



Kingdown School
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CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SAFE PRACTICE

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For review

1. Introduction

This document provides a guide for adults working in schools (including staff, governors, volunteers and visitors) about acceptable and desirable conduct to protect both adults and students. It refers to and complements other policies and guidance in our school, including:

- ◆ School Child Protection Policy
- ◆ School Behaviour Policy
- ◆ School Policy on Use of Force to Control or Restrain Children
- ◆ Professional Standards
- ◆ Safer Recruitment Policy
- ◆ Medical Needs Policy

This Code of Conduct is based upon the DfE document 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults working with Children or Young People in Education Settings' (March 2009 – copy in Headteacher's office) in which you can find useful examples of acceptable and unacceptable conduct, together with discussion of the issues raised. And, Keeping Children safe in Education 2015; Working together to Safeguard Children 2015.

Adults working at Kingdown should know the name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Sara Edwards) in the school, be familiar with the local Child Protection arrangements, and understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children and young people.

2. Basic Principles

- ◆ The child's welfare is paramount (Children Act 1989).
- ◆ Adults working in the school are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead a reasonable person to question their motivation or intentions.
- ◆ Adults working in the school must work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way.
- ◆ When dealing with a safeguarding issue:
 - Adults should discuss and/or take advice promptly from their Line Manager or another Senior Member of staff, to ensure that such situations can be handled promptly and sensitively.
 - A record should be kept of any such incident and of decisions made/further actions agreed, in accordance with school record keeping policy.
 - Staff should apply the same professional standards regardless of gender or sexuality.
- ◆ Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.

All staff, Volunteers and Visitors to the school must:

- be familiar with, and work in accordance with, Kingdown's Policies particularly:

- ◆ Child Protection
 - ◆ Behaviour
 - ◆ Use of Force to Control and Restrain Children
 - ◆ Internet Safety
 - ◆ Health and Safety
 - ◆ Use of Photography and Video
 - ◆ Whistleblowing
 - ◆ Intimate care
 - ◆ Gifts and Hospitality
- provide a good example and a positive role model to students;
 - behave in a mature, respectful, safe, fair and considered manner. For example, you must ensure that you:
 - ◆ are not sarcastic and do not make remarks or 'jokes' to students of a personal, sexual, racist, discriminatory, intimidating or other offensive nature;
 - ◆ do not embarrass or humiliate children.
 - do not discriminate favourably or unfavourably towards any child. For example, you should:
 - ◆ treat all students equally – never build 'special' relationships or confer favour on particular students;
 - ◆ do not give or receive (other than token) gifts unless arranged through school.
 - ensure that your relationship with students remains on a professional footing.

3. **General obligations of school staff**

- Staff should understand the responsibilities that are an intrinsic part of their employment or role, they should make a professional judgement about their actions and behaviour and seek to avoid conduct, which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation or intentions.
- If there is an incident where staff feel there may be a concern, they should discuss the circumstances that informed their action, or their proposed action with a senior colleague, to help ensure that the safest practices are employed and the risk of actions being misinterpreted reduced.
- Records should be made of any incidents and decisions made or further actions agreed, with their justifications, in accordance with school policy.
- Staff should understand their responsibility to voice any general concerns that they might have about practice within the school, in accordance with Kingdown School's Whistle Blowing policy.

- Staff should also be aware of and comply with Kingdown School’s financial and administrative regulations and any other procedure manuals such as the staff handbook.
- Unlawful, unsafe or inappropriate behaviour may result in disciplinary action being taken.

4. Good practice guidelines

The following Code and guidelines set out specific areas of conduct and behaviour that constitute expected and safe practice.

If staff are in any doubt about any aspect of this guidance or need to seek further clarification about a particular situation in the absence of specific guidance, they are advised to speak to a senior manager within Kingdown School.

4.1 Propriety and Behaviour

- 4.1.1 All adults working with children and young people are in a position of trust in relation to the individuals in their care. Staff are expected to adopt high standards of personal integrity and conduct and behave in such a way that does not compromise their position either within or outside Kingdown School.

Staff should not:

- behave in a manner, which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or act as a role model
- use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine students
- make (or encourage others to make) unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate other individuals or might be interpreted as such.

4.2 Confidentiality and Information disclosure

- 4.2.1 Staff should not use any information obtained in the course of their duties to the detriment of Kingdown School or for personal gain or benefit or pass this information on to others who might use it in such a way.
- 4.2.2 Staff must also take reasonable steps to ensure that the loss, destruction, inaccuracy or disclosure of information does not occur as a result of their actions, including information relating to school business and student data.
- 4.2.1 There are some circumstances in which staff may be expected to share information about a child, for example, when child protection issues arise. In such cases staff have a duty to pass information on without delay in line with local procedures. If staff are in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential they should seek guidance from a senior manager or person with designated child protection responsibilities.
- Staff should not use their position to gain access to information for their own advantage or to intimidate, humiliate or embarrass a child
 - Staff are expected to treat any information they receive about children and young people in a discreet and confidential manner

- Staff need to be cautious when passing on information to others about a child/young person and if in any doubt about sharing information, seek the advice of a senior member of staff, or those with designated child protection responsibilities.

4.3 Equality issues

4.3.1 All staff should adhere to the Kingdown School Equal Opportunities Policy, in addition to the requirements of the law.

- Staff should not discriminate in recruitment and employment practices, nor in the delivery of services
- Staff should also ensure that in their dealings with parents and other members of the public, they ensure the provision of an efficient and impartial delivery to all individuals.

4.4 Employment matters

4.4.1 All staff involved in appointments and/or tendering process should ensure that these are made on the basis of merit.

- Staff should not be involved in an appointment or decisions relating to discipline, promotion or pay adjustments for any individual who is a relative or with whom they are in a close personal relationship
- All relationships of a business or private nature with external contractors, or potential contractors should be made known to the Headteacher

4.5 Public duty and private interest

4.5.1 It is important that staff do not put themselves in a position where their duty to Kingdown School and their private interests conflict.

- Staff should not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work and the provision of a balanced and professional service, ensuring that they work to the professional standards required.

4.6 Other employed/private work

4.6.1 Any external work that staff undertake must not bring Kingdown School into disrepute or conflict with the school's interest.

4.6.2 Any copyright created by a member of staff during school hours becomes the property of the school.

- Staff should not set up a business or accept employment with a business that is engaged in work, which is in direct competition with Kingdown School
- Private work should not be undertaken in the school's time, or using the school's premises or equipment, without the prior approval of the Headteacher.

4.7 Dress and appearance – Please refer to Professional Standards Policy

4.7.1 Staff should ensure that they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks that they undertake and that through their appearance, they promote a positive and professional image.

4.7.2 Where dress codes exist in schools these should not discriminate in any way.

4.8 Finance inducements, gifts, hospitality and sponsorship – Please refer to Finance Policy: Gifts and Hospitality

4.8.1 Staff should ensure that they use public funds entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner and that they do not give or receive any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage, which might be misinterpreted.

4.8.2 Although staff should not give or receive gifts from students or parents on a regular basis or of any significant value, it is acceptable, however for staff to receive small tokens of appreciation, such as at Christmas time.

- Staff should not seek or receive preferential rates for themselves by virtue of their dealings on behalf of the school
- Staff should ensure that gifts are declared if they are received
- Staff should generally only give gifts to an individual young person as part of an agreed reward system
- Where staff do give gifts, they should ensure that they are of insignificant value and given to all children equally.

4.9 Use of School Time and Facilities

4.9.1 The School's property and facilities (e.g. stationery, computers, photocopiers) may only be used for School business unless permission for their private use has been granted by the Headteacher or Senior Deputy Headteacher.

4.10 Publication of Books/Articles

4.10.1 If staff want to publish books, articles, letters, dissertations etc...that they have written in connection with their duties and in which they describe themselves as holding an appointment with the school they must consult the Headteacher.

- Staff should speak to the Headteacher if they wish to publish books, articles, letters, dissertations etc..., which have been written in connection with their duties and their role within Kingdown School.

4.11 Infatuations

4.11.1 In cases where a young person develops an infatuation, there is a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against staff.

- Staff should report to a senior colleague any clear/apparent (whether they are verbal, written or physical), that suggest a student may be infatuated with them and respond sensitively to such situations in order to maintain the dignity of all parties.

4.12 Social contact

4.12.1 Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with students to secure or strengthen a friendship. This includes giving any personal details to a student such as a home/mobile phone number, home or email address. Only in exceptional circumstances can this be with the prior approval of a senior member of staff.

- Do not give out personal details such as home/mobile numbers, home address or email address to students
- Staff should always approve any planned social contact with students with senior colleagues, for example, when it is part of a reward scheme or pastoral care programme
- Staff should advise senior management of any regular social contact they have with a student, where it is apparent that it may give rise to a concern.

4.13 Physical contact

- 4.13.1 It is unrealistic to suggest that teachers should never touch students. There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with students, such as when a distressed student needs comfort and reassurance or as an integral part of some lessons such as PE and Music.
- 4.13.2 However, innocent actions and appropriate physical contact can often be misconstrued and it is therefore crucial that staff only initiate physical contact for the minimum time necessary and in ways appropriate to their own role and the needs of the child.
- 4.13.3 Staff should use their professional judgement at all times. Where feasible, staff should seek the child's permission before initiating contact. Where a member of staff thinks that an incident could have been misinterpreted it should be reported to the Headteacher.
- 4.13.4 Any formally agreed plan for children with SEN or physical disabilities should be understood and agreed by all concerned and staff should be provided with relevant information about vulnerable students in their care where it is relevant for this to be provided in order for staff to be able to undertake tasks appropriately.
- 4.13.5 Extra caution may also be required where it is known that a child has suffered previous abuse or neglect. Many such children are often needy and seek out inappropriate contact, thereby leading staff to be vulnerable to allegations of abuse.

In this regard, staff should:

- be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described
- never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent
- always explain to a student the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take
- look at alternatives, where it is anticipated that a student might misinterpret contact, consider involving another member of staff, or a less vulnerable student in a demonstration
- never indulge in horseplay, tickling or fun fights
- always tell a colleague when and how they offered comfort to a distressed child and record any situations, where they think they may give rise to concern
- adhere to the school's physical intervention policy and be acquainted with DfE Guidance in respect of physical contact with students and meeting the medical needs of children and young people in school.

4.14 Showers and Changing

- 4.14.1 Children are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes or taking a shower.
- 4.14.2 However, there does need to be an appropriate level of supervision to safeguard young people and satisfy health and safety considerations. Any supervision must therefore be appropriate to the needs and age of the young people concerned.

- Staff should avoid any physical contact when children are in a state of undress or any visually intrusive behaviour where there are changing rooms
- Staff should announce their intention of entering a changing room and avoid remaining in the room unless students require it
- Staff should not change in the same place as or shower with children

4.15 Behaviour management and physical intervention

4.15.1 Corporal punishment is unlawful in all schools and physical force should never be used as a form of punishment; to do so is likely to constitute a criminal offence.

4.15.2 However in some circumstances, staff in schools have the right to use physical intervention/reasonable force for the shortest period necessary to control or restrain students. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 provides the legal power for school staff to use reasonable force to prevent students from committing a crime or causing injury, damage or disruption.

- Staff should try to defuse situations before they escalate
- Staff should keep parents informed of any sanctions
- Staff should adhere to Kingdown School policies on Behaviour Management and Use of Force to control or restrain children
- Where it is identified that staff are likely to have to restrain on a regular basis they should have received appropriate training.

4.16 Sexual contact with children and curriculum issues

4.16.1 It is a criminal offence for any adult in a position of trust to engage in any form of sexual activity with a young person under 18, even with their consent (Sexual Offences Act 2003). This also includes non-contact activities such as causing children to engage in or watch sexual activity.

4.16.2 There may be occasions when, as part of the curriculum, a teacher has to raise subject matter that is sexually explicit. In such situations, any lesson plan should highlight the areas of risk and sensitivity. Staff should respond to questions with careful judgement and avoid entering into inappropriate or offensive discussions about sexual activity.

In this regard, staff should not:

- use their status and standing to form or promote relationships with children, which are of a sexual nature
- pursue sexual relationships with children and young people either in or out of school
- enter into or encourage inappropriate or offensive discussion about sexual activity
- make sexual remarks to a students (including email, text messages, phone or letter), or use any communication which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative
- discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of students
- discuss a student's relationships in inappropriate settings or contexts
- confer special attention and favour upon a child which might be misconstrued as being part of the 'grooming' process.

4.17 One to one situations and overnight supervision

- 4.17.1 When staff work regularly on an individual basis with children, they are generally more vulnerable to allegations.
- 4.17.2 To avoid such situations arising meetings should, wherever possible, be arranged so that staff are visible and/or audible and not in secluded areas of the school.
- 4.17.3 Staff should not arrange to meet a student away from the school premises without good reason, but if this is necessary, only with the expressed approval of parents and a senior member of staff.
- 4.17.4 However, where a school makes provision for overnight supervision during exam periods and it is necessary for a student to stay with a member of staff in their home, this should only be with the parent's permission and after a full risk assessment has been carried out.

Staff should:

- ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in one to one situations
- inform other staff of the meeting beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by
- avoid the use of 'engaged' or equivalent signs wherever possible, as they may create an opportunity for secrecy or the interpretation of secrecy
- always report to a senior colleague any situation which gives rise to complaint, disagreement or misunderstanding or where a child becomes distressed or angry.

4.18 Transporting children

- 4.18.1 Wherever practicable, an adult additional to the driver should act as an escort and all arrangements agreed with relevant parties in advance.

All staff:

- should avoid using private vehicles wherever possible (if necessary, permission must be sought from the Senior Deputy Head and relevant parents)
- must ensure that they have the appropriate insurance (for business use) where they do have to use their private vehicle
- should ensure that they are alone with a child for the minimum time possible
- should be aware that the safety and welfare of the child is their responsibility until this is safely passed over to a parent/carer
- should report the nature of the journey, the route and expected time of arrival in accordance with agreed procedures
- should ensure that their behaviour and all arrangements ensure vehicle, passenger and driver safety, taking into account any specific needs that the child may have.

4.19 Educational visits and after school clubs

- 4.19.1 Staff should always take care to have another adult present during out of school activities, unless otherwise agreed with senior staff. Health and safety requirements should be strictly adhered to.
- 4.19.2 Staff should ensure that they display professional behaviour during activities that take place off the school site and ensure that their behaviour cannot be interpreted as seeking to establish an inappropriate relationship or friendship. Staff should therefore maintain a professional relationship with students at all times.

- 4.19.3 Where out of school activities include overnight stays, particular consideration should be given to sleeping arrangements, if applicable and students, staff and parents informed of the arrangements in advance.

In this regard, staff should therefore:

- undertake risk assessments
- have parental consent to the activity
- ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times

4.20 First aid and administration of medication

- 4.20.1 In cases where first aid or medication needs to be administered, all staff should adhere to Kingdown School's Health and Safety policy.
- 4.20.2 A health care plan should be drawn up in circumstances where the child needs to take regular medication and any such agreement between the child, parents/carers and the school must be negotiated, agreed and recorded.
- 4.20.3 Where possible, children should be encouraged to administer the medication themselves, with the permission of parents.

Staff should:

- make relevant staff aware of the task being undertaken
- explain to the child what is happening

4.21 Intimate Care

- 4.21.1 All children have a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of an intimate nature is required. A care plan should be drawn up and agreed with parents for all children, including those with special needs, who require intimate care on a regular basis.

In this regard staff should:

- adhere to the school's intimate care guidelines
- make other staff aware of the task being undertaken
- explain to the child what is happening
- consult with colleagues where any variation from the agreed procedure or care plan is necessary and record the justification, sharing the information with parents.

- 4.21.2 A detailed Intimate Care Policy has been produced for Kingdown School which should be referred to for further detail.

5. Acceptable uses of technologies

5.1 Photography, videos and other creative arts

- 5.1.1 Many school activities involve recording images, but the use of such images needs careful consideration and handling. In particular, children who may have been abused in this way may feel threatened by the use of photography and filming.
- 5.1.2 The use of any images of children for publicity purposes will also require the appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their legal guardians.

Staff should therefore:

- be clear about the purpose of the activity and about what will happen to the photographs when the lesson or activity is concluded

- ensure consent is gained from the student and their legal guardians where being used for publicity purposes
- ensure that a senior member of staff is aware what the photography/image equipment is being used for and for what purpose
- ensure that all images are available for scrutiny in order to screen for acceptability
- be able to justify images of children in their possession
- never use mobile phones to take images
- avoid making images in one to one situations

5.2 Internet use

5.2.1 Accessing child pornography or indecent images of children on the computer is illegal. Under no circumstances should adults in schools access inappropriate images on the internet. The same rule applies to the use of the school’s equipment by members of staff at home, e.g. use of laptops.

- Staff should follow the school policy on the use of IT equipment (eSafety Policy)
- Staff are strongly advised to avoid social media as a form of communication and should never use it to communicate with students or staff.

5.3 Mobile phones

5.3.1 Personal mobile phone numbers should only be given out if needed for school trips or activities.

5.3.2 Staff should not use their mobile device to take photos of students, or text or email students.

5.4 Social media

5.4.1 Staff should follow the school policy on the use of IT equipment (eSafety Policy)

5.4.2 Staff are strongly advised to avoid social media as a form of communication and should never use it to communicate with students or staff.

Declaration of receipt

I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct and Guidelines for Safe Working Practice and understand that any unlawful or unsafe behaviour could lead to appropriate legal or disciplinary action being taken. I also know that all school policies are on the Q drive and/or school website.

Name (please print):

Signature: Date:

Please return this slip to the PA to the Headteacher as soon as possible.

Reference Documents

- ◆ Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016
- ◆ Working together to Safeguard Children 2015
- ◆ Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (DfES January 2007)
- ◆ School Policies
- ◆ LSCB Local Safeguarding Children Procedures
- ◆ Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults working with Children or Young People in Education Settings' (March 2009)
- ◆ Code of Conduct for Staff, Supply and Volunteers of Kingdown School
- ◆ Wiltshire County Council Model Procedure.