



# STRATFORD GIRLS' GRAMMAR SCHOOL

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

## Staff Protection Policy: Code of Conduct

Disclosable under Freedom of Information Act 2000	Yes
To be published on website	Yes
Policy ownership	
Governor committee:	Progress & Well-being
Department responsible:	Senior Leadership Team
Post-holder: (title and name)	Chris Hall, Assistant Head
Linked procedures	
Responsible person	Chris Hall
Planned review interval	Annually
Planned next review date:	July 2024

We have a cherished tradition of trust between staff and students at Stratford Girls' Grammar School. We recognise that our safeguarding duty is paramount – primarily to ensure the safety and welfare of our students, but also to protect our staff. This Code of Conduct has been drawn up to provide clear guidelines for all staff as to what constitutes best practice in professional behaviour to ensure the safety of all. It should help staff avoid situations where they might otherwise be vulnerable: all school staff must be careful to avoid putting themselves at risk. The Code has been agreed with staff and governors, and all staff are expected to sign it.

This school adheres to the guidelines contained in the DfE documents *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE 2023) and *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (DfE 2018). Warwickshire's *Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct; WES 2014)* forms the basis of much of the Code, and the Warwickshire document should be read in conjunction with it. (It goes into more detail in many areas.) Staff are also expected to have due regard to the national *Teachers' Standards* (DfE July 2012, introduction revised June 2013). A list of these and other documents referred to in the drawing up of the Code is included at the end of the Code.

Breaches of this Code may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Specific guidelines for Stratford Girls' Grammar School:

**General:**

- All staff are expected to behave thoughtfully and responsibly at all times.

**Recruitment:**

- See our separate policy document *Safer Recruitment Procedures* for guidelines around recruitment, including statements in all recruitment literature to our commitment to safeguarding, the need for enhanced DBS checks and two references.

**Safeguarding and child protection:**

- All new staff, whatever their experience, are provided with a full induction programme that covers policies and routines of the school with particular emphasis on safeguarding and child protection.
- All staff receive safeguarding and child protection training updates in accordance with DfE and WSCB guidelines at least once every three years. These include Prevent training (countering extremism and radicalisation) and CSE and FGM training.
- All staff have a duty to look out for signs of physical, emotional or sexual abuse of students or neglect – or signs of radicalisation – in the light of a student's behaviour.
- Staff must pass any concern on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL: the Assistant Headteacher: Progress and Well-being) or the Deputy DSL (Head) without delay. Green Forms are available in the staff room/departmental offices/pastoral office for this purpose.

**Professional relationships between staff and students:**

- Staff must maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, including treating students with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position.
- All staff employed at the school hold a position of trust with regard to students. There should be no inappropriate relationships between staff and students, in order primarily to protect our students from abuse of that trust, but also to protect staff from allegations of abuse. If you are unsure about what constitutes an inappropriate relationship, seek advice from your line manager, the Business Manager or the Headteacher.
- Maintain a professional distance between you and students, while of course showing that you care.

- Use the student' first names but never become over-familiar. Expect students to use your surname and a title that you prefer (eg Mr, Mrs, Ms or "Sir" or "Miss.") Do not allow them to become over-familiar with you. This advice applies both in school and outside of school.
- Avoid confrontation with students; always try to diffuse situations. Do not shout or use sarcasm or otherwise humiliate a student: be firm and calm, and criticise the behaviour rather than the individual. Always model the kind of behaviour you expect from young people.
- It is an offence to have a sexual relationship with any student up to the age of 18, and even though technically legal beyond 18, such a relationship may well be viewed as a serious breach of professional trust and responsibility. *Warwickshire training states students are regarded as under 18 whilst still at school.*
- If any allegations are made against you, stay calm and report the matter to the Headteacher immediately. Make notes of what happened in case the matter has to be investigated further.
- Circumstances might occasionally arise where a member of staff is approached in some manner by a student. This might take such forms as, for example:
  - an invitation to meet inside or outside school
  - physical contact initiated by the student
  - persistent contact by letter or email.

If such an approach is made, report the incident immediately to your line manager (or to the Business Manager or the Headteacher). A record should be made and action taken as appropriate, including reporting the incident to the Assistant Head: Pastoral and Wellbeing (as DSL), the Head of Sixth Form or the relevant Head of House (who may contact the student's parents).

- If you suspect any colleague of improper or unprofessional behaviour, you **must** report it to the Headteacher immediately. This can be done in person, email or using the Warwickshire yellow form. If you suspect the Headteacher of improper or unprofessional behaviour, you must report your concerns to the Assistant Head: Pastoral and Wellbeing (as DSL) or member of SLT, who will immediately inform the Chair of Governors. The school will follow Warwickshire procedures for managing allegations against staff: the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Manager/ Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be consulted and an investigation will be undertaken. See our *Allegations of Abuse Policy*. All concerns will be investigated thoroughly and confidentially, and appropriate action taken. Any serious proven allegations will be dealt with according to the school's disciplinary policies and could include summary dismissal as well as police prosecution for a very serious case.

#### **Low-Level Concerns:**

- In creating and embedding a culture of openness, trust and transparency any concerns regarding the conduct of staff should be recorded on a yellow form and passed directly to the Headteacher. As referenced in KCSIE 2023, low – level concerns are not insignificant and a concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or nagging doubt that a member of staff 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 harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO

Examples of such behaviour include, but are not limited to:

- Being overfriendly with students
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of students on their mobile phone/contrary to school policy
- Engaging with a student on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area/behind a closed door
- Humiliating students

- The school has a *Whistleblowing Policy*.

### **Meetings and contact with students:**

- All school staff should take care to avoid making themselves vulnerable.
- For their own safety and protection, staff should exercise caution in situations where they are alone with students. Other than in formal teaching situations – musical instrument tuition, for example, or MFL orals – it is always advisable for interviews or work with individual students or parents to be conducted in view of other adults. All rooms that are used for the teaching or counselling of students should have clear and unobstructed glass panels in the doors. The door to any room in which one-to-one coaching, counselling or meeting is taking place should be left open. Where this is not practicable because of the need for confidentiality, another member of staff should be asked to maintain a presence nearby and a record will be kept of the circumstances of the meeting.
- Whilst it would be unrealistic and undesirable to preclude all physical contact between adults and children, staff are expected to exercise caution and avoid placing themselves in a position where their actions might be open to criticism or misinterpretation. Although it is permissible to touch a student in, for example, demonstrating a skill in PE, Drama or D&T, or in comforting a distressed student, administering first aid or congratulating someone (or occasionally in other circumstances), it is advisable otherwise not to touch, put your arm around, push or grab students unless it is to protect them from hurting themselves or others.
- Particular care needs to be exercised in changing rooms, showers and toilet areas and staff should never use student toilets.
- If there is an issue with uniform or jewellery having to be removed, or a student is to be searched, a female member of staff should do this, in the presence of another member of staff.
- Home visits to students or private tuition of students should only take place with the knowledge and approval of the Headteacher. Visits/telephone calls by students to the homes of staff members should only occur in exceptional circumstances and with the prior knowledge and approval of the Headteacher.
- Individual members of staff must not give lifts in their cars to individual students (one-to-one). In exceptional circumstances (eg transporting students to hospital), the Headteacher or Business Manager may authorise a member of staff to give a lift to a student only if accompanied by another member of staff, and only with the agreement of those members of staff and parents/carers. In such cases, the driver must have business insurance.

### **Relationships with parents**

- Staff should aim to create a welcoming and open relationship with parents. All parental concerns should be treated seriously and dealt with promptly: see our *Communications* and *Complaints Policies*.
- Particular care should be taken when the usual boundaries between staff and parents are blurred – eg when parents are also members of staff, or when staff have friends who are also parents. It is important that confidentiality should be maintained and appropriate boundaries observed at all times both in school and out of school (eg when a member of staff's daughter brings home school friends, or when members of staff socialise with parents).

### **Relationships with other staff**

- All staff are expected to treat each other with respect and relationships between staff should be characterised by fairness and openness. This means valuing all contributions, acknowledging difference, and working together to build a climate of continuous improvement. Politeness and respect are essential ingredients: where differences occur

they should be dealt with calmly and fairly. Staff should not denigrate their colleagues in the presence of others.

- All staff should exercise due confidentiality towards matters that are either discussed or overheard, whether about students or other staff.

#### **Email:**

- Your staff sggs.org.uk email address is the appropriate point of contact and this can be accessed from home. This is the only email address which should be used for school communications including email contact with students, parents and colleagues.
- Staff must not give their private email contact details out to students.
- If accessing your school emails from a home computer, ensure you have appropriate anti-virus software installed and updated regularly.

#### **Laptops and netbooks:**

- All teaching staff are provided with school netbooks or laptops.
- In line with GDPR (May 2018) great care must be taken when transporting laptops and netbooks between school and home. They must not be left in unattended cars, for example.
- In addition, great care must be taken to ensure that personal sensitive data (eg student dates of birth or addresses, personal progress data, marked work etc) remain secure. Any such information must be accessed only through secure on-line routes.

#### **Social Networking Sites:**

- It is strongly recommended that staff do not have profiles on social networking sites. Staff may still choose to do so, but it is at their own risk and against the advice of the school.
- Should staff choose to have a profile on a social networking site, then the following procedures must be observed, both for the protection of all staff members and for the protection of students at the school:
  - Privacy settings must be set up so that the profile for any member of staff is private and only invited friends can access personal information.
  - Even if social media sites/platforms are deemed to be private, defamatory material relating to school, its employees or students must not appear. Staff should do nothing to jeopardise the school's reputation or bring it into disrepute – eg bad-mouthing colleagues or the school. This would be regarded as unacceptable professional conduct.
  - No student of the school, including sixth formers, should be a 'friend' of any member of staff. A social networking profile is a personal domain to which the children in our care should not have access. Any electronic communication between students and staff should be via school email.
  - Staff may choose to add former students of the school as 'friends' at their own risk so long as:
    - the former student is over the age of 18 and is no longer a student at the school.
    - privacy settings remain as detailed above whereby the member of staff's profile is private and accessible only to invited 'friends'.
- Staff may choose to set up a page on a social media site for communication with students of the school provided that:
  - permission is sought from SLT regarding the purposes of the site
  - the site is established for educational purposes only and not for social communication
  - the site is open only to students of the school using real name logins and is not accessible to people who are not members of the current school community

- the advice of the school Marketing Manager is sought to ensure the branding and language used on the site shares the school's image.
- The use of the school's Twitter (@Shottery) is the recommended and preferred Twitter feed for departments. If a department does set up a subject Twitter feed, this needs to be done following consultation with the Marketing Manager. If permitted the following guidelines apply:
  - This should primarily be used for re-tweeting links from relevant organisations or details about lessons, topics etc.
  - Tweeting opinions and personal thoughts using the account is not recommended.
  - Tweets should be 'protected', to ensure students follow using their real name.
- All other accounts such as Instagram, Pintrest etc. should also be used following the above principles and guidance.

### **Mobile phones:**

- Staff **must not give** their personal mobile phone number to students.
- On many school trips students are supervised the whole time (issue students with an emergency contact number using school trip phone where advisable). Staff can use their personal mobile phones for emergency contact with school.
- On school trips where students are allowed some unsupervised time away from staff (eg most residential visits including exchange visits), the Group Leader will be given a school mobile phone. In these circumstances it is wise to give the students the school mobile phone contact number – and also to collect the students mobile phone numbers centrally. School mobile phones are held in the Finance Office.
- Mobile phones/devices with built in cameras: staff must ensure their mobile phones have screen locks enabled at all times in school. If a member of staff's phone is left unattended and accessible by a student, then that member of staff has left themselves open to their camera being used for improper behaviour – which would be regarded as professional misconduct.

### **Attendance, punctuality, preparedness and dress:**

- Staff should maintain the highest standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- All absence should be genuine (see our *Absence from Work Policy*).
- Staff should be punctual and well-prepared, and should carry out tasks to the best of their ability, taking pride in their work.
- A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression, and some individuals will wish to exercise their own cultural customs. However, staff should select a manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role, and which may be necessarily different to that adopted in their personal life. Staff should ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake. Those who dress or appear in a manner which could be viewed as offensive or inappropriate will render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegation.
- All staff should wear clothing which:
  - promotes a positive and professional image.
  - is appropriate to their role.
  - is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative.
  - does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding.
  - is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans.
  - is not considered to be discriminatory.
  - is compliant with professional standards.

The expectations are that:

- male teaching staff are expected to wear a jacket and collared shirt, and female teaching staff equivalently smart attire with a jacket. Ties are optional.
  - staff are expected to dress appropriately; all staff should set a good example to students in what they wear, avoiding clothing that is overly casual or revealing.
  - staff must wear school purple ID lanyards (or ID badges if preferred) at all times.
  - staff should maintain the highest standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
  - all absence should be genuine
  - staff should be punctual and well-prepared
- staff should carry out tasks to the best of their ability, taking pride in their work.

### **Staff physical and mental well-being**

- All staff are encouraged to look after their physical and mental wellbeing. This includes maintaining a healthy work-life balance. We take issues of stress very seriously, and look to provide appropriate support and help in these cases.
- All staff should have access to counselling and support. Staff needing support are encouraged to discuss issues and concerns with the Headteacher in confidence. Support can be provided both internally (eg through the provision of a mentor), or externally through the Occupational Health Service. Trade Unions also provide help, support and advice for their members, and membership of a trade union is strongly encouraged. See *Staff Well-being and Mental Health Policy*

### **Finance and resources**

- 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 (including physical resources and those such as heat/ electricity); and following the principles of 'reduce, re-use, recycle' where appropriate.
- Procedures for handling money are dealt with in separate policies – see eg the *Financial Procedures* and *Gifts and Hospitality* policies – and staff are expected to follow these. Staff should not, for instance, solicit or accept any gift, loan, fee, hospitality or other reward which influences the way in which they carry out their duties. Any cash (from eg concerts or charity fundraising events) should be clearly labelled and sent as soon as practicable to the Finance Office. Failure to do so could leave colleagues open to accusations of misconduct.

### **Work issues, including possible conflicts of interest**

- Care should be taken to avoid any conflict of interest between activities outside the school and professional responsibilities.
- Staff must notify the School of any outside conduct, activity or circumstances that are likely to either bring the School into disrepute or put into question your suitability for the role of teacher at the School.
- 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.
- Any intellectual property arising out of any lesson plans, dramatic or musical compositions or other creations or inventions that are developed in the course of your employment remain the property of the School. The School will not unreasonably withhold permission for you to make use of such property, provided it is not for financial gain
- Staff should not, without the prior knowledge and approval of the Headteacher, undertake activities unconnected with their professional role during working hours.

- Staff in full-time employment should inform the Headteacher where they are undertaking paid work which may impinge on their normal duties, including activities such as examining, private tuition, or preparing publications or press articles. Where work is undertaken in the employee's own time any fees paid may be retained by the employee. However, where the work impinges on 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. Teachers are encouraged to take part in examining and moderating as this is seen to be advantageous for the school. However, external exam marking should not take place within the working school day. Release to attend any exam standardisation or moderation meetings as required by the exam boards should be agreed in advance with the Headteacher. Normally the costs of cover are reimbursed by the exam boards in these circumstances.
- In addition to financial interests, staff should exercise professional judgement in disclosing to the Headteacher any non-financial interests which may conflict with the interests of the school. 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.

### **Student Proms/Balls**

- These are not events which are run by the school – they are private events
- The school does not provide administrative or logistical support
- Staff do not attend these events

### **Other Policies:**

- All staff must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of Stratford Girls' Grammar School.
- All staff are expected to have a good understanding of and follow the school's policies, including the *Child Protection and Safeguarding, Behaviour, Use of ICT (Staff), Communications* and *Equality* policies, and implement the *Rewards and Sanctions* system consistently and fairly, including keeping records up-to-date on Behaviour Manager.
- All staff must familiarise themselves with school and national policies listed below.
- Staff should not deliberately behave in such a way as to bring the school into disrepute or jeopardise the school's or individual colleagues' reputations. This would be regarded as unacceptable professional conduct.
- Staff should not behave in a discriminatory manner (eg racist, sexist, homophobic etc - or about disability) or make discriminatory remarks about others (see *Equality Policy*).

### **Further reading:**

*Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct):* WES 2014

*Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE 2023)

*Working Together to Safeguard Children* (DfE 2018)

*Teachers' Standards* (DfE, July 2012, introduction updated June 2013)

*The use of force to control or restrain pupils* (DfE, 2013)

Stratford Girls' Grammar School key linked policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Safer Recruitment Procedures
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Physical Conduct and the Use of Force Policy
- ICT policies, including E-Safety and the various Acceptable Use Policies
- Communications



- Complaints
- Staff Absence from Work Policy
- Information Security Policy
- Financial Procedures Policy
- Gifts and Hospitality Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Equality Policy and Procedures

By adhering to this Code of Conduct staff can be assured that they are playing their part in safeguarding pupils and protecting themselves. It is our expectation that all staff should sign annually that they have read and agree to abide by this Code of Conduct.