



Dame Alice Owen's School  
The Dame Alice Owen Foundation - 1613

# CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF

Agreed by the Governing Body

Personnel & Remuneration Committee

Ratified by the full Governing Body

To be reviewed

(reviewed every 2 years)

Spring 2024

Spring 2024

Spring 2026

To be monitored by the Governing Body Personnel & Remuneration Committee

***The Professional Associations and/or Trade Unions have been consulted on this policy***

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## 1. Objective, Scope and Principles

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour that all staff, and those acting on behalf of the School, 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 students.

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

In addition to this Code of Conduct, all staff engaged to work under Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Employment are required to adhere to the 'Teachers' Standards 2012', in particular 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](#).

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 staff to disclose matters from their personal life the school will consider the circumstances and context of each matter before determining whether any further action is required.

All staff are expected to familiarise themselves and comply with all School's policies and procedures.

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

### **1.1. Setting an example**

All staff set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by students. Therefore, all staff must:

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

## **2. Safeguarding Students**

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.

Staff have a duty to safeguard students from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.

The duty to safeguard students includes the duty to report concerns about a student or colleague to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and/or Designated Senior Person (DSP). The school's DSL is Vicki Blackburn. The Deputy DSLs are Sian Jays and Sarah Ogufere.

Staff have access to the school's [Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#) and [Whistleblowing Procedure](#). Staff must be familiar with these documents.

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

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.

Staff must take reasonable care of students under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.

Staff should be aware that the management of any safeguarding concerns is dealt with 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).

## **2.1. Low Level Concerns**

The term ‘low-level’ concern does not mean that a concern 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 the school 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 without due permission or reason;
  - 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.

In our school, where low-level concerns are reported, the Headteacher is the ultimate decision maker in respect of the response to all low-level concerns.

## **3. Relationships**

Staff must declare any relationships that they may have with students, staff, clients, contractors supplies or parents outside of school; 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 person (for example: a risk of allegations of bias or conflict of interest). The Line Manager will treat declarations in confidence.

Staff should not assume that the school is aware of any such connections and should use Appendix 2 and/or 3 to make a declaration.

#### **4. Relationships with students**

Relationships with students must be professional at all times. Physical relationships with students 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 students must be via school-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 students.

If contacted by a student by an inappropriate route, staff should report the contact to their Line Manager immediately.

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

#### **5. Student Development**

Staff must comply with school policies and procedures that support the wellbeing and development of students.

Staff must cooperate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of students.

Staff must follow reasonable instructions that support the development of students.

#### **6. Honesty and Integrity**

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.

All staff 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](#). Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to the Line Manager/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. Staff must not act on behalf of the School unless they have the authority to do so.

Professional references from the School 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**

Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation of the school or the staff member's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community. In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education, any conduct or behaviour that indicates a staff member 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, the School will need to consider what triggered these actions and question whether a child in the School 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 a member of staff's suitability or ability to do their role/work in an educational setting.

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 the 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 the 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.

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.

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.

## 8. Online Safety and Internet Use

Staff must exercise caution at all times both inside and outside of work when using information technology. Staff should be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social media sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute. Staff must not post comments on social media which make reference to their professional role or which could be seen as negative comments about, or related to, the school. Staff should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have. Staff should exercise caution in their use of all social media use. This includes creating, endorsing, liking, posting, retweeting, sharing direct messaging or sending any statements, photos, videos, audios or messages. This also includes speaking and/or lip syncing to other creators' content and any music used. Caution should be exercised when using dating websites where staff could encounter students either with their own profile or acting covertly.

Photographs or video footage of students should only be taken using school equipment, for purposes authorised by the School. With the express permission of the Headteacher, staff may use their personal digital equipment such as mobile phones and cameras to record images of pupils, this includes when on field trips. In such cases, staff are permitted to take photographs of students for whom we have appropriate parental consent, using their own personal devices. These photos must be downloaded, to an appropriate folder on the shared area/ Google Drive, **and deleted from the personal device**, as soon as reasonably possible. Any use of such images 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. Further details on this can be found in the Safe Use of Images Policy.

## 9. Confidentiality

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

All staff may at some point witness actions or events which need to be kept confidential. For example, where a student is bullied by another student (or by a member of staff). Once reported through the appropriate school procedure, the event must not be discussed outside the School, including with other staff, students, parents or carers. Staff have an obligation to share with their manager or the Designated Senior Person any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a student and to engage with professional dialogue, to this end, with colleagues in school. Staff must not promise a student that they will not act on information that they are told by the student.

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 or designated person.

## **10. Dress and Appearance**

All staff must dress in a manner that is appropriate to their role and promote a professional image, this does not include casual wear. Staff 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 staff are transitioning to live in a gender with which they identify, the School will apply and adapt this code sensitively and flexibly.

The School understands that there may be circumstances that make it difficult for some staff to follow a code (for example, if a staff member has a disability or is experiencing certain menopausal symptoms). If this is the case, the School will discuss with the member of staff how we can support the member of staff and make reasonable adjustments where possible.

The School has the final say on whether clothing and appearance is appropriate.

## **11. Compliance**

All staff must complete a Google Form (an example is shown in Appendix 1) to confirm they have read, understood and agreed to comply with the code of conduct. This form should then be completed on an annual basis and/or each time the code is amended.

All staff are expected to:

- remain professional and ensure all communication, electronic or otherwise, with students, parents, carers, staff and others is compatible with their professional role and in line with school policies
- refrain from talking about their professional role in any capacity when using social media
- refrain from putting online any text, image, sound or video that could upset or offend any member of the whole school community or be incompatible with their professional role
- use school ICT systems and resources for all school business. This includes their school email address, and using a school camera/video camera where possible
- ensure the integrity and privacy of all work 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 SLT
- avoid browsing, downloading, uploading or distributing any material that could be considered offensive, illegal or discriminatory

- ensure that their online activity, both in school and outside school, will not bring the school or their professional role into disrepute
- aim to check their email daily as a minimum (on working days). This is stated with the understanding that this may be difficult to do, on occasion, if a day is particularly busy
- report any online incident which may impact on them, their professionalism or the school as well as any other Safeguarding or Health and Safety concern, without undue delay and in line with the appropriate policies.



## AN EXAMPLE OF THE GOOGLE FORM - Appendix 1

### Confirmation of compliance

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with the school's code of conduct.

Full Name

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Current Position

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Signed by \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

## AN EXAMPLE OF THE GOOGLE FORM - Appendix 2 - Relationships with students outside of work declaration

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby staff of the School are known to students outside of work.

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

Staff Name	Student Name	Relationship

I can confirm that I am fully aware of the code of conduct relating to contact out of the 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, either informally (e.g., via the student) or formally
- no private tutoring has/will take place on the School's 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.

Full Name

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Current Position

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Signed by \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the HR Manager

### **AN EXAMPLE OF THE GOOGLE FORM - Appendix 3 - Relationships outside of work declaration**

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby staff of the School are known to others connected with the School outside of work.

Staff must declare any relationship outside of the School that they may have with others that could create a conflict of interest.

Staff Name	3 <sup>rd</sup> 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 the School is aware of any relationships.

Full Name

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Current Position

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Signed by \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to HR Manager.