It also describes safe practice and which behaviours should be avoided.

Its aim is to safeguard young people and reduce the risk of staff being falsely accused of improper or unprofessional conduct.

Every member of staff should read this code of conduct in conjunction with:

1. The current Professional Standards for Teachers, printed in the staff handbook.
2. The school’s current [Safeguarding Policy](#) and procedures
3. “Keeping Children Safe in Education”
4. [KCSIE](#) (September 2024)
5. [Guidance for Safer Working Practice 2022](#) for those working with children and young people

This code of conduct will be reviewed annually.

If a member of staff does not follow this code of conduct this may lead to disciplinary procedures.

1. DUTY OF CARE

Teachers and other staff are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority; manage risk; use resources; and protect students from discrimination and avoidable harm.

This means that staff should:

1. Understand the responsibilities, which are part of their employment or role, and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached.
2. Always act, and be seen to act in the child’s best interests.
3. Avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
4. Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour.

Employers have a duty of care towards their employees which requires them to provide a safe working environment for staff and guidance about safe working practices. This means that

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Clayesmore School should:

1. Ensure that safeguarding procedures are in place and reviewed
2. Ensure that systems are in place for concerns to be raised
3. Ensure that adults are not placed in situations which render them particularly vulnerable

Staff must:

1. Make themselves familiar with the safeguarding policy and how and when to report concerns to the DSL or Deputy DSL.

2. EXERCISE OF PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT

This guidance 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. Individuals are expected to make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the children in their charge and in so doing will be seen to be acting reasonably. Staff should take account of the fuller advice set out in the document Guidance for Safe Working Practice for those who work with children and young people.

3. POWER and POSITIONS OF TRUST

All adults working with pupils in education settings are in positions of 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; staff have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.

Staff should always maintain appropriate professionalism and wherever possible, they should avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others and report and record any incident with this potential. Where a person aged 18 or over is in a position of trust with a child under 18, it is an offence under the Children Act 1989 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 aged 18 or over is in a position of trust with a pupil who has already reached the age of 18, any attempt to engage in sexual activity with that person will be treated as a breach of trust and will be treated as gross misconduct.

Where a person aged 18 or over is in a position of trust established with a person who has only recently left the school, any attempt to engage in sexual activity with that person will be a cause for concern and may be treated as a breach of trust established in that prior relationship and could be regarded as gross misconduct.

This means that staff should not:

1. Use their position to gain access to information for their own advantage and/or a pupils' or family's detriment.
2. Use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine pupils.
3. Use their status and standing to form or promote a relationship with a pupil, which is of a sexual nature.
4. Attempt to initiate a relationship with a recent ex-pupil, which is of a sexual nature.

4. CONFIDENTIALITY

Members of staff may have access to confidential information about pupils in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities.

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Staff are expected to:

1. Treat information they receive about pupils in a discreet and confidential manner.
2. Seek advice from a senior member of staff if they are in any doubt about sharing information they hold or which has been requested of them.
3. Be cautious when passing information to others about a pupil.
4. Know whom any concerns or allegations should be reported to.
5. Listen to and support pupils but never promise confidentiality or request pupils to do the same under any circumstances.
6. Pass on any concerns or allegations about adults to the Head, without delay.

5. PROPRIETY and BEHAVIOUR

All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of pupils. They 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 his/her position within the work setting so it is important to exercise due care and attention when outside of the school environment.

Staff should:

1. Be aware that their behaviour in their personal lives may impact upon their work with pupils

Staff should not:

1. Drink alcohol with pupils in public or private places, nor purchase alcohol for pupils. If a member of staff finds themselves in a pub or other meeting place in which current pupils are drinking & socialising, the member of staff should not join the pupils and if possible should leave the premises.
2. Drink alcohol when supervising pupils on school trips.
3. Make inappropriate remarks to a pupil (including email, text message, phone or letter etc.)
4. Discuss their own personal relationships with or in the presence of pupils
5. Discuss a pupil's personal relationships in inappropriate settings or contexts
6. Make (or encourage others to make) unprofessional personal comments in any form of communication (e-mail, conversations or social networking comments)

NB. Where alcohol is served to parents (or occasionally senior pupils) at school functions, staff on duty looking after pupils should not drink alcohol. If in doubt, please check with one of the Deputy Heads.

6. INTERACTION and COMMUNICATION WITH PUPILS

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, web-cams, websites, social networking sites, online gaming and blogs. A pupil is not a friend – they must not be considered as such.

Staff should:

1. Communicate with pupils in an appropriate and professional manner, using only the school network & e-mail system for internet communication and school mobile phones when on trips & expeditions
2. Only make contact with pupils for professional reasons
3. Be cautious in their contact with ex-pupils, as there is still a professional relationship and there may be contact with current pupils
4. Report to the SLT any indications (verbal, written or physical) that suggest a pupil may be infatuated

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with a member of staff

5. Be mindful if they are alone in a room with a pupil. Leave the door open if there is no need for confidentiality.
6. Always approve any planned social contact with senior colleagues, for example when it is part of a reward scheme or pastoral care programme
7. Advise the SLT of any regular social contact they may have with a pupil or parent which may give rise to concern
8. Report and record any situation or behaviour which they feel might compromise the school or their own professional standing

Staff should not:

1. Give their personal contact details to pupils
2. Make contact with pupils for personal reasons
3. Allow pupils to call them by their first name/nickname
4. Take or store images of pupils on personal mobile devices, cameras or home computers
5. Make images of pupils available on the internet, other than through the school network/website without permission from parents or the SLT
6. Have any secret social contact with pupils

7. PHYSICAL CONTACT

There are occasions when it is appropriate for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role (e.g. PE, music staff). When physical contact is made with pupils 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.

Staff should:

1. Be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the pupil, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described.
2. Consider alternatives, where it is anticipated that a pupil might misinterpret any such contact, perhaps involving another member of staff, or a less vulnerable pupil in the demonstration
3. Always explain to a pupil the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take unless their safety is at immediate risk
4. Never touch a pupil in a way which may be considered indecent
5. Always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny
6. Report to House Staff or a member of SLT any incident involving physical contact with a pupil which has occurred outside their normal day-to-day role.

The school will provide staff, on a 'need to know' basis, with relevant information about vulnerable pupils in their care

8. PUPILS IN DISTRESS

There may be occasions when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance. This may include age appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

Staff should:

1. Consider the way they offer comfort to a distressed pupil
2. Always tell a colleague when & how they offered comfort to a distressed pupil

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3. Record situations which may give rise to concern

9. SEXUAL CONTACT WITH PUPILS

Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a pupil is illegal. Pupils are protected by the same laws as adults in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour. They are additionally protected by specific legal provisions regardless of whether the child or young person consents or not. This includes the prohibition on adults in a position of trust.

There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' where the purpose is to gain the trust of the child, and manipulate that relationship so sexual abuse can take place. This is an offence.

Staff should not:

1. Pursue sexual relationships with children and young people either in or out of school
2. Communicate with a child or young person in any manner which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative, i.e. verbal comments, letters, notes, e-mail, phone calls, texts or physical contact
3. Communicate with a child or young person in any manner which fosters an emotional dependence

10. ONE to ONE SITUATIONS

Staff working in one to one situations with children and young people are more vulnerable to allegations. Teachers and others should recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure the safety and security needs of both staff and pupils. Pre-arranged meetings with pupils away from the school premises should not be permitted unless approval is obtained from their parent and the Head or the SLT with delegated authority.

Staff should:

1. Avoid meetings with pupils in remote, secluded areas of the school
2. Ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in one to one situations
3. Inform other staff of the meeting beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by
4. Avoid use of 'engaged' or equivalent signs wherever possible
5. Always report to a senior colleague any situation where a pupil becomes distressed or angry
6. Consider the needs and circumstances of the child/children involved

11. CHANGING ROOMS

Where there are separate staff and pupil changing facilities e.g. Clayesmore School sports centre, staff must ensure their appropriate use. Where there are no separate facilities e.g. at a sailing club, staff should take appropriate steps to stagger the use of facilities with pupils.

12. TRANSPORTING PUPILS

Wherever possible and practicable it is advisable that transport is undertaken other than in private vehicles, with at least one additional adult to the driver acting as an escort. If there are exceptional circumstances that make unaccompanied transportation of pupils unavoidable, the journey should be made known to a senior member of staff.

Staff should:

1. Except in a medical emergency when this might not be possible, obtain permission in writing (or email) to carry the pupil from both a) a parent of the pupil and b) a senior member of staff.

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2. Ensure a lone pupil sits in the back of the car and wears the appropriate seat belt.

13. INTERNET USE

Clayesmore School has a clear policy about access to and use of the Internet. Please refer to the ICT Acceptable Use Policy for further guidance.

14. WHISTLEBLOWING

Clayesmore School has a clear policy about ways in which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. Please refer to the school Whistleblowing Policy for further guidance. Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of the Head and/or relevant external agencies. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

Staff should:

- Report to the Head any behaviour by colleagues that raises concern. If they have concerns about the Head they should contact the Chairman of Governors.
- Any member of staff may, at any time, contact Dorset Social MASH directly.

15. CONCERNS

All concerns about a member of staff's behaviour should be reported, without delay, to the Head or to the LADO at Dorset Children's Services. Concerns about the Head should be communicated to the Chairman of Governors or the LADO. This includes, but is not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

Further details regarding "low-level" concerns can be found in Appendix 9 of the Safeguarding policy

16. VISITING SPEAKERS

Before inviting any speakers to visit the school you must follow the guidance in the Visiting Speakers Policy.

17. FUNDAMENTAL BRITISH VALUES

The school expects all teachers at all times to teach and to act in support the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith.

18. PREVENT

All staff have undergone PREVENT training and each member of staff is aware of their duty under PREVENT to report any concerns they might have about radicalisation of pupils.

19. CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Corporal punishment is never permitted. Staff may never hit pupils.

20. PHYSICAL CONTROL / RESTRAINT

All staff should be aware of the [Restraint Policy](#) and seek immediate help from a senior member of staff if ever

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they think they might need to restrain a pupil or if they have had to do so.

21. SOCIAL CONTACT WITH PUPILS OUTSIDE WORK

Staff are advised to be very careful about any social contact with pupils outside work either face-to-face or online. It is sometimes inevitable in a boarding community that staff and pupils will meet socially. And it is also inevitable that staff who are parents of pupils within the school will meet their own children's friends at a social event from time to time. However, for all staff the guidance and requirements set out in the Professional Standards for Teachers and in the KCSiE apply at all times. Staff are always subject to the conditions set out in these documents.

Staff who seek social contact with pupils or with recent leavers are almost certainly breaking the law or at risk from doing so and would be reported to Dorset Children's Services.

22. DRESS CODE / APPEARANCE

Staff should dress in a professional manner, erring perhaps on the more formal side of things. Multiple visible piercings are not acceptable.

23. SUPERVISION OF BOARDING ACCOMMODATION

The boarding houses have detailed guidance on the supervision of boarding accommodation which must be followed at all times. If you are a tutor visiting a boarding house you will be inducted into what is required. Staff living in school accommodation must sign the Licence to Occupy and comply with all child protection requirements: e.g. all other adults resident overnight must be cleared via the DBS.

24. OVERNIGHT SUPERVISION

The boarding houses have detailed guidance on the supervision of boarders overnight.

25. AVOIDANCE OF APPEARANCE OF FAVOURITISM

It is a very important principle of all teaching, tutoring, coaching of all kinds that favouritism and/or the appearance of favouritism must be avoided. Staff must take pains to offer special opportunities to all pupils who might be eligible for them and not only those they know or come across. Any concerns that emerge regarding an accusation of favouritism will be raised by one of the Deputy Heads and discussed with the member of staff.

26. BRINGING THE NAME OF THE SCHOOL INTO DISREPUTE

Staff are referred to the Professional Standards for Teachers (Part 2) and reminded that anything they do or say outside the school campus or online will reflect for good or ill on the name of the school. The school will raise immediately with a member of staff any concerns that arise and advise the member of staff accordingly.