



HARVINGTON PREP SCHOOL

(including the EYFS)

Staff Code of Conduct

Staff Code of Conduct

Staff, visitors and volunteers at Harvington Preparatory School must be mindful that they hold a position of trust and that their behaviour towards the children in their charge must be above reproach. The interests of our children are of prime consideration. The term staff will be used throughout this document but will also include visitors and volunteers.

This code of conduct sets out key principles for the creation and maintenance of a safe school culture. It cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for staff. However, it does highlight behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable in relation to children. There will be occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or take action in the best interests of the child where no specific guidance has been given. Adults are expected to make responsible and informed judgements about their own behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the children in their charge.

OBJECTIVES OF A SAFE SCHOOL CULTURE

- To safeguard children and protect staff
- To make explicit expectations of performance and conduct
- To minimise opportunities for abuse
- For all staff to have confidence to report concerns with full confidentiality
- To respond promptly to concerns: we always investigate and address issues
- To exercise appropriate sanctions
- To create and maintain an ethos of mutual respect, openness and fairness

1. PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR AND CONDUCT

1.1 Treating other people with dignity and respect

All staff are expected to treat other colleagues, children and external contacts, such as parents, with dignity and respect.

Staff are required to comply with the school's equality policy in respect of colleagues, children, parents and all within our community. Unacceptable behaviour such as discrimination, bullying, harassment or intimidation will not be tolerated. This includes physical and verbal abuse and use of inappropriate language or unprofessional behaviour with colleagues, children and parents.

1.2 Appropriate relationships with children

Staff are expected to act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to suspect their actions or intent. Staff must never give out or disclose personal details such as telephone numbers, Facebook or other social media details to children. It is not permissible to transport children in staff's own cars. Any 1:1 contact between teachers and individual children should be with the door open. Peripatetic music teachers are an exception to this, but the advice of the head must be sought, should either the teacher or the child, feel uncomfortable about this. Whilst children get dressed or undressed for PE, the guard should be put on the classroom door, indicating the right to children's privacy. In the EYFS, staff tell one another when they need to assist children in toileting and wherever possible, a second person is present whilst aiding children with hygiene procedures. We encourage independence and respect privacy for the door to be closed, whilst always asking the child for their permission to go into the toilet cubicle, should we need to.

Staff in schools are in a position of trust and have a duty to protect young people from discrimination and harm and to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. It is equally important for staff to avoid behaviour that might be misinterpreted by others in order to protect both young people and themselves.

Staff are required to read and understand Harvington's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures document.

1.3 Professional behaviour

Staff must not misuse or misrepresent their position, qualifications or experience or bring the reputation of the school into disrepute. Such behaviour may lead to disciplinary action.

1.4 Dress and Appearance

Staff should adhere to Harvington's Dress Code:

Dress Code

The way a person looks says a great deal about the organisation they work for and what they think about the job they do. Their appearance and personal image is perceived as a reflection of the organization's brand image.

All staff are required to dress smartly and set a high standard of appearance. By dressing in appropriate attire we communicate a professional image to children, parents and the wider community.

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Men must wear professional-looking full length formal trousers and jacket. These are to be complemented with a collared shirt, either short or long-sleeved and a tie, which is done up.

Women are expected to dress smartly and professionally in full length tailored trousers or skirts (no more than two inches above the knee), suits or dresses. A variety of tops are acceptable including; shirts, blouses, sweaters and jackets provided necklines are appropriate and discreet, and fabric is not sheer. For footwear clean, open or closed shoes, dress sandals or boots are acceptable. During a normal school day PE staff should wear good quality sportswear which includes a collared sports shirt and training shoes. Formal attire is required for parents' evenings and school events.

Tattoos and body-piercing other than earrings should not be visible. Make-up and jewellery should be discreet.

The following attire is not permitted:

- shorts, jeans, cords, safari-type trousers, track suits, leggings, very baggy-fit trousers;
- 'skimpy' t-shirts, sweat-shirts;
- sheer tops, indiscreet necklines, tops with straps;
- clothing that has distasteful images or words;
- shirts or tops which do not cover the midriff or overlap the waistband of a skirt or trousers that it accompanies;
- casual footwear, flip-flops, trainers.

1.5 Criminal actions

Staff must inform the Headmistress immediately if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution.

The Head will discuss this with the member of staff in the context of their role and responsibilities in order to help safeguard children and other staff at the school. Staff have a duty to disclose whether they abide with any person who has had or is in the process of facing, charges relating to children.

2. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Staff must adhere to Harvington's Health and Safety Policy, and must ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and everyone in the school environment safe and well.

This includes taking immediate safety action in a potentially harmful situation (either at school or off-site) by complying with statutory and school guidelines.

3. WELLBEING

All staff should take care of their physical and mental wellbeing. This includes maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

4. CONFIDENTIALITY

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

All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a child is bullied by another child (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.

However, staff have an obligation to share with the Headmistress any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a child. Staff must **never** promise a child that they will not act on information that they are told by the child.

5. BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

All children have a right to be treated with respect and dignity even in those circumstances where they display difficult or challenging behaviour.

Adults should not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a child. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards children is not acceptable in any situation.

Any sanctions or rewards used should be part of Harvington's Behaviour / Discipline Policy which is regularly reviewed.

The use of or the threat of corporal punishment is not acceptable and is unlawful in schools. Where children display difficult or challenging behaviour, adults must follow the Behaviour / Discipline Policy. The use of physical contact for demonstration in subjects such as PE, drama, music, etc. is permissible but permission must be asked of the children first. The use of physical intervention can only be justified in exceptional circumstances and must be used as a last resort when other behaviour management strategies have failed.

6. EDUCATIONAL VISITS AND AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Staff should take particular care when supervising children on visits out of school, where the setting may be less formal than the usual workplace. Staff remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times and stays within clearly defined professional boundaries.

Where out of school activities include overnight stays, careful consideration needs to be given to sleeping arrangements.

Children, adults and parents should be informed of these prior to the start of the visit. In all circumstances, those organising visits must pay careful attention to ensuring safe staff/child ratios and to the gender mix of staff especially on overnight stays.

Health and Safety arrangements require members of staff to keep colleagues aware of their whereabouts, especially when involved in activities outside the usual workplace.

7. SOCIAL CONTACT

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. If a child or parent seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise her/his professional judgement in making a response. There will be occasions when there are social contacts between children and staff, where for example the parent and teacher are part of the same social circle. These contacts however, will be easily recognised and openly acknowledged.

Nevertheless, there must be awareness on the part of those working with children that some social contacts, especially where these are not common knowledge can be misconstrued as

being part a grooming process. This can also apply to social contacts made through outside interests or through the staff member's own family.

8. PHYSICAL CONTACT

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with children, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role.

When physical contact is made with children this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development and gender.

Appropriate physical contact in school will occur most often with younger children.

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.

Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be recorded as soon as possible in the school's incident book and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the child's file.

9. SOCIAL NETWORKING WEBSITES

Staff must not access social networking websites on school equipment for personal use (i.e. non- job related use) during work time.

Access to some journals, blogs and social networking sites is permitted during work time for the purposes of undertaking job related duties only. Staff must act in the best interests of the school and not disclose personal data or information about any individual including staff or children. This includes images.

The school respects a member of staff's private life. However, it must also ensure that confidentiality and its reputation are protected. Employees using social networking websites in their private life;

- must refrain from identifying themselves as working for the school, in a way which has, or may have, the effect of bringing the school into disrepute.
- must not identify other school employees or children without their consent.
- must not make any defamatory remarks about the school, its employees or children, or conduct themselves in a way that is detrimental to the school.
- disclose personal data or information about the school, employees or children, that could breach the Data Protection Act 1998, for example, posting photographs or images of children.
- must not allow children to access their personal social networking accounts and where they are contacted by a pupil they should bring it to the Head's attention.

10. USE OF SCHOOL PREMISES, EQUIPMENT & COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

All staff should treat resources responsibly, and exercise due financial care. All staff have a responsibility to look after the resources of the school. This includes: not wasting resources unnecessarily (including physical resources and those such as heat/electricity); following the principles of 'reduce, re-use, recycle' where appropriate

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School equipment and systems (phone, email and computers) are available only for school-related activities and should not be used for the fulfilment of another job or for personal use. This is unless authorised by the Headmistress (NB for the Head this is the Chair of Governors); in case of an emergency, or where used for brief periods outside of working hours.

This includes photocopy facilities, stationery and premises. It also applies to access provided for remote use (e.g. hand held portable devices etc.) and to staff working outside of school premises and using their own IT equipment.

Illegal, inappropriate or unacceptable use of school equipment or communication systems may result in disciplinary action. This list is not exhaustive and includes;

- creating, sending or forwarding any message that would reasonably be considered inappropriate or unacceptable.
- committing or implying commitment to any contractual arrangements unless delegated to do so by the Headmistress.
- accessing, publication or circulation of illegal, offensive, unacceptable, inappropriate or non-work related material.
- any illegal activities.
- posting confidential information about the school and/or other employees, children or parents.
- gambling or gaming.
- unauthorised use of school facilities (or employee's personal IT equipment), for personal use during a member of staff's working time.

Employees receiving inappropriate communication or material or who are unsure about whether something h/she proposes to do might breach this policy should seek advice from the Head.

The school has the right to monitor e-mails, phone-calls, internet activity or document production, principally in order to avoid offensive or nuisance material and to protect systems from viruses, but also to ensure proper and effective use of systems. Communication systems may be accessed when the school suspects that the employee has been misusing systems or facilities, or for the investigation of suspected fraud or other irregularity.

Passwords should not be shared and access to computer systems must be kept confidential.

Any school equipment that is used outside school premises, for example laptops, should be returned to the school when the employee leaves employment.

Use of Mobile Phones

Staff are **not** permitted to use mobile phones for their own personal use in any vicinity where they are with children, without the permission of the Head. **No** photographs of children may be taken on a personal mobile phone.

The school holds a register of parents who have declared a wish for their child not be photographed and uploaded on the website.

11. USE OF ALCOHOL AND ILLEGAL DRUGS

The taking of alcohol and/or illegal drugs during working hours is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All staff are expected to attend work without being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs and without their performance being adversely impacted by the consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs.

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PRESCRIBED MEDICATION

Staff are responsible to ensure that they are fit and able to carry out their responsibilities whilst on medication and that should they be on prescribed medication, they declare this to the Headmistress and that any prescribed medication will be stored separately, out of the vicinity and reach of children.

12. GIFTS, REWARDS AND FAVOURITISM

The giving of gifts or rewards to children should be part of an agreed policy for supporting positive behaviour or recognising particular achievements. In some situations, the giving of gifts as rewards may be accepted practice for a group of children, whilst in other situations the giving of a gift to an individual child or young person will be part of an agreed plan, recorded and discussed with the parent.

It is acknowledged that there may be specific occasions when a member of staff working with a child may consider it appropriate to give a child a small personal gift of insignificant value.

Any gifts should be given openly and not be based on favouritism. Adults need to be aware however, that the giving of gifts can be misinterpreted by others as a gesture either to bribe or 'groom' a young person.

Staff should exercise care when selecting children for school teams, productions, visits and/or specific work tasks in order to avoid perceptions of favouritism or injustice. Similar care should be exercised when children are excluded from an activity. Methods of selection and exclusion should always be subject to clear, agreed criteria.

Care should also be taken to ensure that staff do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.

There are occasions when children or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to adults e.g. on special occasions or as a thank-you and this is acceptable.

However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.

13. WHISTLE BLOWING

Staff should be aware of, and adhere to, Harvington's Whistle Blowing Policy. Whistle blowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of the SLT. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

14. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

A member of staff is required to declare where a group or organisation would be considered to be in conflict with the ethos of the school. Membership of a trade union or staff representative group would not need to be declared.

Staff should also consider carefully whether they need to declare to the school their relationship with any individual(s) where this might cause a conflict with school activities. For example, a relationship with a Governor, another staff member or a contractor who provides services to the school.

All declarations should be submitted in writing to the Head who will arrange for the information to be recorded on a school Register of Business Interests.

15. DISCIPLINARY ACTION

All staff need to recognise that failure to meet these standards of behaviour and conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

This document acts as an extension of individual contracts.

Annex 1

AIDE MEMOIRE FOR ALL STAFF

When we speak to others we will:

- use a positive statement rather than a negative one so that children can learn what we expect of them in any situation.
- use a calm tone of voice at all times, to explain something to or instruct the children, so that they can follow our words without feeling threatened or uncomfortable.
- avoid using sarcastic words or phrases as these demean children and prevent them from developing high self-esteem.
- speak respectfully to other adults at all times, even if we disagree with them.

As professionals we will:

- avoid workplace gossip and negativity as it breeds resentment and becomes a roadblock to effective communication and collaboration. We all have a duty to take active steps to divert conversations away from this if we come across it.
- maintain confidentiality about anything that we see or hear in the school, so that parents and children can trust us and as a way of showing respect to our fellow professionals.
- work as part of a team, contributing as well as learning from others and helping to build a strong workforce so that we can provide the best possible learning opportunities for the children.
- work within Harvington's policies and practices, so that what we do is consistent with what has been agreed between all members of the staff and the governors.
- treat everyone with respect.
- dress appropriately, so that we set a good example for the children and to show that we are here to work as professionals.
- behave in a positive way despite any personal problems that we may have, especially in front of the children.

Annex 2

(from Teachers' Standards Effective from 1 September 2012)

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

A teacher is expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct throughout a teacher's career.

Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:

- treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
- having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
- not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

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Please sign below and return to the Headmistress

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Please sign to agree the above Staff Code of Conduct and acknowledge it as part of your contractual obligation:

Name:

*I agree to abide by the school's **Staff Code of Conduct** and understand that failure to abide by it may lead to disciplinary proceedings:*

Signed:

Date: