Bernards Heath Junior School

Code of Conduct

Policy Review (Statutory Policy)

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body or nominated committee on an annual basis.

Reviewed: **September 2026**

Due for school review: **September 2027** (to bring in line with HfL review)

Signature: .....
(on behalf of governing body)

Date.....

CHANGES: **Changes since previous version:**

Section 4.2 Added for additional clarity with regards to contact with ex-pupils

Section 5 – updated to reflect DfE guidance on 'Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force in schools'

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1. Introduction

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour that all employees and those acting on behalf of us are expected to observe. All staff are role models, and are in a unique position of influence, and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all pupils.

This Code of Conduct applies to all employees. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and it may be amended at any time.

In addition to this Code of Conduct, all employees engaged to work under Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Employment are required to adhere to the 'Teachers' Standards 2012', relation to this policy, Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct.

This Code helps all staff to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable, and regard should also be given to the disciplinary rules set out in the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure which may be found in the Staff Handbook. .

Staff should be aware that a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including but not limited to dismissal.

Where this policy requires an employee to disclose matters from their personal life we will consider the circumstances and context of each matter before determining whether any further action is required.

2. Principles

You are expected to familiarise yourselves and comply with all of our policies and procedures.

You must not undermine fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

All of you must attend work in accordance with their contract of employment and associated terms and conditions in relation to hours, days of work and holidays.

2.1. Setting an example

All of you set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils. Therefore, you must:

- avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.
- demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same.
- avoid putting yourselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

3. Safeguarding Pupils

You have a duty to have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education throughout your employment and abide by the duties placed upon you within this.

You have a duty to safeguard pupils from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect.

The duty to safeguard pupils includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil or colleague

to our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and/or Designated Senior Person (DSP).

Our DSL is Ms C Piggott, Headteacher. Our Deputy DSL's are Mrs Gilbert, Miss Honeybell and Mrs Nicholas. .

You have access to the Child Protection Policy and Whistleblowing Procedure which may be found in the Staff Handbook and on the T drive Compliance Pack 2627 and staff must be familiar with these documents.

You should treat pupils with respect and dignity and must not seriously demean or undermine pupils, their parents or carers, or colleagues.

You should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of pupils, embarrassing, or humiliating pupils, discriminating against or favouring pupils.

You must take reasonable care of pupils under your supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.

You should be aware that the management of any safeguarding concerns is dealt in accordance with the latest statutory guidance as detailed in Keeping Children Safe in Education and includes any allegations that meet the harm test and/or allegations considered to be low level concerns. (i. e those which do not meet the harm test).

3.1. Low Level Concerns

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the harm test threshold.

A low-level concern is any concern that an adult working in or on behalf of us may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work.
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are 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
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating, or offensive language.

4. Relationships

You must declare any relationships that you may have with pupils, staff, clients, contractors supplies or parents outside of work. This may include mutual membership of social groups, tutoring, and/or family connections.

Existing or new personal relationships at work between colleagues should be declared to the line manager where there is a potential for this to impact upon the work of either (for example: a risk of allegations of bias or conflict of interest). The line manager will treat declarations in confidence in accordance with the Relationships at Work Policy.

You should not assume that we are aware of any such connections and should use Appendix 2 and/or 3 to make a declaration.

4.1. Relationships with pupils

Relationships with pupils must be professional at all times. Physical relationships with pupils are not permitted and may lead to a criminal conviction.

Encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which may lead to a sexual relationship, or any other inappropriate relationship will be viewed as a grave breach of trust.

Contact with pupils must be via our-authorised mechanisms and solely for educational purposes. At no time should a personal telephone number, text, email addresses or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with pupils.

If contacted by a pupil by an inappropriate route, you should report the contact to your line manager immediately.

Behaviour giving rise to concern should also be reported which includes pupils seeking affection, being sexually provocative or exhibiting overly familiar behaviour.

If you are a parent of a child in school, it is understood that you will come into contact with students and parents outside of work, we would expect you to use your discretion and maintain appropriate relationships at all times.

4.2 Contact with Ex-Pupils

The expectations of this Code of conduct extends to ex-pupils, particularly where individuals are under the age of 18 or have only recently left the school. Staff must not use their position, or the knowledge and influence gained through their role, to establish or pursue personal, social, or inappropriate relationships with ex-pupils. Such behaviour may constitute a breach of trust and professional boundaries, even where the pupil is no longer on roll, and may undermine professional integrity and public confidence in the school.

Staff should be mindful that relationships with ex-pupils can still be open to scrutiny, particularly where a perceived power imbalance remains or where contact could reasonably be viewed as grooming or exploitative behaviour. Where there is any uncertainty about the appropriateness of contact, staff must seek advice from their line manager or the DSL before engaging.

If a member of staff becomes aware that they, or another member of staff, has had contact with a pupil or ex-pupil that may be inappropriate, or could be perceived as a breach of professional boundaries, this must be reported immediately to the Headteacher, line manager, or DSL in line with safeguarding and whistleblowing procedures.

5. Pupil Wellbeing and Development

You must adhere to all policies and procedures that promote the wellbeing and development of pupils, including those relating to safeguarding and the appropriate use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable use of force as set out in the DfE guidance Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force in schools.

Any restrictive intervention must only be used where it is necessary, proportionate, and for the minimum time required to protect the safety of pupils or others and must never be used as a punishment.

You must work collaboratively with colleagues and, where appropriate, with external agencies to ensure that pupils' needs are met and their development is effectively supported.

You must follow reasonable and lawful instructions that are intended to safeguard pupils and support their wellbeing, safety and development.

You must promptly and accurately report any incidents, concerns or use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force in accordance with the school's reporting procedures and statutory guidance, including statutory duties relating to the recording and reporting of significant incidents.

6. Honesty and Integrity

You must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of our property and facilities.

All of you must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be found guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they:

- offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone
- if they request, agree or accept, or receive a bribe from another person.

If you believe that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act, you should refer to the Whistleblowing procedure which may be found in the Staff Handbook and on the Tdrive Compliance Pack 2627.

For Hertfordshire schools, for further information see the HCC Anti Bribery Policy for Schools available on The Grid.

Gifts from suppliers or associates must be declared to the line manager/Headteacher, with the exception of one off "token" gifts from pupils or parents.

Personal gifts from individual members of staff to pupils are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted and may lead to disciplinary action. A record will be kept of all gifts received.

You must not act on behalf of us unless they have the authority to do so.

Professional references from us will be provided by the relevant person with delegated authority. References or endorsements on social media given by other members of staff must be clear that they are provided in a personal capacity.

7. Conduct outside of Work

You must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation of us or your own reputation or the reputation of other members of our community.

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education, any conduct or behaviour that indicates you may not be suitable to work with children including such behaviour outside of the workplace which may or may not involve children is likely to be regarded as unacceptable.

For example, should a member of staff be involved in domestic violence at home and no children were involved, we will need to consider what triggered these actions and question whether a child could trigger the same reaction, therefore be put at risk.

In addition, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable where it brings into question an employee's suitability or ability to do their role/work in an educational setting.

You may undertake additional work, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with our interests, nor be to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance at work. It is recommended that permission is sought in advance.

- you must disclose any additional work or outside business interests where there is a potential conflict of interests with your employment with us.
- if any allegation of wrongdoing occurs in your additional place of work (whether or not you deny this) which may have a bearing on your employment, they must disclose this immediately to the Headteacher or their line manager.

Forming inappropriate relationships or friendships with children or young people who are pupils under the age of 18 at another school/college will be viewed as inappropriate and impact upon our ability to trust you to maintain professional boundaries with pupils.

Any work-related social event is considered to be an extension of the workplace and as such the standards of behaviour expected at these events is in line with this policy.

8. E-Safety and Internet Use

You must exercise caution at all times both inside and outside of work when using information technology. You should be aware of the risks to yourselves and others.

You must not engage in inappropriate use of social media sites which may bring yourselves, us, our community or us into disrepute. You should ensure that you adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles you may have.

You should exercise caution in your use of all social media use. This includes creating, endorsing, liking, posting, retweeting, sharing direct messaging or sending any statements, photo's, videos, audios, or messages. This also includes speaking and/or lip syncing to other creators' content and any music used.

This may also include the use of dating websites where you could encounter pupils either with their own profile or acting covertly.

Contact with pupils should only made via the use of our email accounts or telephone equipment when appropriate and strictly for educational reasons.

Photographs or video footage of pupils should only be taken using our equipment, for purposes authorised by us. Any such use should always be transparent and only occur where parental consent has been given. The resultant files from such recording or taking of photographs must be stored in accordance with our procedures on our equipment.

Further details on this can be found in the Online Safety Policy and Acceptable User Agreements, and Social Media Policy which may be found in the Staff Handbook and on the T drive Compliance Pack 2627 and staff must be familiar with these documents. *Please note that the Online Safety Policy is now incorporated into section 11.*

Confidentiality

Where you have access to confidential information about pupils or their parents or carers, you must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil.

All of you may at some point witness actions or events which need to be confidential.

For example, where a pupil is bullied by another pupil (or by a member of staff / colleague), once reported through our appropriate procedure, it must not be discussed outside, including with other staff, pupils, parents, or carers, except with the appropriate member of staff to deal with the matter.

You have an obligation to share with your manager or our Designated Senior Person any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a pupil. You must not promise a pupil that you will not act on information that you are told by them.

You are not allowed to make any comment to the media about us, its performance, governance, pupils, or parents without written approval. Any media queries should be directed to the Headteacher or designated person.

9. Dress and Appearance

You must dress in a manner that is appropriate to your role and promote a professional image, not casual wear.

You should dress in a manner that is absent from political or other contentious slogans. If clothing has wording or pictures on it, this should not be offensive. Footwear should not pose a health and safety risk.

Where you are transitioning to live in the gender with which you identify, we will apply and adapt this code sensitively and flexibly.

We understand that there may be circumstances that make it difficult for some of you to follow a code (for example, if you have a disability or are experiencing certain menopausal symptoms). If this is the case, we will discuss this with you on how we can support you and make reasonable adjustments where possible.

We have the final say on whether clothing and appearance is appropriate.

10.Compliance

All of you must complete the form in appendix 1 to confirm you have read, understood, and agreed to comply with the code of conduct. This form should then be signed and dated on an annual basis.

You should be aware that a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including but not limited to dismissal. Please see our disciplinary policy for further information.

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11.Appendix 1- Confirmation of compliance

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood, and agree to comply with our code of conduct.

Full Name

_____

Current Position

_____

Signed by _____

Date _____

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the SBM.

12. Appendix 2 - Relationships with pupils outside of work declaration

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby you are known to pupils outside of work.

You must declare any relationship outside of the work that you may have with pupils.

Employee Name	Pupil Name	Relationship

I can confirm that I am fully aware of the code of conduct relating to contact out of work with pupils in line with this policy.

If I am tutoring a pupil outside of work, I am aware that the following must be adhered to:

- I do not, at any point, teach the child in question as part of my daily timetable - this is a stipulation of such tutoring.
- I emphasise to parents that this is done completely independently of work.
- no monies come through work at any point, either informally (e.g., via the pupil) or formally
- no private tutoring has/will take place on work premises.

I confirm that if these circumstances change at any time, I will complete a new form to ensure that you are aware of any relationships.

Full Name

_____

Current Position

_____

Signed by _____

Date _____

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the SBM.

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13.Appendix 3 - Relationships outside of work declaration

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby you are known to others connected with us outside of work.

You must declare any relationship outside of work that they may have with others that could create a conflict of interest.

Employee Name	3rd party name	Relationship

I can confirm that I am fully aware of the code of conduct and relationships at work policy, and I am not in breach of these.

I confirm that if these circumstances change at any time, I will complete a new form to ensure that you are aware of any relationships.

Full Name

_____

Current Position

_____

Signed by _____

Date _____

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the SBM.