

## BETHLEM AND MAUDSLEY HOSPITAL SCHOOL

### CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF

*See also Staff Code of Conduct incorporated in the SAFEGUARDING (CHILD PROTECTION) POLICY  
re. countering radicalisation, Female Genital Mutilation, etc.*

#### **Introduction and scope**

This Code of Conduct sets out the minimum standards that should apply to all staff, whether teacher or support staff (including volunteers), or visitors working with pupils on and off site. This Code is designed to be supportive and aims to help employees to maintain professional standards of behaviour and protect themselves from misunderstanding or criticism.

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to provide a framework for safe professional practice and effective partnerships between staff and parents/carers.

The Code does not supersede local operating guidelines nor the need for employees to fulfil their obligations laid down in their job description, work plan and contract of employment. It does not attempt to identify every school rule that exists but highlights some key rules, which broadly apply to all employees.

Also, staff in schools have a common law duty of care towards pupils and have a legal obligation to safeguard and promote the welfare and well-being of all pupils, whose needs must be the first and paramount consideration. (Children Act 1989, Education Act 2002, Education and Inspections Act 2006).

#### **1. Behaviour and standards**

‘Each employee shares a responsibility for recognising the sensitivities and feelings of others, which may be different from their own but no less valid. All employees should be committed to high standards in delivering work and dealing with colleagues, this will not only be about the tasks people do but the effect of their words, how they interact/engage with others and tackling discriminatory or inappropriate behaviour.’ (Respect at Work Policy – March 2014.) Employees also have a responsibility to not behave in such a way that may ‘bring the reputation of the school into disrepute’ outside of working hours particularly if they live and work in the local community. Employees have a responsibility to work with colleagues and treat them with respect.

Teachers are also subject to the standards of personal and professional conduct in the Teachers` Standards.

Employees will always be with at least one other member of staff when working with pupils.

At the Bethlem site, where staff work after the end of the school day, it will be expected that each person will check to see who else is left in the building. When this is the last person, it will be expected that they will make a final check on external doors and windows and that they will also inform the porters (extension 84550) of their lone working and likely time of leaving.

At the Maudsley site, in Mapother House, when staff work after the end of the school day, it will be expected that each person will check to see whether there are still school staff working in the classroom or office. If you are the last person, it will be expected that you will make a final check on classroom doors and windows and that you will inform the porters (extension 82311) of your lone working and likely time of leaving if this is to be after 7pm.

All employees are expected, without fear of recrimination, to report to the appropriate manager any impropriety or breach of procedure. The school has a procedure for `whistle blowing` (raising a concern) to facilitate this.

## **2. Appropriate dress**

The school expects all employees to dress appropriately whilst at work so that confidence of service users is maintained. Whilst the school values diversity and are not seeking to achieve a complete uniformity of dress style, the school does expect all employees` clothing at work to be neat, clean, modest and appropriate.

## **3. Confidentiality and disclosure of information**

Employees should not communicate to the public, press, television or any outside agency the contents of any documents relating to the school or the proceedings of any committee meeting that is confidential information unless required by law or authorised by an appropriate manager to do so. The only exception is in the case of elected Trade Union officials acting in their official capacity. However, Trade Union representatives would be expected to raise any issues through the normal channels through the school and/or the LA in the first instance.

Employees should not use any information obtained in the course of their employment for personal gain or benefit, nor should they pass it on to others who might use it in such a way, for example, passing dates for review of contracts for services before they are public knowledge.

Staff or volunteers in schools must not use confidential or sensitive information about a child or their family for their own benefit or to humiliate or embarrass a child. Confidential information about pupils or the school should not be shared casually. However, information that might suggest that a child is in need or at risk of significant harm must be shared with the designated person, in accordance with the safeguarding/child protection procedures.

#### **4. Social contact**

Staff should not establish or seek to establish any social contact with a pupil or their parents/carers. Unplanned or other social contact that happens outside of the school setting should be reported to the headteacher. Staff should not give their personal telephone numbers or email addresses to pupils or their parents. No member of staff will enter into extra or private tuition or childcare arrangements with parents without the permission of the headteacher. Staff should notify their line manager of any existing or previous family or social relationship with a pupil or their parents/carers.

#### **5. Physical contact**

When physical contact is made with pupils, it should be in response to their needs at that time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Physical contact should never be secretive or represent a misuse of authority. Extra caution should be exercised where a child is known to have suffered previous abuse or neglect. Such experiences may sometimes make a child exceptionally needy and demanding of physical contact and staff should respond sensitively by deterring the child through helping them to understand the importance of personal boundaries. Any extreme attention-seeking or behaviour by pupils that makes staff feel uncomfortable should be reported to a line manager. Staff supervising PE and games or providing music tuition may be required to initiate physical contact with pupils, the principle of "limited touch" should be applied, with understanding of pupils' sensitivities and with the pupil's agreement. Children are entitled to respect and privacy whilst they are changing or showering after games or swimming.

All adults should clearly understand the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their contacts with pupils. Intimate relationships between children/young people and the adults who work with them will be regarded as a grave breach of trust. Allowing or encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which might lead to an inappropriate relationship is also unacceptable. Staff must understand that any breaches in the law or professional expectations might lead to criminal or disciplinary action and barring.

#### **6. Home visits**

All work with pupils and parents should, wherever possible, be undertaken in the school or other recognised workplace. There are however occasions, in response to urgent or specific situations, where it is necessary to make one-off or regular home visits.

A risk assessment should include an evaluation of any known factors regarding the child/young person, parents and others living in the household. Following an assessment, appropriate risk management measures should be put in place before visits are agreed. Where little or no information is available, visits should not be made alone.

No child or young person should be in, or invited into, the home of an adult who works with them, unless the reason for this has been firmly established and agreed with parents/carers and a senior manager or headteacher.

#### **7. Educational visits and after-school activities**

Adults remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times and stays within clearly defined professional boundaries.

#### **8. Infatuations**

It is not unusual for pupils or, sometimes, their parents to develop infatuations or 'crushes' towards trusted staff. All such situations must be responded to sensitively to maintain the dignity of those concerned and any indications that this might be happening reported to the headteacher. In addition, the object of the pupils' or parent's affections may not even be aware of this; in this case colleagues must bring this to the colleague's attention and report this to the headteacher.

#### **9. Pupils in distress**

On those occasions when a pupil may be in distress and in need of comfort and reassurance, staff should ensure that they remain self-aware at all times and that their contact with the pupil is not open to misunderstanding. Such incidents must always be recorded and shared with a line manager.

#### **10. Care, control and physical intervention**

The school is committed to the use of positive behaviour management and staff will not use any form of physical punishment, threats, sarcasm or demeaning comments to deal with unacceptable behaviour. When children need to be restrained for their own protection or the protection of others, this must only be undertaken in accordance with the training and policy sanctioned by the senior leadership team and governing body. Any such incidents and physical interventions will be recorded and reported to parents/carers.

#### **11. Transporting or accompanying pupils off-site**

Staff will not be expected to transport or accompany pupils off-site on their own. However, in the event of an emergency situation (accompanying to a hospital), this may be appropriate. Staff will not use their own cars for transporting pupils, except in such an emergency where there is no alternative option.

#### **12. First aid**

All first aid will be administered only by suitably trained and accredited staff except in an emergency where the illness or injury is such that to delay assistance might cause harm to the child. Children who require any form of intimate care are entitled to privacy, dignity and safety. Pupils with ongoing health problems will be treated in accordance with any Medical Plan that has been agreed with the parent and the Health Authority and only by those who have been authorised to do so by the

headteacher. Lone members of staff should not be placed in a position where they are expected to provide any form of intimate care without the safeguard of having another colleague in the same room or area.

### **13. Curriculum**

Care should be taken to abide by the school's policy on sex and relationships education and the wishes of parents. The curriculum can include or raise a subject matter, which is sexually explicit or otherwise of a sensitive nature. Care should be exercised to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the lesson plan. The curriculum can sometimes lead to unplanned discussion of sensitive subject matters. Responding to pupils' questions requires careful judgments and guidance should be sought from members of the senior leadership team, as appropriate.

### **14. Photography, videos and other creative arts**

Written permission from pupils and their parents/carers must be obtained before taking photographs. This should be done on the standard school form. All images must be stored appropriately and securely and only used by those authorised to do so. Any images containing pupils will remain within the school.

Whilst photographic and video images can play a valuable role within the curriculum, after-school activities and to celebrate achievement, there is potential for such images and opportunities to be misused by adults with ulterior motives. Staff should be sensitive to the needs of pupils who may have been abused in this way or who appear uncomfortable when asked to participate in photography or filming.

Permission from pupils and their parents/carers must be obtained in relation to photography or filming of the young person.

### **15. Safeguarding**

Staff must be aware of the name of the designated person with responsibility for safeguarding pupils (and their deputy) and understand their responsibilities under the Safeguarding (Child Protection) policy. All staff have a responsibility to raise concerns about the inappropriate or worrying behaviour of a colleague: in good faith and without fear of repercussions. Staff must accept responsibility for their own actions and behaviour and avoid any conduct that might lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions. They must make a record of any incident and They must report their concerns to the designated person or, deputy designated persons: see the school's Safeguarding (Child Protection) policy. All staff are obliged to support the school's statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare and well-being of all pupils.

Where allegations are made about the mistreatment of a pupil by a member of staff or volunteer, the headteacher will follow the procedures adopted by the London Safeguarding Children Board, in consultation with relevant designated LA officers. In

the case where an allegation is made against the headteacher, the chair of the governing body will follow the above procedures.

Staff and volunteers working in schools must understand that any breaches in the law or professional expectations might lead to criminal or disciplinary action and barring,

Under the Southwark Safeguarding Board advice, staff are asked to complete a new DBS application every 3 years. Staff should in the interim period declare to the headteacher/chair of governors any caution, conviction or if bound over as soon as possible.

## **16. Whistleblowing**

If employees have concerns about something that is happening at work which they believe could be unlawful conduct, financial malpractice, a concern for the welfare or safeguarding of a child or be dangerous to the public or the environment, it is important that you bring it to the school's attention.

## **17. Relationships with contractors**

All relationships of a business or private nature with external contractors, or potential contractors, must be made known to the headteacher and/or governing body and properly recorded. All employees who engage or supervise contractors or who have any other official relationship with contractors and have previously had or currently have a relationship in a private or domestic capacity with contractors, must also declare that relationship. A Declaration of Interest pro-forma is available for such notification.

Orders and contracts must be awarded on merit, by fair competition against other tenderers and no special favour should be shown to businesses or consultancies run by, for example, friends, partners or relatives, in the tendering process.

## **18. Appointment and other employment matters**

All employees involved in appointments should ensure that these are made on the basis of merit. It would be unlawful for an employee to make an appointment that was based on anything other than the ability of the candidate to undertake the duties of the post. The school's recruitment and selection procedure must be strictly observed. In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias, employees should not be involved in an appointment where they are related to an applicant or have a close personal relationship outside work with him or her.

Staff should make the headteacher/chair of governors aware of any personal relations with other staff members or governors that might lead to a conflict of interests or cast doubt on the integrity of the school/service; especially where one or other of the parties holds a management or leadership role.

Similarly, employees should not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, capability, promotion or pay adjustments for any employee who is a relative, partner, close friend, etc.

### **19. Relationships with the local community and service users**

Employees should always remember their responsibilities to the community they serve and ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery to all groups and individuals within that community as defined by the policies of the governing body and LA.

### **20. Outside commitments**

Employees' off-duty hours are their own personal concern. However, employees should not take up any outside activities or employment, whether paid or unpaid, which conflicts with or reacts detrimentally, or has such potential, to the school's interests, or which exposes themselves to a significant health risk. Some employees have contracts of employment that require them to obtain written consent from an appropriate manager to take up any outside employment. All employees should be clear about their contractual obligations and should not take up outside employment that conflicts with the school's interests or exposes themselves to a significant health risk.

Employees should follow the LA's rules on the ownership of intellectual property or copyright created during their employment. All patents, trademarks and other rights in inventions or concepts that are created or developed by employees during and arising from or related to their employment belongs to the LA, subject to any rights acquired by employees under the Patents Act 1977. The LA also owns the copyright in all work produced by employees during their employment.

### **21. Personal interests**

Employees must declare to an appropriate manager any financial or non-financial interests they consider could bring about a conflict with the school's interests.

Headteachers, members of governing bodies, teachers and senior managers are required to declare membership of any organisation not open to the public without formal membership and commitment of allegiance and which has secrecy about rules or membership or conduct. A Declaration of Interests pro-forma is available for such notification. All other staff are encouraged to declare such membership to an appropriate manager.

### **22. Equality issues**

The Local Authority has a duty to promote community cohesion and members of that local community, customers and other employees have a right to be treated with fairness. All employees should ensure that they are aware of the school's policies relating to equality issues and managing diversity and that all such policies are complied with fully, both in letter and spirit.

It is a personal responsibility of all employees to take all necessary steps to ensure that they do not discriminate against members of the local community, customers or other employees on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic and national origins, sex, marital status, domestic circumstances, sexual orientation, disability, age, class, ethical beliefs, basic skills or trade union activity. All employees must also do whatever is reasonable and appropriate to promote equality of opportunity in whatever way and whenever they can.

### **23. Separation of roles during tendering**

Employees involved in the tendering process and dealing with contractors should be clear on the separation of client and contractor roles within the school.

Headteachers or senior managers who have both a client and contractor responsibility must be aware of the need for accountability and openness.

Employees in contractor or client units must exercise fairness and impartiality when dealing with all customers, suppliers, other contractors and sub-contractors.

Employees who are privy to confidential information on tenders or costs, for either internal or external contractors, should not disclose that information to any unauthorised party or organisation.

Employees should ensure that no special favour is shown to current or recent former employees or their partners, close relatives or associates in awarding contracts to businesses or consultancies run by them or employing them in a senior or relevant managerial capacity.

### **24. Gifts and corruption**

Employees must be aware that it is a serious criminal offence for them corruptly to receive or give any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage for doing, or not doing, anything or showing favour, or disfavour, to any person, including members of the public, in their official capacity. If an allegation is made, under the Prevention of Corruption Act 1916, that an employee is deemed to have received the reward, etc. corruptly, it is for the employee to demonstrate that any such rewards have not been corruptly obtained.

However, it is acknowledged that a teacher may, owing to a long-standing tradition, often be given small tokens by pupils, parents and/or carers at certain times of the year. The teacher must inform his/her headteacher, if the value of the token is likely to exceed £10.00. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis.

Personal gifts should not be given by staff to pupils and any reward to a child should be consistent with the school's behaviour policy, recorded and not based upon favouritism.

Employees should not accept significant personal gifts from contractors and external suppliers, although the school does allow employees to keep items of token value

such as pens, diaries, etc. In all cases, advice should be sought from the headteacher or governing body.

## **25. Use of financial resources**

Employees must ensure that they use public funds entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner. They should strive to ensure value for money to the local community and to avoid legal challenge to the school. All employees should ensure that they have an appropriate awareness of the school's financial regulations and that their actions fully comply with those regulations.

## **26. Hospitality**

Employees should only accept offers of hospitality if there is a genuine need to impart information or represent the school in the community. Offers to attend purely social, entertainment or sporting functions should be accepted only when these are part of the life of the community or where the school should be seen to be represented. All such offers of hospitality should be properly authorised and recorded by the relevant manager.

When hospitality has to be declined, those making the offer should be courteously but firmly informed of the procedures and standards operating within the school.

When receiving authorised hospitality, employees should be particularly sensitive as to its timing in relation to decisions which the school may be taking affecting or potentially affecting those providing the hospitality.

Acceptance by employees of hospitality through attendance at relevant conferences and courses is acceptable where it is clear the hospitality is corporate rather than personal, where the headteacher/governing body gives consent in advance and where the headteacher/governing body is satisfied that any purchasing decisions are not compromised. Where visits to inspect equipment, etc, are required, employees should ensure that the school meets the cost of such visits to avoid jeopardising the integrity of subsequent purchasing decisions.

## **27. Sponsorship – giving and receiving**

Where an outside organisation wishes to sponsor or is seeking to sponsor a school activity, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily, the basic conventions concerning acceptance of gifts or hospitality apply. Particular care must be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors.

Where the school wishes to sponsor an event or service, neither an employee nor any partner, spouse or relative must benefit from such sponsorship in a direct way without there being full disclosure to the headteacher/governing body of any such interest. Similarly, where the school through sponsorship, grant aid, financial or other means, gives support in the community, employees should ensure that impartial advice is given and that there is no conflict of interest involved.

**28. Debts and rent and/or council tax arrears**

Where employees are tenants or former tenants of the LA, they should not fall into arrears with payments of rent or council tax. Where any such arrears have been accrued prior to employment with the LA, and are still outstanding, employees should undertake to clear them within an agreed and reasonable period of time.

**29. Use of school property and facilities for personal use**

Employees are not normally permitted to use office equipment, e.g. personal computers, facsimile machines, photocopiers and the like, for personal use. Employees must not allow the school address to be used for personal mail deliveries without prior authorisation from the headteacher.

**30. Answering telephones**

All employees should ensure that telephones are answered quickly, efficiently, helpfully and politely usually within five rings and should be aware the school may record telephone conversations for ensuring compliance with its policies and procedures and this code of conduct.

**31. Answering correspondence**

In general, correspondence should be acknowledged within three working days of receipt and a full reply sent within two weeks.

All member enquiries should be answered within ten working days, but in exceptional circumstances (which should be relayed to the member), a further three weeks may be allowed.

**32. Use of telephones, e-mail and internet**

Employees are not permitted to make personal use of telephones, e-mail and internet facilities during work time. They may only use them at the headteacher's discretion at break or lunchtimes or when there is an urgent need to contact someone in an emergency. The time spent should be kept to a minimum. Employees should also inform their family and friends only to contact them at work when it is necessary.

Staff may not use their personal mobile phones in the classroom.

Employees must not view their computer or anything stored on it as personal. They must not download, store, display, view, retrieve or send electronic material that uses un-authorised encryption, contains programme files, is obscene, indecent, sexist, racist, defamatory, abusive, in breach of copyright, confidential, may constitute harassment, violate an individual's dignity, or create an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or otherwise inappropriate environment. Headteachers may access to an employee mailbox or gain access to internet usage reports for the following reasons at any time with no notice to:

- ensure compliance with this policy
- monitor standards of service or
- prevent, investigate or detect unauthorised use of the IT system or criminal activities.

If pupils are found to have accessed such images, this should be reported to the headteacher.

It is also strictly forbidden to download any software from or to load software onto the school's IT system except with the prior written authorisation of the headteacher and the IT network manager.

Employees should use the internet and electronic mail in exactly the same way as they would correspond to anyone on school headed notepaper and must remember that all electronic mail falls within the framework of the Data Protection legislation. Employees must not correspond on any aspect of school business, unless it falls within the employee's job description and should not be treated as a confidential means of communication.

### **33. Use of Social Media**

#### **Introduction**

Social media is the term commonly given to websites and online tools allowing users to interact with each other; by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests. Social media can include any website where comments and or information can be shared and are considered to be in the public domain; for example, photo sharing, blogs, as well as the more well-known social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook.

This guidance aims to help school staff make responsible decisions to ensure they are using them in line with the school's Code of Conduct. They must be used carefully to avoid potential pitfalls. Where actions in using social media are judged to contravene the school's Code of Conduct employees may face disciplinary action and potentially summary dismissal (dismissal without notice), this may include activities outside employment.

#### **Protocol**

The basic premise is to exercise common sense. What you write on social networking sites is essentially in the public domain, even if you have privacy settings or material is posted on a closed profile or group.

- You should only use social media in your capacity as an employee of the school where this is an appropriate communication tool which must be specifically endorsed by your headteacher.
- If you are not using social media to support you directly in your employed position, you should always access this in your personal time.
- In any circumstance:

- Be accurate, fair, thorough and transparent.
  - Be mindful that what you publish may be public for a long time.
  - Respect copyright and data protection laws as well as maintaining confidential information.
  - Do not publish or report information or conversations that are accessed through your employment at the school without explicit permission. "Conversations" may be oral or e-mail exchanges.
  - Do not use swear words or use derogatory language.
  - It is unacceptable to use social media in a manner that would generally be accepted as a hostile attempt to hurt, upset or embarrass another person, or groups of people, associated with the school.
  - Never refer to stakeholders, suppliers or staff in a way that they can identify individuals.
  - Never represent or reproduce the Southwark logo or the school logo without authorisation.
  - Do not publish images relating to users of the school's services unless consent has been given in writing.
  - Be aware of safeguarding issues and materials which may adversely impact on children and vulnerable adults. Challenge and report inappropriate use of media.
- In addition, in your personal use of social media:
- Ensure that your online activities or expressed opinions do not interfere with or conflict with your job or your colleagues (for example, many roles within schools are viewed as role models, views expressed should not conflict with this).
  - If you are identifiable as a school employee on social networks, ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you should present yourself with colleagues and users of school services.
  - Do not download or copy school materials without permission.
  - If you publish content to a website not owned by the school and it has something to do with work that you do as an employee of the school (e.g. evident from your profile), use a disclaimer such as: "The views expressed here are my own and do not necessarily represent the views of my employer."
  - Maintain boundaries between your personal and professional lives, including customising your privacy settings and avoiding inappropriate personal information becoming visible to members of the group (please note that information can be passed on by individuals that have been allowed access to and any inappropriate views or content will be viewed as contravening the Code of Conduct).

**34. Health and safety issues**

All employees should ensure that they are fully aware of their own duties and responsibilities under the health and safety at work legislation. The school participates in the Education Support Partnership (advice and support for wellbeing of people working in education). A copy of the school's Health and Safety policy is available for each employee.

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