



Staff Code of Conduct Policy

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Members of staff responsible	Headteacher
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People involved	LGB
Signed by Chair of LGB	Christine Robertson
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1. Aims, scope and principles

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

Many of the principles in this code of conduct are based on the [Teachers' Standards](#).

School staff have an influential position in the school and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards.

We expect all support staff, governors and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in our staff disciplinary procedures.

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils.

2. Legislation and guidance

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), we should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistle-blowing, as well as acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. General obligations

Staff set an example to pupils. They will:

- › Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- › Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school
- › Treat pupils and others with dignity and respect
- › Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others
- › Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and other protected characteristics
- › Not express personal beliefs in a way that exploits pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- › Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within
- › Adhere to the [Teachers' Standards](#)
- › Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in disciplinary action being taken against them, criminal action and/or other proceedings including barring by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) from working in regulated activity, or for acts of serious misconduct, prohibition from teaching by the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA).

4. Safeguarding

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect.

Staff will familiarise themselves with our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures, and the Prevent initiative, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child. Our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures are available on the School Website and in MyConcern. New staff will also be given copies on arrival.

All staff should know the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead and be familiar with local child protection arrangements, arrangements for managing allegations against staff, whistleblowing procedures and the *Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership* procedures.

Staff and managers should continually monitor and review practice to ensure this guidance is followed and should understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children.

4.1 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that anyone working in the school, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place inside or outside of school

We will deal with any such allegation quickly and in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be the headteacher, or the chair of governors where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation.

4.2 Low-level concerns about members of staff

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harm threshold, is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt'. For example, this may include:

- Being over-friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on a personal device
- Engaging in 1-to-1 activities where they can't easily be seen
- Humiliating pupils

Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy. We also encourage staff to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage staff to report it.

All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way.

Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed, and the staff member supported to correct it, at an early stage.

This creates and embeds a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff, while minimising the risk of abuse.

Reporting and responding to low-level concerns is covered in more detail in our child protection and safeguarding policy. This is available on the School Website and in MyConcern.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

4.3 Whistle-blowing

Whistle-blowing reports wrongdoing that it is “in the public interest” to report. Examples linked to safeguarding include:

- Pupils’ or staff members’ health and safety being put in danger
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement
- Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest

Staff are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. Their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and their confidentiality will be respected.

Staff should consider the examples above when deciding whether their concern is of a whistle-blowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or school procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

Staff should report their concern to the headteacher. If the concern is about the headteacher, or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the chair of the governing board.

Concerns should be made in writing wherever possible. They should include names of those committing wrongdoing, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter.

For our school’s detailed whistle-blowing process, please refer to our whistle-blowing policy.

5. Staff-pupil relationships

Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so.

If staff members and pupils must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

- This takes place in a public place that others can access
- Others can see into the room
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of school hours if possible.

Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes social media profiles.

While we are aware many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to pupils are not acceptable.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, or if a staff member is concerned at any point about a fellow staff member and a pupil, this should be reported in line with the procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

6. Communication and social media

School staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name, as pupils may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead, and set public profiles to private.

Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship. They will not make any efforts to find pupils' or parents' social media profiles.

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at the school without their consent.

Staff should be aware of the school's online safety policy.

7. Acceptable use of technology

Staff will not use technology in school or belonging to the school to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.

Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school equipment for personal use, in school hours or in front of pupils. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.

We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system.

Staff should be aware of the school's online safety policy and acceptable use policy.

8. Confidentiality

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the school, staff, pupils and their parents.

This information should never be:

- Disclosed to anyone unless required by law or with consent from the relevant party or parties
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, as detailed further in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

9. Honesty and integrity

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities.

Staff should be aware of and comply with the school's financial and administrative regulations and any other procedure manuals.

Staff will not accept bribes. Gifts that are worth more than £15 must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the school is correct. This should include:

- Background information (including any past or current investigations/cautions related to conduct outside of school)
- Qualifications
- Professional experience

Where there are any updates to the information provided to the school, the member of staff will advise the school as such as soon as reasonably practicable. Consideration will then be given to the nature and circumstances of the matter and whether this may have an impact on the member of staff's employment.

10. Dress code

Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner.

Staff should dress appropriately at all times for the tasks they undertake and ensure they promote a positive and professional image.

Clothes will not display any offensive or political slogans.

11. Conduct outside of work

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school, or the teaching profession, into disrepute. This covers conduct including but not limited to relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school on social media.

12. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually, but can be revised as needed. It will be approved by the Local Governing Board.

Our governing board will ensure this code of conduct is implemented effectively, and will ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard children and deal with any concerns.

13. Links with other policies

This policy links with our policies on:

- Staff disciplinary procedures, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct. It also sets out examples of what we will deem as misconduct and gross misconduct
- Staff grievance procedures
- Child protection and safeguarding
- Gifts and hospitality
- Online safety
- Whistle-blowing
- Email and home/school communications

14. Disciplinary Action

14.1. All staff should be aware that a failure to meet these standards of behaviour and conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

Your employment is exempt under the Exceptions Order of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and this will have been notified to you during the recruitment process. If you fail to declare any past, present or future court convictions, bindovers, cautions and any judgements or investigations pending, your employment may be terminated. Please see paragraph 10.1.3 of your contract on which convictions to declare.

14.2 *You are required to declare in writing any of the above to the Head teacher should they occur during employment with the school. Any such information will be considered in relation as to how it will affect the*

employment position. Failure to declare any relevant change to your criminal record status will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include dismissal in serious cases.

This policy/procedure is to be read in conjunction with all others that come under the Wyvern Safeguarding family of policies.

These are: Child Protection, Behaviour (including anti-bullying), Staff Code of Conduct, SRE, Intimate Care, Medical, Whistle-Blowing, Health and Safety, E-Safety, Safer Recruitment, Complaints, Allegations Procedures, Attendance (pupils), Data Protection, Looked after Children, Lone Working, Manual Handling, Pool Safety Operating Procedures, Violence at Work.

As such, reference is made to the key guidance documents: Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 and Guidance for Safer Working Practice 2019.

Wyvern Academy Staff Code of Conduct: Clarification on use of Personal Mobile Phones and Portable Devices.

General: Mobile phones have not been banned from school but as their use has been involved in high profile abuse cases in educational settings it is necessary to set clear guidelines for all staff in order to uphold the highest standards and protect staff from the risk of allegations.

Mobile phones should not be routinely carried on a member of staff's person during the school day and should be kept in a bag, locker or cupboard. Staff may use their mobile phone on breaks in the staff room or a quiet room, by agreement with SLT, and anywhere within the school before and after curriculum time (9am-3:30pm).

While staff will be expected to take a mobile phone with them on class trips for safety reasons, in such situations their use must be only for safety-related reasons (i.e. not personal or recreational reasons) for the duration of this trip.

Staff members attending after-school meetings or INSET days should keep phones on silent and should notify the speaker in advance if they have reason to be 'on call'.

Detailed Clarification:

Risk	Required Action
Taking photos/videos on personal device	Absolutely no photos or videos to be taken with staff personal devices (phone, camera, tablet, laptop etc.) in school, in school grounds or the wider campus or while out on a trip, walk or educational visit, whether there is a student in the picture or not.
Using phone during lesson time	No personal or work-related calls, emails, messages or texts to be made or taken on personal mobile phones or portable devices in the classrooms, corridors, yard or playgrounds during curriculum time, in or out of the presence of students. In the event that a member of staff has a very important personal need to be contactable, the school's main number should be given to the caller and office staff should be informed in advance where possible. If necessary a quiet, confidential room will be provided to take or return the call.
Disturbance of lessons due to ringing or notifications.	Any mobile device being stored in school during the day must be switched off or silenced when not in use.
Extended services	The above rules also include staff involved in student transport to and from school for the duration of the journey with pupils and any pick-up/drop-off periods. They also apply to periods of time at weekends and in holidays when school staff provide respite either in school or out in the community under an agreed SLA with Dorset County Council.

This should be read in conjunction with the school's E-Safety policy and the staff Acceptable Use Policy which all staff are required to read and sign.

Wyvern Academy Staff Code of Conduct: Clarification on expectations for academy staff undertaking *Direct Payment* work for students' families.

Introduction

Wyvern Academy staff represent a local and highly trained and trusted source of potential employees for parents wishing to use their Direct Payments (DP) to gain support or respite at home, out of school hours. DP work is a good source of extra income for Wyvern staff that doesn't impinge on their working hours and uses their existing skills and training.

As such there is no contractual or ethical reason why staff should not take up this sort of opportunity and while the confidentiality and conduct matters involved are fully covered by existing documents and policies, this guidance has been produced to provide clarity around particular aspects, in order to minimise the possibility of staff putting themselves at risk of an allegation.

Staff members undertaking DP work are responsible for establishing their working hours and pay rates; family expectations and for ensuring that their work at school is not adversely affected by fatigue. Under the Working Time Regulations 1998 there is a requirement that employees do not work more than 48 hours a week, unless the employee has chosen voluntarily to sign an opt-out agreement. Where this is the case, we have a responsibility to find out how many hours the staff member is working and, if more than 48 hours, ask the staff member to sign the opt-out agreement. In addition, if we believe that the staff member's own or others' (in particular our pupils') health and safety is being adversely affected by having two jobs, steps may have to be taken to reduce this risk, for example asking the staff member to work less hours or possibly give up the other job.

Transparency

- When staff members take up DP work with a family it is common for their relationship, outside of the school setting, to become more informal and even seem like becoming part of the family. This might include knowing all sorts of details about the family members' lives they might otherwise not know. It is also possible for boundaries to become blurred and so it is essential that the strictest confidentiality around information is maintained, out of the home and especially in school. The only exception to this would be if the staff member had safeguarding concerns which would need to be addressed through the child protection procedures.
- Any staff undertaking DP work for a Wyvern family should make this known to the senior leadership who will keep a register in line with the Working Time Regulations duty. Any difficulties or breakdown in relationship with the family should also be confidentially reported. The reason for this is that cases can sometimes spill over into school work which is potentially compromising for the staff member and might bring up issues around the pupil. Senior leadership may be required to become involved to support the staff member. It can also have an effect on which classes staff are placed in at school when relationship confusions might affect the pupil.
- On taking up DP work it will be necessary for the staff member to make sure the family understands the need to maintain a clear separation of business between the two employments. This will mean establishing that they cannot become a route for official communication between home and school (this should go through Home-School Diaries or contact with the Office). Other aspects of the Code of Conduct will also apply

Communication

- Communication with the family will naturally be necessary for day to day arrangements. Whilst there is clear guidance in place around staff use of mobile phones in school, this will often be the most convenient method to make arrangements and staff are reminded about the restrictions on where and when use of personal mobile phones is permitted. As senior leadership will be informed of any potentially inappropriate contact with families, this is another reason why making sure any DP work is known to them.

- Within the scope of communication is the use of social media, pictures and videos. It is entirely possible that the family worked for are frequent users of social media websites and apps and that staff members may appear in them from time to time. Here again openness about DP work will make sure anything reported to senior leadership is known about. Staff members are reminded about the school's rules on the appropriateness of photos. Whilst these rules are not enforceable outside of school business, as common-sense advice they are completely relevant in terms of avoiding unwelcome comments or accusations.

Conduct

- Although not under their Wyvern contract during their DP work, there is an obvious and unavoidable connection with Wyvern Academy and hence the conduct of the staff member will reflect on school. There is a completely understandable informality away from the school setting but it is nevertheless important, especially while out and about locally or on social media, to have consideration for the excellent reputation the school has in our community.
- In a similar vein, staff members do become ambassadors for the school by virtue of their day-job. It is not inappropriate to answer questions about the school or how things work in classes as long as no other individual pupils or staff members are discussed. We should all feel proud of our school and our standards and it is perfectly OK to explain what we do. However, if a family has any kind of complaint or grievance about school it is not the staff member's duty to defend school practices and decisions. This is part of the separation of business mentioned above as it would place the staff member in a very difficult and unfair position. If this situation arises the family must contact school directly and speak to the class teacher or the Head Teacher.
- Equally, there may, from time to time, be decisions in school the staff member does not personally agree with, understand or like. It is important in such a situation to maintain the separation of business and not share these concerns with the pupil's family.