



Staff Behaviour Code of Conduct Policy

Implementation Date: August 2015

Date / Term of last review: Michaelmas Term 2025

The review date of this Policy has been updated to reflect the annual review date for KCSIE regulations. This policy applies to the whole school, including the EYFS.

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Next Review Date:	Michaelmas Term 2026

For office use only:

Website	Required	✓
Internal Staff purposes only		

1. Aims and objectives

- 1.1. The aim of this policy is to provide clear guidance about staff behaviour and actions so as not to place pupils or staff at risk of harm or allegations of harm to a pupil. This policy aligns with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2023 and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2025.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. This policy sets out clear guidance on the standards of behaviour expected from all staff at Oakwood School. The principles underlying the guidance aim to encourage staff to achieve the highest possible standards of conduct and minimise the risk of inappropriate conduct occurring.
- 2.2. School staff are in a unique position of trust and influence as role models for pupils. Therefore, staff must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all pupils within the school at all times.
- 2.3. Staff also have an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, both inside and outside working hours and work setting.
- 2.4. This policy applies to all staff and volunteers in the school regardless of their position, role or responsibility. References to 'staff' throughout the policy relate to all of the following groups:
 - All members of staff including teaching and support staff
 - Volunteers, including governors
 - Casual workers and visitors
 - Temporary and supply staff, either from agencies or engaged directly
 - Student placements, including those undertaking initial teacher training and apprentices.
- 2.5. Oakwood School requires that all staff have read and agree to comply with this policy.
- 2.6. Breach or failure to observe this policy will result in action being taken under the school disciplinary procedures including, but not limited to, dismissal.
- 2.7. This code of conduct is not an exhaustive list of acceptable and unacceptable standards of behaviour. In situations where guidance does not exist in this policy staff are expected to exercise their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the pupils and the school.

3. Professional Behaviour and Conduct

- 3.1. Staff are expected to demonstrate the highest possible standards of personal and professional conduct and behaviour and consistently act with honesty and integrity. Oakwood School expects staff to treat each other, pupils, parents and the wider community with dignity and respect at all times.
- 3.2. Staff must act in accordance with their duty of care to pupils and ensure that the safety, respect and welfare of pupils are accorded the highest priority. Staff need to ensure that their behaviour does not inadvertently lay them open to allegations of abuse.
- 3.3. Staff should show fairness in their treatment of children and avoid behaviours such as embarrassing or humiliating pupils, making jokes at the expense of pupils, discriminating against or favouring pupils, sarcasm or promoting political indoctrination.
- 3.4. Staff must have regard for the ethos and values of the school and must not do or say anything which may bring the school or governing body into disrepute. Care should be taken by staff to avoid any conflict of interest between activities undertaken outside school and responsibilities within school. Staff should act in accordance with the school's policies and procedures at all times.

4. Dress and Personal Appearance

- 4.1. Oakwood School recognises that dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self expression. However, all staff must dress in a manner that is appropriate and smart to a professional role and that promotes a professional image.
- 4.2. Staff should dress in a manner that is not offensive, revealing or sexually provocative and in a manner that is absent from political or contentious slogans.
- 4.3. Staff should dress safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake.
- 4.4. Tattoos and body art should be covered while staff are in school as best as able yet this is not a formal requirement; where tattoos and body art are visible staff must ensure they are in line with 4.1. and 4.2. Of this policy. Discreet piercings are acceptable.

5. Mobility and Flexibility

- 5.1. Due to the demands and nature of the school, staff should be prepared to transfer upon request within departments either temporarily or permanently, to undertake work of a different nature, providing it is reasonable and safe to do so and the staff member is adequately trained.

6. Relationships and Communications with Pupils including the use of Social Media

- 6.1. Staff should maintain professional boundaries with pupils appropriate to their position and must always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably. Staff should act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to question their actions or intent. Staff should think carefully about their conduct so that misinterpretations are minimised. Where possible, a gap or barrier should be maintained between teacher and child at all times.
- 6.2. Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship whether in person or through any technological platform. If a young person seeks to establish social contact you should handle professionally, making it clear in a sensitive way, that it is not appropriate. You should exercise your professional judgement when making a response and be aware that such social contact could be misconstrued. You may also use your professional judgement on whether it is necessary to contact the DSL or DSO for advice.
- 6.3. Staff should not develop personal or sexual relationships with pupils and should not engage in any sexual activity with a pupil. Sexual activity does not just involve physical contact including penetrative and non-penetrative acts.
- 6.4. Working Together To Safeguard Children 2023 defines sexual abuse as, 'forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).
- 6.5. Staff should be mindful of section 16 of The Sexual Offences Act 2003 and Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children in Schools and Colleges, KSCIE 2025, being clear regarding 'Child on Child' abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.
- 6.6. Staff should not make sexual remarks to a pupil, discuss their own sexual relationships with, or

in the presence of, pupils or discuss a pupil's sexual relationships in an inappropriate setting or context.

- 6.7. Contact with pupils should be authorised through Oakwood School's SLT. Personal phone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via all social media platforms should not be used and staff should not share their home address with pupils. If contacted via an inappropriate route the member of staff should inform the Headteacher and DSL immediately.
- 6.8. Oakwood School Staff must not accept friend invitations or become friends with any pupil of Oakwood School on any social media platform or use social media to communicate with pupils. Staff should also refrain from following the social media accounts of pupils or their parents. Staff should read the school's E-Safety Policy carefully and follow all advice and guidance contained within it.
- 6.9. Electronic communications with pupils: All staff must adhere to the E-Safety Policy for staff obligations in relation to electronic communications with pupils. Staff will undertake regular training on E-Safety.

7. Infatuations

- 7.1. It is not unusual for pupils or, sometimes, their parents to develop infatuations towards members of staff. All such situations must be responded to professionally and sensitively to maintain the dignity of those concerned. Staff concerns should be raised promptly and directly with DSL.
- 7.2. Staff should also be aware that such circumstances carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against staff. Any indications of an infatuation towards yourself or another member of staff should be reported to your DSL.

8. Gifts/Hospitality

- 8.1. Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift/offer of hospitality that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. However, there may be occasions where pupils or parents wish to give a small token of appreciation to staff, for example at religious festivities or at the end of term/the academic year.
- 8.2. It is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or to suggest to pupils that gifts are appropriate or desired. Money should not be accepted as a gift. If you are unsure whether to accept a gift you should consult the Headteacher.
- 8.3. Staff should not accept significant gifts or hospitality from pupils, parents, carers, actual or potential contractors or outside suppliers. All such gifts/offers of hospitality should be reported to your line manager and recorded. Personal gifts should not be given by staff to pupils and any reward to pupils should be in accordance with Oakwood School's behaviour policy, recorded and not based on favouritism.

9. Physical Contact with Pupils

- 9.1. There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. A 'no touch' approach is impractical for most staff and may in some circumstances be inappropriate. When physical contact is made with pupils it should be in response to their needs at that time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Staff should use their professional judgement at all times.
- 9.2. Where feasible, staff should seek the child's permission before initiating contact. Staff should listen, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and, so far as is possible, use a level of contact which is acceptable to the child for the minimum time necessary. A member of

staff can never take the place of a parent in providing physical comfort and should be cautious of any demonstrations of affection.

- 9.3. It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. Staff should therefore, use their professional judgement at all times.
- 9.4. 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. Staff should never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent. Always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny. Staff should not engage in rough play, tickling or fun fights with pupils.
- 9.5. Extra caution should be exercised where a child is known to have suffered previous abuse or neglect. Such experiences may sometimes make a child exceptionally needy and demanding of physical contact and staff should respond sensitively by deterring the child through helping them to understand the importance of personal boundaries.
- 9.6. Physical contact should never be secretive, for the gratification of the adult or represent a misuse of authority.
- 9.7. If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported to your line manager, recorded and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the child's file.
- 9.8. Staff should refer to Oakwood School's Use of Reasonable Force and Supporting Pupils with Medical Need and Intimate Care Policies.

10. Physical Education and other activities requiring physical contact

- 10.1. Where exercises and procedures need to be demonstrated, extreme caution should be used if the demonstration involves contact with pupils and, wherever possible, contact should be avoided. It is acknowledged that some staff, for example those who teach PE and games, or who offer music tuition, will on occasions, have to initiate physical contact with pupils in order to support a pupil so they can perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument or assist them with an exercise. This should be done with the pupils' agreement.

11. Child in distress

- 11.1. There may be occasions when a pupil is in distress and in need of comfort as a 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.
- 11.2. Such incidents should always be recorded and shared with your line manager. If you have a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance you should seek further advice from your line manager.

12. Showers and changing

- 12.1. Pupils are entitled to respect and privacy whilst they are changing after PE/games or swimming. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard young people, meet health and safety requirements and to ensure that bullying does not take place. The supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the pupils and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment. Oakwood School does not have pupil and staff shower facilities.
- 12.2. Staff should be vigilant about their own behaviour and announce their intention of entering a

changing room. Staff should not change in the same place as children.

13. One to one situations (including tuition)

- 13.1. Staff working individually with pupils should be aware of the potential vulnerability of pupils and staff in such situations. Staff should manage these situations with regard to the safety of the pupil and to themselves.
- 13.2. Individual work with pupils should not be undertaken in isolated areas or rooms where there is no external viewing panel. Where it is necessary to close doors for reasons of confidentiality a colleague should be made aware of this and asked to remain vigilant and be transferred to a room with a viewing panel.

14. Transporting pupils

- 14.1. In certain circumstances it may be appropriate for staff to transport pupils offsite, for example sports fixtures, swimming lessons or other out of school activities. A designated member of staff should be appointed to plan and provide oversight of all transport arrangements and to respond to any difficulties that may arise.
- 14.2. Where possible, staff should not transport or accompany pupils off-site using their own vehicle and at least one adult additional to the driver should act as an escort. Staff should never transport an individual pupil alone. If there are exceptional circumstances that make unaccompanied transportation of pupils unavoidable, the journey should be known to the DSL and SLT.
- 14.3. Staff should ensure that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. Staff should ensure that the driver has the appropriate license for the vehicle, that the vehicle is roadworthy, has a valid MOT certificate and is appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.
- 14.4. Staff should ensure that the driver is not distracted while the vehicle is in motion for any reason other than an emergency and should also ensure all passengers are wearing correctly fastened seat belts. Staff should never transport pupils while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- 14.5. Prior to transporting pupils off-site consent must be obtained from a pupils' parent and staff should be aware that the safety and welfare of the pupils is their responsibility until this is safely passed back to their parents.

15. E-Safety - Acceptable Use of Technologies

- 15.1. Staff should follow Oakwood School's E-Safety Policy and the Oakwood School ICT Procedures at all times. Staff should have regard for Oakwood School's E-Safety Policy for pupils and have signed the school's Mobile Device Policy agreement.
- 15.2. Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school or the school community into disrepute. Staff should adopt the highest security settings on any personal profiles they have.
- 15.3. Staff should remain mindful of their digital footprint and exercise caution in all their use of social media or any other web based presence they have. This includes written content, videos or photographs and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts or following certain individuals or groups. Staff should exercise care when using dating websites where staff could encounter students.
- 15.4. In line with this policy, staff should not make contact with pupils, should not accept or initiate friend requests nor follow pupils accounts on any social media platform. Staff should not communicate with pupils via social media, websites, instant messenger accounts or text

messages, with the exception of school related Google applications.

16. Mobile Phones

- 16.1. Staff should refer to the School's *Mobile Devices (including Mobile Cameras) Policy for Staff, Governors, Volunteers and Visitors*; and the *Taking, Storing and using images of children policies*.
- 16.2. Mobile phones and personally-owned devices may not be used during lessons or formal school time. They should be switched off (or silent) at all times and be placed in bags or desk drawers. Mobile phones and personal devices are not permitted to be used in certain areas within the school site such as changing rooms and toilets. All personal devices and phones must have appropriate passcodes/biometric recognition for security and limiting access. (Reference: Mobile Device Policy)
- 16.3. Mobile phones and personally-owned mobile devices brought into school are the responsibility of the device owner. Oakwood School accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of personally owned mobile phones or mobile devices.

17. Photography, video and images of children

- 17.1. Many school activities involve recording images as part of the curriculum, extra school activities, publicity or to celebrate an achievement. In accordance with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018, the image of a pupil is personal data. Therefore, it is a requirement under the Act for consent to be obtained from the parent/guardian of a pupil for any images made. It is also important to take into account the wishes of the pupil, remembering that some pupils do not wish to have their photograph taken or be filmed.
- 17.2. Using images for publicity purposes will require the age-appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their parents. Images should not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without their consent. Staff should also be clear about the purpose of the activity and what will happen to the photographs/images/video footage when the lesson or activity is concluded.
- 17.3. Photographs or video footage of pupils when on site, and at all times in EYFS, should only be taken using school equipment for purposes authorised by the school and should be stored securely and only on school equipment. There may be exceptional circumstances where a staff member takes photographs of children on their personal device, when away from the school site on trips, visits and sporting events. These photographs should be transferred to the school shared drive and deleted from the personal devices as soon as is practicable.
- 17.4. Staff should remain aware of the potential for images of pupils to be misused to create indecent images of children and/or for grooming purposes. Therefore, careful consideration should be given to how activities which are being filmed or photographed are organised and undertaken. Particular care should be given when filming or photographing young or vulnerable pupils who may be unable to question how or why the activities are taking place. Staff should also be mindful that pupils who have been abused through the use of video or photography may feel threatened by its use in a teaching environment.

18. Confidentiality

- 18.1. Staff members should never give absolute guarantees of confidentiality to pupils or adults wishing to tell them about something serious. They should guarantee only that they will pass on information to the minimum number of people who must be told in order to ensure that the proper action is taken to sort out the problem and that they will not tell anyone who does not have a clear need to know. They will also take whatever steps they can to protect the information pupil or adult from any retaliation or unnecessary stress that might be feared after a disclosure has been made.

- 18.2. Members of staff may have access to confidential information about pupils, their parents or their siblings. Staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil.
- 18.3. Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil or her/his family for their own, or others' advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other organisations). Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the pupil.
- 18.4. All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a pupil is bullied by another pupil, 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 pupil/student's parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the school except by a senior member of staff with the appropriate authority to deal with the matter.
- 18.5. Staff have a statutory obligation to share with Oakwood School's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) any information which gives rise to concern about the welfare or safety of a pupil or that might suggest a pupil is in need or at risk of significant harm. Staff should pass on information without delay in accordance with Oakwood School's safeguarding policy and procedures and this should be recorded. Staff must never promise a pupil that they will not act on or pass on any information that they are told by the pupil.
- 18.6. Staff should refer to the DfE document, 'Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers' for further guidance on information sharing. If you are in any doubt about whether to share you should seek guidance from a member of the senior leadership team.
- 18.7. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the senior leadership team and only approved staff and Governors should communicate to the media about the school.

19. Whistleblowing

- 19.1. Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, without fear of repercussion.
- 19.2. All school staff have a duty to report any behaviour by a colleague which raises concern. Staff should refer to the 'Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy', 'Low Level Concerns Policy' and the school's Staff Policy Handbook Whistleblowing Policy' for further guidance. This is particularly important where the welfare of pupils may be at risk.
- 19.3. The School wishes to foster a culture of openness and safety and the school's Whistleblowing Procedure reflects this. Should any member of staff have any concerns about the behaviour of another member of staff towards a pupil, he or she should report it at once to the Head (or to the Chairman of Governors where the concern relates to the Head or a governor). Any concern will be thoroughly investigated under the school's whistle-blowing procedures. Such reporting will be without prejudice to the member of staff's position in the school. Where there are allegations of criminal activity, the LADO (or DO) will always be informed, and advice taken, before the school undertakes any investigation of its own. Wherever possible, and subject to the rights of the pupil, the member of staff will be informed of the outcome of the investigation. No one who reports a genuine concern in good faith needs to fear retribution. Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 the member of staff may be entitled to raise a concern directly with an external body where the circumstances justify it.

20. Equal Treatment

- 20.1. We are committed to equal treatment of pupils regardless of sex, sexuality, race, caste, disability, religion or belief. We keep a record of disciplinary incidents.

- 20.2. We aim to create a friendly, caring and perceptive environment in which every individual is valued. We endeavour to contribute positively towards the growing autonomy, self-esteem and safety of each pupil. Our staff undertake regular consultation activities with our pupils e.g. through safety questionnaires, participation in anti-bullying week and speaking to children about their experiences at lunchtime and playtimes.

21. Bullying

- 21.1. Bullying, harassment and victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat our pupils, staff and our parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. Any kind of bullying including cyber-bullying is unacceptable and the school keeps a record of any incidents. Please see our school policy on anti-bullying for further details. Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh' or 'part of growing up'. Bullying is taken seriously.

22. Compliance

- 22.1. All new staff must complete the form in Appendix 1 to confirm they have read, understood and agree to comply with this policy. This form should be signed and dated and a copy retained on the member of staff's file.

23. Daily Conduct Requirements for Staff

23.1. Attendance and Timekeeping

All staff are expected to be prompt and keep to time, ensuring that at the start of the day staff are ready to greet pupils and parents appropriately. Should a staff member need to be absent or expect to be late for any reason, he/she should communicate with the Head of Routines and Logistics and/or another member of the Senior Leadership Team in advance and as soon as possible via email: SLT@oakwoodschool.co.uk. If staff are absent due to illness they are asked to communicate with SLT daily, and in advance of the next day, to ensure that staff cover can be arranged effectively and in a timely fashion.

23.2. Eating and Drinking

All lunches should be eaten by staff in the dining room or in allocated areas such as staffrooms or Little Oaks; meals should not be eaten in classrooms. Hot drinks may be consumed in the outdoor spaces but only if in a drinking vessel with a secure lid.

23.3. Smoking

To promote a healthy and pleasant working environment and because of the fire risk, smoking (in any form, including the use of e-cigarettes) is not allowed anywhere on site.

23.4. Alcohol and Illegal Drugs

Consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs is not permitted on site save where, in the case of alcohol, at a school function or otherwise agreed when modest amounts of alcohol may be consumed. This also includes residential trips. Employees' conduct and performance must not be adversely impacted by alcohol or drugs when undertaking their duties. Staff that reside on site may consume modest quantities of alcohol at private events held at school when they are not on duty.

23.5. Security

In the interests of security, employees must use the electronic sign in and out app on their mobile device and must carry their identity card whilst in school and produce it on request. Staff are able to provide their car registration details to the school to allow automatic entry onto the school site when the barrier is down. The school reserves the right to search the outer clothing, bags, lockers and vehicles etc. of staff members whilst on site. The staff member may have a colleague in attendance on such (rare) occasions.

Appendix 1: Confirmation of compliance



I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with Oakwood School's Staff Code of Conduct Policy

Name:

Position/Post Held:

Signed:

Date:

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).