Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers

Policy Review Date Agreed by Board of Governors: Next Review Date: December 2027 Signed by Chair of Governors: Date:

OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND PRINCIPLES

This Code of Conduct, which applies to all staff and volunteers, is designed to give guidance on the standards of behaviour which should be observed. School staff and volunteers are role models, in a unique position of influence and trust and their behaviour should set a good example to all the pupils within the school.

It does not form part of any employee's contract of employment. It is merely for guidance and specific breaches of the Code must not be viewed as a disciplinary offence.

The Code includes sections on:

- Setting an Example
- Relationships and Attitudes
- Private Meetings with Pupils
- Physical Contact with Pupils
- Honesty and Integrity
- Conduct Outside of Work
- E-Safety and Internet Use
- Confidentiality

1. Setting an Example

1.1 All staff and volunteers in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils. Staff and volunteers should therefore, for example, avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times and demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same. All staff and volunteers should be familiar with all school policies and procedures and to comply with these so as to set a good example to pupils.

1.2 Staff and volunteers must always comply with statutory requirements in relation to such issues as discrimination, health and safety and data protection.

2. Relationships and Attitudes

2.1 All staff and volunteers should treat pupils with respect and dignity and not in a manner which demeans or undermines them, their parents or carers, or colleagues. Staff and volunteers should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age and maturity of their pupils. They 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. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require thought to ensure that conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Relationships with pupils must be professional at all times and sexual relationships with current pupils are not permitted and may lead to criminal conviction.

2.2 Staff and volunteers may have less formal contact with pupils outside of school; perhaps through mutual membership of social groups, sporting organisations, or family connections. Staff and volunteers should not assume that the school would be aware of any such relationship and should therefore consider whether the school should be made aware of the connection.

2.3 Staff and volunteers should always behave in a professional manner which, within the context of this Code of Conduct, includes such aspects as:

- acting in a fair, courteous and mature manner to pupils, colleagues and other stakeholders;
- cooperating and liaising with colleagues, as appropriate, to ensure pupils receive a coherent and comprehensive educational service;
- respect for school property;
- taking responsibility for the behaviour and conduct of pupils in the classroom and sharing such responsibility elsewhere on the premises;
- being familiar with communication channels and school procedures applicable to both pupils and staff and volunteers;
- respect for the rights and opinions of others.

3. Private Meetings with Pupils

3.1 It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews with individual pupils must take place. As far as possible, staff and volunteers should conduct interviews in a room with visual access or with an open door and ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. Where possible, another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview.

4. Physical Contact with Pupils

4.1 To avoid misinterpretations, and so far as is practicable, staff and volunteers are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with a pupil.

4.2 Staff and volunteers should therefore be cognisant of the guidance issued by the Department on the use of reasonable force (Circular 2021/13 Interim Guidance on the use of restraint and seclusion in educational settings) and be familiar with the school's policy on Safe Handling and Use of Reasonable Force.

5. Honesty and Integrity

5.1 All staff and volunteers are expected to maintain the highest 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 Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school (eg a supplier of materials) must be declared to the Principal. A record should be kept of all such gifts received. This requirement does not apply to "one off" token gifts from pupils or parents eg at Christmas or the end of the school year. Staff and volunteers should be mindful that gifts to individual pupils may be considered inappropriate and could be misinterpreted.

6. Conduct Outside of Work

6.1 Staff and volunteers should not engage in conduct outside work which could damage the reputation and standing of the school or the staff/ volunteer's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.

6.2 Staff and volunteers may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary and should ensure it does not affect their work performance in the school. Advice should be sought from the Principal when considering work outside the school.

7. E-Safety and Internet Use

7.1 A staff member or volunteer's off duty hours are their personal concern but all staff and volunteers should exercise caution when using information technology and be fully aware of the risks to themselves and others. For school-based activities, advice is contained in the school's E-Safety and Acceptable Use Policy.

7.2 Staff and volunteers should exercise particular caution in relation to making online associations/friendships with current pupils via social media and using texting/email facilities to communicate with them. It is preferable that any contact with pupils is made via the use of school email accounts or telephone equipment when necessary.

7.3 Staff are encouraged not to make links to parents in online platforms. However, if they chose to do so, they must ensure that they follow this policy.

7.4 Staff and volunteers should model responsible behaviour by avoiding the personal use of mobile phones, smartphones, smartwatches and other communication or recording devices in pupil-facing areas. Devices should be switched off or placed on silent, kept securely out of sight and used only during authorised breaks in an appropriate staff area. Exceptions may be made where use is required for an authorised professional duty, safeguarding, an agreed medical need or a genuine emergency. Personal devices must not be used to photograph, film or record pupils, or to store or share confidential school or pupil information, unless expressly authorised under the school's relevant policies. School-owned or approved equipment and established school communication channels should be used for school business wherever possible.

8. Confidentiality

8.1 Staff and volunteers may have access to confidential information about pupils including highly sensitive or private information. It should not be shared with any

person other than on a need to know basis. In circumstances where the pupil's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.

8.2 There are some circumstances in which a member of staff or volunteer may be expected to share information about a pupil, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals should pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated child protection responsibilities.

8.3 If a member of staff or volunteer is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from a senior member of staff. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to senior leadership.

8.4 Staff and volunteers need to be aware that although it is important to listen to and support pupils, they must not promise confidentiality or request pupils to do the same under any circumstances. Additionally, concerns and allegations about adults should be treated as confidential and passed to the Principal or a member of the safeguarding team without delay.

8.5 The school's child protection arrangements should include any external candidates studying or sitting examinations in the school.