



# RICKMANSWORTH SCHOOL

## Code of Professional Conduct Policy

Version:	5.1
Version Author:	Matt Fletcher
Version Ratified By:	Full Governing Body
Date Version Ratified:	October 2020
Governor's Lead:	Geoff Cox
SLT's Lead	Matt Fletcher
Date this version issued:	October 2020
Last Review Date:	November 2019
Next Review Date:	October 2023
Target Audience:	Governors, Staff
To Be Published on The Website	No

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## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose**

This Code of Conduct Policy is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school employees are expected to observe at all times.

A reference copy of this document is kept on the shared drive and it will be brought to the attention of all members of staff.

### **Review Process**

This document will be reviewed in accordance with our policy review process every 3 years or on the introduction of new or amended relevant legislation. .



**Tony Walker**  
**CHAIR OF GOVERNORS**



**Matthew Fletcher**  
**HEADTEACHER**

## **Objective, Scope and Principles**

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school employees are expected to observe. School employees are role models, and are in a unique position of influence, and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the students within the school. As a member of a school community, each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside working hours.

This Code of Conduct applies to all employees of the school. 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 have a statutory obligation to adhere to the 'Teachers' Standards 2012' and in 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, regard should also be given to the disciplinary rules set out in the Schools' Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. Staff should be aware that a failure to comply with the School's Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including but not limited to dismissal.

### **1. Setting an Example**

- 1.1 All staff who work in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by students. Staff must therefore for example avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.
- 1.2 All staff must, therefore, demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our students to do the same.
- 1.3 All staff must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.
- 1.4 All staff are expected to familiarise themselves and comply with all school policies and procedures.

### **2. Safeguarding Students**

- 2.1 Staff have a duty to have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education throughout their employment and abide by the duties placed upon them within this

- 2.2 Staff have a duty to safeguard students from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect
- 2.3 The duty to safeguard students includes the duty to report concerns about a Student or colleague to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The school's DSL is Mr Christopher Hambleton and the School has a number of Deputy DSL's.
- 2.4 Staff have access to the school's Child Protection Policy and Whistleblowing Procedure and staff must be familiar with these documents.
- 2.5 Staff should treat students with respect and dignity and must not seriously demean or undermine students, their parents or carers, or colleagues.
- 2.6 Staff should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of students, embarrassing or humiliating students, discriminating against or favouring students.
- 2.7 Staff must take reasonable care of students under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.

### **3. Relationships with Students**

- 3.1 Staff must declare any relationships that they may have with students outside of school; this may include mutual membership of social groups, tutoring, or family connections. Staff should not assume that the school is aware of any such connections. A declaration form may be found in appendix 1 of this document.
- 3.2 Relationships with students must be professional at all times. Physical relationships with students are not permitted and may lead to a criminal conviction.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 Contact with students must be via school-authorized mechanisms and solely for educational purposes. At no time should personal telephone numbers, text, email addresses or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with students.

- 3.5 If contacted by a student by an inappropriate route, staff should report the contact to their Line Manager immediately.
- 3.6 Behaviour giving rise to concern should also be reported which includes students seeking affection, being sexually provocative or exhibiting overly familiar behaviour.
- 3.7 Existing or new personal relationships at work should be declared to the Line Manager. The Line Manager will treat declarations in confidence.
- 3.8 Staff should inform their Line Manager of any relationships which may create an enhanced risk to children so that necessary steps can be taken by the School e.g. cohabitation with a person convicted of a serious offence.

#### **4. Student Development**

- 4.1 Staff must comply with school policies and procedures that support the wellbeing and development of students.
- 4.2 Staff must cooperate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of students.
- 4.3 Staff must follow reasonable instructions that support the development of students.

#### **5. Honesty and Integrity**

- 5.1 Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.
- 5.2 All staff must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or 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 school's Whistleblowing procedure.
- 5.3 Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to the Headteacher, with the exception of "one off" token gifts from students or parents. Personal gifts from individual members of staff to students are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted and may lead to disciplinary action. A

record will be kept of all gifts received. Please refer to the School's Gifts & Hospitality Policy for more detail about the acceptance of gifts and avoidance of bribery.

5.4 Staff must not act on behalf of the school unless they have the authority to do so.

5.5 Professional references from the school will be provided by the Headteacher. References given by other members of staff must be clear that they are provided in a personal capacity.

## **6. Conduct outside of Work**

6.1 Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation of the school or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.

6.2 In particular, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable.

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

- Staff must disclose any work outside school or outside business interests where there is a potential conflict of interests with their employment at the school.
- If any allegation of wrongdoing occurs in a staff member's work outside school (whether or not they deny this) which may have a bearing on their employment they must disclose this immediately to the Headteacher or their Line Manager.
- Staff are advised to consult the School's Private Tutoring Policy before engaging in private tutoring work.

6.4 Forming inappropriate relationships or friendships with children or young people who are students under the age of 18 at another school/college will be viewed as inappropriate and impact upon the school's ability to trust the member of staff to maintain professional boundaries with students at the school.

6.5 A 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. For the avoidance of doubt, this includes the annual Staff Conference evening event.

## **7. E-Safety and Internet Use**

- 7.1 Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Regard should be given to the school's e-Safety Agreement and Acceptable Use of ICT policy at all times both inside and outside of work.
- 7.2 Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social media sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute. Staff should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have.
- 7.3 Staff should exercise caution in their use of all social media or any other web based presence that they may have, including written content, videos or images/photographs, and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts established by others. This may also include the use of dating websites where staff could encounter students either with their own profile or when acting covertly.
- 7.4 Contact with students should only be made via the use of school email accounts when appropriate and strictly for educational reasons.
- 7.5 Photographs or video footage of students should only be taken using school equipment, for purposes authorised by the school. 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 the school's procedures on school equipment. Exceptions to this expectation should be sought from the member of staff's SLT Line Manager.

## **8. Confidentiality**

- 8.1 Where staff have access to confidential information about students or their parents or carers, staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the student.
- 8.2 All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a student is bullied by another student (or by a member of staff), this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate school procedure. It must not be discussed outside the school, including with the student's parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the school except with a senior member of staff with the appropriate authority to deal with the matter.



8.3 However, staff have an obligation to share with their manager or the school's Designated Senior Person any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a student. Staff must not promise a student that they will not act on information that they are told by the student.

8.4 Staff are not allowed to make any comment to the media about the school, its performance, governance, students or parents without written approval. Any media queries should be directed to the Headteacher.

## **9. Dress and Appearance**

9.1 All staff must dress in a manner that is appropriate to their role and promote a professional image.

9.2 Staff should dress in a manner that is not offensive, revealing or sexually provocative.

9.3 Staff should dress in a manner that is absent from political or other contentious slogans.

## **10. COVID-19**

Staff must follow all the instructions and guidance in the [COVID-19 Arrangements - Staff Briefing](#) document. This document is updated periodically as guidance changes and is an essential part of the School's COVID risk management strategy.

## **11. Disciplinary Action**

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

## **12. Compliance**

All new staff must complete the form provided by HR to confirm they have read, understood and agreed to comply with the Code of Conduct. This form should then be signed and dated.

## **PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Employees of the school have a duty to report any e-Safety incident which may impact on you, your professionalism or the school.

When using any form of ICT, including the Internet, in school and outside school

**For your own protection and well-being we advise that you:**

- Ensure all electronic communication with students, parents, carers, staff and others is compatible with your professional role and in line with school policies;
- Do not talk about your professional role in any capacity when using social media;
- Do not put online any text, image, sound or video that could upset or offend any member of the whole school community or be incompatible with your professional role;
- Use school ICT systems and resources for all school business. This includes your school email address, school phone and school camera. The School's ICT system should only be used for School-related matters and not for personal matters;
- Do not disclose any passwords and ensure that personal data (such as data held on MIS software) is kept secure and used appropriately;
- Only take images of students and/or staff for professional purposes, in accordance with school policy and with the knowledge of the School's Leadership Team;
- Do not browse, download, upload or distribute any material that could be considered offensive, illegal or discriminatory;
- Ensure that your online activity, both in school and outside school, will not bring the school or professional role into disrepute;
- Check emails daily as a minimum (on working days) or every other day if one day is particularly busy.
- Ensure that all email and other digital correspondence is polite, professional and courteous at all times.

## Appendix 1

### Relationships with students outside of work declaration

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby employees of the school are known to students outside of work. Examples include membership of sports clubs, family connections, or private tutoring.

Staff must declare any relationship outside of school that they may have with students.

Employee Name	Student Name	Relationship

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

If I am tutoring a student outside of school 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 the school
- No monies come through the school at any point, informally (e.g. via the child) or formally
- No private tutoring is to take place on the school premises

I confirm that if these circumstances change at any time I will complete a new form to ensure the school is aware of any relationships.

Signed .....

Date .....

**Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Headteacher**