



**Professional Code of Conduct for Staff Working in
Kew Green Preparatory School**

Professional Code of Conduct for Staff

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 All employees should be aware of the standards of conduct expected of them by their employer. Although it is impossible to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all eventualities, this Code sets out the principal areas where concerns are likely to arise and staff awareness is necessary. The Code applies to all staff working in school although particular reference is made to teaching staff.
- 1.2 Staff must comply with requirements placed on them by their contract of employment, conditions of service, schools' Articles of Government and relevant policies of the school. This Code is supplementary to documents detailing terms and conditions of employment, including statutory provisions, issued at the time of appointment.
- 1.3 Failure to observe the provisions of the Code may be relevant in considering action under disciplinary procedures. Should this occur, full consideration will be given to all the relevant facts and circumstances of the case in accordance with the principles of natural justice and following agreed procedures.
- 1.4 LPS schools have a high reputation for the quality of their work and the professionalism of their staff. This Code will serve to confirm the current good practice of staff working in LPS schools. Should staff have any doubts about the issues raised they should consult their Headteacher.
- 1.5 At Kew Green Preparatory School we have a clear culture of vigilance with regard to Health & Safety, Safeguarding and the appropriate behaviour of everyone in the school community. This culture facilitates the raising of concerns about child welfare and behaviour. Our 'whistle blowing' procedures are in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2016). There are therefore procedures for reporting and handling concerns and there will be provision for mediation and dispute resolution where necessary. Training and support is provided for staff. There will be transparency and accountability in relation to how concerns are received and handled. Refer to Safeguarding Policy for further information.

2. CONDUCT IN RELATION TO PUPILS

- 2.1 The law recognises that staff act in loco parentis in respect of pupils in their charge and must act in the role of a reasonably prudent parent in the school context. Through their actions staff must act in accordance with this duty of care to ensure at all times that the safety and welfare of pupils is accorded the highest priority. In this and other ways staff should always maintain standards of conduct which sustain their professional standing and that of the school.
- 2.2 Interaction with pupils should always be appropriate to their age and gender. Staff should not touch pupils, however casually, in ways or on parts of the body that might be considered indecent. Staff must not become 'over-familiar' with pupils or use inappropriate language. Particular care may be necessary when supervising pupils in out of school activities. Further advice on the practical arrangements in this area are available in the "School Visits" Policy.
- 2.3 Teaching materials should be appropriate to the age and gender of pupils. Particular care should be taken that sex or health education materials are appropriate and consistent with the school's policies.
- 2.4 When holding meetings with pupils on sensitive issues, staff should exercise proper professional judgement over the arrangements for the meeting. They should safeguard their own position by, for instance, considering the need for a second adult to be present.

2.5 Corporal punishment defined as any intentional application of force as punishment is illegal and may render a member of staff liable to criminal action as well as action under the school's disciplinary procedures. Corporal punishment includes any form of physical chastisement.

2.6 Physical intervention will not constitute corporal punishment where its purpose is to avert an immediate danger of injury to, or an immediate danger to the property of, any person including a pupil. In such circumstances, the element of restraint should be the minimum necessary to prevent injury or remove the risk of harm.

2.7 Where physical contact is necessary (eg in teaching PE or Music), that contact should be the minimum necessary for the purpose and comply with accepted good practice. Particular care should be taken in helping pupils with physical or other disabilities (eg in lifting). Further guidance is available in Codes of Practice produced by the professional associations representing staff in these subject areas.

2.8 Each school should have and follow a policy on first aid and have at least one member of staff appropriately trained in its application.

2.9 Following any incident where a member of staff has reason to believe that their actions may be open to misinterpretation, the Head should be immediately notified and a written report submitted as soon as possible following the incident.

2.10 Guidance on procedures regarding suspected or alleged child abuse is contained in the Safeguarding Children Policy and follows the Keeping Children Safe in Education principles.

2.11 Agreed guidelines on procedures where staff are accused of physical or sexual abuse of pupils are contained in the document Safeguarding Children Policy and follows the Keeping Children Safe in Education principles.

3. CONDUCT IN RELATION TO THE SCHOOL

3.1 Staff should make sure that they do not disclose confidential information to anyone who has no right to receive it and do not say or write anything that would constitute a breach of confidence. Confidential information relating to employment or the school should only be communicated on a need to know basis or with the specific permission of the Head.

3.2 Use of materials and equipment provided by the school should not be used for purposes unconnected with employment. Staff should always use funds to the best advantage of the school, community and students and adhere to high standards of probity in their use.

3.3 Staff should comply with the expectations of staff behaviour outlined in their individual contracts of employment and adhere to all relevant policies governing expectations of behaviour and conduct

3.4 Staff should not solicit or accept any gift, loan, fee, hospitality or other reward which influences the way in which they carry out their duties. They should not influence or be influenced unfairly in the way they carry out their duties by ties of kinship or friendship, or by some other association or loyalty.

3.5 Care should be taken to avoid any conflict of interest between activities outside the school and professional responsibilities. Staff should not undertake work or engage in activities in their own time through which they seek to exercise unfair advantage by virtue of their position. In no case should outside activities bring the school into disrepute.

- 3.6 Staff should not, without authority, undertake activities unconnected with their professional role during working hours. Policies relating to Leave of Absence are laid down in the Personnel handbook and should be followed.
- 3.7 Staff in full-time employment should inform their Head where they are undertaking paid work which may impinge on their normal duties, including activities such as lectures, private tuition, publications, press articles or radio/TV appearances. Where work is undertaken in the employee's own time any fees paid may be retained by the employee. However, where the event, or preparation for it, takes place in working time and/or involves the use of school resources, it is necessary to seek approval to use such resources and agree the proportion of any fee to be paid to the school for such use.
- 3.8 The payment of fees to teachers acting as examiners is covered by the specific provisions of the regulations of Examining Bodies.
- 3.9 In addition to financial interests, staff should exercise professional judgement in disclosing to the Head or their line manager, non-financial interests which may conflict with the interests of the school or the LEA. Such disclosure will depend upon circumstances (eg in making appointments) and may include personal acquaintances, membership of voluntary or other organisations or any official position or public appointment.

4. USE OF MOBILE PHONES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Guidance for all staff (with specific mention of Early Years) is written in our e-safety documents.

Children have their photographs taken to provide evidence of their achievements for development records as well as displays and promotional media such as our in-house magazine (Kew Life) or our website. Under the Data Protection Act 1998, before any child joins the school, we obtain parental permission to take photographs or to film them. This permission covers the use of the photographs of the children taking part in an activity to advertise/promote the school.

Staff mobile phones should be turned off or silent during lessons. Staff are strictly prohibited from making personal calls during their teaching time. Staff must keep contact with children on a professional basis and be prepared for their mobile devices to be open to scrutiny upon request from the Head.

We are a school that embraces the opportunity to 'capture' moments in our school life and so staff, if a camera is unavailable, may use their mobile phone to capture the moment. Staff are aware that this picture must be then downloaded onto an in-school computer or our intranet and off their phone. i.e. the photo must be removed from the phone within a reasonable timeframe.

Social media:

Staff are forbidden to use social media for purposes of contact with any child.

Staff are required to keep a 'professional distance' from the parent body in this respect and are strongly advised NOT to enter social media exchanges with any parents.

Staff are reminded that Social Media security settings of their own accounts should be considered to prevent 'browsing' parents and/or children scrutinising their online activity.

Whatsapp:

Whatsapp groups with parents are used during residential trips to send updates and photos directly to parents mobile devices. Staff who may be part of a parental whatsapp group are advised to remove themselves from the group at the end of the residential visit.

Whilst whatsapp is seen as a closed platform in terms of social media (ie not open to public wider scrutiny) and as such may be useful in other circumstances in school, however, staff are still advised to use extreme discretion in their communication in this forum.

For clarity – staff should never have communication with pupils via social media, whatsapp or mobile phones.

Email contact with children:

There may be occasions when email is used between home and school for children/teacher (eg. submitting homework tasks) If this is the case the staff member must inform a senior member of staff and copy that staff member and the child's parent in to any email correspondence. The level of communication in these instances must be kept to a minimum.

Written by: Ruth Morgan, September 2015

Reviewed by: Andrew Taylor, January 2018