



# Hedgewood School

# Staff Code of Conduct

Revised February 2023

Approved by:

Date:

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### 1. Aims, scope and principles

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff, volunteers and governors to maintain. Hedgewood School actively supports council values and standards of staff conduct and bases this policy on model frameworks from Hillingdon Local Authority.

We want Hedgewood to be an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect. We are aiming for excellence, promoting sustainability and diversity, valuing our staff and professional colleagues and enhancing the local community.

Many of the principles in this code of conduct are based on the [Teachers' Standards](#). All school staff have an influential position in the school and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards.

Through our detailed staff induction process and follow up training, we aim to ensure that all staff will have the capacity use our Safeguarding protocols to keep all Hedgewood pupils safe. This includes an effective, current working understanding of Safeguarding reporting, protocols and practice. as well as our positive 'Low arousal' approaches to behavior set out in our policies and Studio 3 training. Also very importantly staff absolutely need a deep understanding of autism and the social and communication needs of our pupils.

We expect all support staff, governors and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

**Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in our staff disciplinary procedures.**

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils.

We place a great emphasis on maintaining confidentiality of pupil and family information and the positive and patient way we support our pupils.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

As a maintained school, we are required to establish procedures for the regulation of staff conduct under regulation 7 of [The School Staffing \(England\) Regulations 2009](#).

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), schools should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistle-blowing, as well as acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

## 3. General obligations

Hedgewood staff will:

### 1. Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality including:

- ❖ Arriving to allow time to ensure belongings and personal needs are dealt with before commencing start of duty time. Staff **must** be on time to start their duties and responsibilities to pupils
- ❖ Always using Inventory system to sign in and out
- ❖ Returning promptly from any allocated break times (including using personal facilities during break times)
- ❖ Exiting and signing out at the end of day **after** agreed finish time in class
- ❖ Report reasons for lateness to SLT (come at end of school day)
- ❖ Ensure fob is on your person at all times and not sharing it with colleagues
- ❖ Not sign in or out on Inventory for colleagues (this could lead to disciplinary action)
- ❖ Ensure all absence reporting arrangements are followed  
(This includes calling a member of Senior Leadership Team personally to inform of circumstance of absence (no texting please). Names and contacts numbers will be available and updated regularly on Parentmail)
- ❖ As per the attendance policy, arrange all medical and dental appointments in own time wherever possible
- ❖ Provide Senior Leaders of reasons for special leave requests for emergencies and dependents' leave
- ❖ Understand that school based employment consists of term time commitment and no annual leave entitlement is available for class based staff
- ❖ Ensure levels of attendance are optimized, and wherever possible take responsibility for managing issues that prevent attendance at work

School recognises there will exceptional circumstances relating to attendance and punctuality, and will respond to individual requests as is appropriate, keeping in mind at all times the needs of the school.

***Good attendance allows for consistency in class- for pupils and colleagues, and punctuality assures safeguarding of pupils both in and out of class.***

2. For all staff with a teaching responsibility, understand and adhere to the professional expectations in the Teachers Standards (relating to the complex profiles of pupils at Hedgewood School)

## 4. Safeguarding

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from harm, and to report any concerns as per our protocol. This includes physical, emotional, sexual abuse, or neglect.

All staff must familiarize themselves (i.e. understand), our Safeguarding and Child Protection (CP) and Whistleblowing policies and related procedures as well as the Prevent initiative. Staff have a professional duty to ensure they know the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

All staff must complete initial induction Level 1 Safeguarding training (via The Key) and read Part One of the current Keeping Children Safe in Education. Staff will also attend a safeguarding workshop to ensure they understand how to recognise, respond, record and report concerns in line with Hedgewood and local procedures.

Staff will also attend Safer Working Practices training to ensure understanding of responding to the needs of pupils in our specialist setting.

**Our Safeguarding and Child Protection and Whistleblowing policies and procedures are available in the staff room, on the website and from the school office. New staff are given copies on arrival.**

#### **4.1 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold**

This section is based on 'Section 1: Allegations that may meet the harm threshold' in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that anyone working in the school, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place inside or outside of school

We will deal with any such allegation quickly and in a fair and consistent way in line with advice from the LADO and our Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be the Headteacher/Deputy HT, or the chair of governors where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation.

#### **4.2 Low-level concerns about members of staff**

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harm threshold, is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt'. For example, this may include:

- Being over-friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Engaging in 1-to-1 activities where they can't easily be seen
- Humiliating pupils

Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy. We also encourage staff to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage staff to report it.

All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way.

Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed, and the staff member supported to correct it, at an early stage.

This creates and embeds a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff, while minimising the risk of abuse.

Reporting and responding to low-level concerns is covered in more detail in our child protection and safeguarding policy and attitudes towards pupil behaviours is comprehensively addressed in our Behaviour and Well-being policy and in Safer Working Practices induction training.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

### 4.3 Whistle-blowing

Whistle-blowing reports wrongdoing that it is “in the public interest” to report. Examples linked to safeguarding include:

- Pupils’ or staff’s health and safety being put in danger
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement
- Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest

Staff are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. Their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and their confidentiality will be respected.

Staff should consider the examples above when deciding whether their concern is of a whistle-blowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or school procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

Staff should report their concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead [DSL]. If the concern is about the DSL, or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the head teacher.

Concerns should be made in writing wherever possible. They should include names of those committing wrongdoing, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter.

For details, please refer to our Whistle-Blowing Policy.

## 5. Staff-pupil relationships

Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so. This will be in line with Safer Working Practices training.

If staff members and pupils must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place
- Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of school hours if possible.
- Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes social media profiles.
- Procedures are in line with our Intimate Care Policy

Staff should avoid social contact with pupils outside of school hours in the vast majority of instances unless contact has been agreed with the Headteacher. This is to ensure that any other outside work or activity could not be reasonably construed as to be in conflict with their employment.

Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils. **This includes all social media profiles and contacts.**

While we are aware many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school year, and that these gifts are not by way of currying favour or inducement this can only be to a value less than £30 otherwise these need to be declared to Customs and Excise and it is the recipient’s obligation to do so. We currently follow the policy that no gifts will be given from staff to pupils.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, this should be reported to their line manager, DSL or the head teacher.

SLT must be informed if staff are considering tutoring or supporting Hedgewood pupils outside of school. Careful consideration needs to be given as to how this may affect pupil, staff and parent relationships. Any engagement outside of school is not the responsibility of Hedgewood, but staff must be aware that welfare of pupils, confidentiality and the reputation of the school is a focus at all times.

## **6. Communication and social media**

School staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name, as pupils may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead, and set public profiles to private.

Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship. They will not make any efforts to find pupils' or parents' social media profiles.

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images or text online that identify children who are pupils at the school.

Staff should be aware of the school's E-safety policy, Social Media Policy and IT usage policy and as well as personal use, should follow all school protocols to ensure pupil safety when using technologies (both in and out of school). All these policies are available via the school office.

## **7. Acceptable use of technology**

Staff will not use technology in school to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.

Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school equipment for personal use, in school hours or in front of pupils. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils as per our use of mobile phone regulation and mobile phones can only be used in the staffroom at designated breaktimes. If a member of staff wears a smartwatch on school premises, they may only be used as a function to tell the time. All text and phone functions must be switched off throughout the day and may only be used in the staffroom on a designated breaktime.

As above staff should be aware of the school's E-safety policy, Social Media Policy and IT usage policy and as well as personal use, should follow all school protocols to ensure pupil safety when using technologies (both in and out of school).

The school retains the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system.

## **8. Confidentiality**

Staff must observe the requirement of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018. The law and the smooth functioning of the school requires that certain types of information that certain types of information are available to staff. All staff must exercise caution and care in releasing information beyond the school and if in any doubt should check with SLT.

Members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the school, staff, pupils and their parents.

This information will never be:

1. Disclosed to anyone without the relevant authority from SLT
2. Used to humiliate, embarrass, intimidate or seek to gain from others
3. Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

4. Be casually communicated in a public place e.g. On the bus; at the restaurant, at home in front of the listening children or on any telephonic or social media platform.
5. Bring the school and council into disrepute.

This does not overrule staff's duty to report safeguarding and child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child is at risk of harm.

## 9. Honesty and integrity

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities.

As above, gifts that are worth more than £30 must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register.

We expect all that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional expectations set out in The Teachers' Standards.

Staff will ensure that all personal information given to the school is correct. This should include:

- Background information (including any past or current investigations/cautions related to conduct outside of school)
- Qualifications and Professional experience

Where there are any updates to the information provided to the school, the member of staff will advise the school as such as soon as reasonably practicable. Consideration will then be given to the nature and circumstances of the matter and whether this may have an impact on the member of staff's employment.

## 10. Dress code

Staff will dress in a professional manner: smart, safe active wear and smart casual are good guidelines. It is important to give a good impression of ourselves and the school. Remember that we are meeting parents on a daily basis.

Outfits will not be overly revealing (including length of dresses, shoulder straps, necklines and length of shorts in summer). We ask that tattoos are covered up where possible.

Clothes will not display any offensive or political slogans.

Footwear must be sensible at all times, Shoes and boots should be flat or low heeled with a back and support your feet. Flip flops, high heels and open-toed sandals are not safe and put you and potentially others at risk.

Jewellery and piercings must not pose a risk to you or others and where possible earring studs, not hoops to worn. Staff should be mindful that raised and decorative rings may pose a danger to pupils. Our pupils can be impulsive.

Hand decoration must allow you to perform all aspects of your role safely e.g. whilst mehndi would not impede, false nails could pose a risk during pupil interactions and so all nails must be kept to a moderate length.

Your most obvious dress is what our pupils and parents see, so positive body language is key as are welcoming facial expressions that assist our pupils with their social understanding and our parents in developing confidence in the school.

SLT will advise if any inappropriate clothing is worn by a member of staff.

**PLEASE REFER TO THE DRESS CODE FOR DETAILED GUIDANCE OF SAFE, APPROPRIATE WEAR WHEN WORKING IN OUR VERY PRACTICAL SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT.**

## **11. Conduct outside of work**

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school, cause the school reputational damage or the teaching profession, into disrepute. This covers conduct including but not limited to relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school on social media.

## **12. Health and Safety at Work**

It is the responsibility of all staff to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and those who may be affected by anything they do at work. Employees must follow the H&S rules, codes and safe practices (e.g. direction on clothing jewellery, piercings footwear, body language tone etc.). Protective clothing must be worn by the school keeper, premises team and servery team as required by the job, likewise in any instance of manual handling.

## **13. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed and revised as needed and is approved by our Governing Board. The Headteacher and GB will ensure this code of conduct is implemented effectively, and will ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard children and deal with any concerns.

## **13. Links with other policies**

This policy links with our policies on:

1. Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
2. Social Media Policy
3. IT Usage policy
4. Gifts and Hospitality Policy
5. E-safety Policy
6. Behaviour and Safety Policy
7. Intimate Care Policy
8. Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
9. Whistleblowing Policy
10. Managing Attendance Policy
11. Special Leave Policy
12. Staff Disciplinary Procedures, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct. It also sets out examples of what we will deem as misconduct and gross misconduct
13. Staff Grievance Procedures