



**BROADHURST SCHOOL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF**

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# CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF

## Your Duties and Responsibilities

You are under a duty to comply with the standards of behaviour required by the school and to behave in a reasonable manner at all times.

## Duty of Care

At Broadhurst School we believe that all those working with children must set an appropriate example. This code of conduct applies to all those working within our school, regardless of status, and you are advised to familiarise yourself with this important set of standards which we ask you to observe and comply with.

## Code of Conduct (as per contract and employee handbook)

All staff, whether paid or voluntary, have a duty to keep young people safe and to protect them from physical and emotional harm. This duty is in part exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between staff and pupils and behaviour by staff that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement. They should always act, and be seen to act, in the child's best interests.

## Guidance for safe working practice for the protection of children and staff

- The welfare of the child is paramount (Children Act 1989).
- Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- Staff should work and be seen to work in an open and transparent way.
- Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from the Headmistress over any incident, which may give rise to concern.
- Records should be made of any such incident and of decisions made and/or further actions agreed.
- Staff should apply the same professional standards regardless of gender or sexuality.
- All staff should know the name of their designated person for child protection, be familiar with child protection arrangements and understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children.
- Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.

## Attendance and Timekeeping

Staff must:

- comply with the rules relating to notification of absence set out in the school's absence procedure
- arrive at work promptly, ready to start work at your contracted starting time
- remain at work until your contracted finishing time
- obtain management authorisation if for any reason you wish to arrive later or leave earlier than your agreed normal start and finish times

The school reserves the right not to pay you in respect of working time lost because of poor timekeeping. Persistent poor timekeeping may result in disciplinary action.

## **Conduct Standards**

Staff must:

- maintain satisfactory standards of performance at work
- comply with all reasonable management instructions
- co-operate fully with your colleagues and with management
- ensure the maintenance of acceptable standards of politeness
- take all necessary steps to safeguard the school's public image and preserve positive relationships with all persons and organisations connected to the school
- ensure that you behave in a way that does not constitute unlawful discrimination
- comply with the school's Operating Policies and Procedures

Unless otherwise instructed, personal mobile telephones must be switched off or switched to silent mode at all times during normal working hours. They should NOT at any time be used inside the classrooms, toilets, corridors, stairwells, changing areas and in the vicinity of children. Lockers are provided for all teaching staff for the safekeeping of mobile phones during the school day.

## **Flexibility**

You may be required to work additional hours at short notice, in accordance with the needs of the business.

You may also be required to undertake duties outside your normal job remit and to work at locations other than your normal place of work.

## **Confidentiality**

You must keep confidential, except as required by law, both during your employment and at any time after its termination, all information gained in the course of your employment about the School and that of all persons and organisations connected to the School.

## **Conduct while representing the School**

As a general rule, behaviour outside of normal working hours is a personal matter and does not directly concern the School. However, there are some exceptions to this rule. The School will become involved when incidents occur:

- at parties or other work-related social occasions or gatherings
- at social occasions or gatherings organised by a third party, where you have been invited in your capacity as a representative of the School
- at work related conferences
- while working away on business on behalf of the School

On these occasions you are expected to behave in an appropriate and responsible manner, keeping in mind that you are representing the School. You are instructed specifically not to consume any alcohol at such events where you are driving.

If your conduct brings the School into disrepute you will be subject to the School's disciplinary procedure. Such behaviour may be viewed as a gross misconduct offence and could render you liable to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal without notice.

## **Outside activities and other employment**

You are not permitted to engage in any activity outside your employment with the school that could reasonably be interpreted as competing with the school.

You are not permitted to be employed by the family of any current pupil in any capacity, this includes as a tutor.

You are required to seek permission from management before taking on any other employment while employed by the school.

## **Health and Safety**

It is your duty and responsibility to familiarise yourself with, and to comply with, the school or any third party's health and safety policies and procedures. Breach of these rules may result in disciplinary action, up to and including the termination of your employment without notice for gross misconduct.

You must report all accidents, however minor, as soon as possible, making a comprehensive entry in the school's Accident Book.

## **Dress and Appearance**

Your personal appearance makes an important contribution to the School's reputation and image. For this reason, it is important that your dress and appearance is professional and reflects the environment in which you work.

You will be expected to comply with any management instructions concerning dress and appearance. (see dress and appearance policy)

## **Property and Equipment**

You are not permitted to make use of school or a third party's telephone, postal or other services for personal purposes.

You must not remove property or equipment from school or a third party's premises unless for use on authorised business or with the permission of management.

Where you damage property belonging to the school either through misuse or carelessness, the school reserves the right to make a deduction from your pay in respect of the damaged property.

On termination of your employment you must return all school property, such as keys, laptops, iPads, mobile telephones, documents or any other items belonging to the school.

## **Clear Desk Policy**

To improve the security and confidentiality, you are required to ensure that when your workstation is unoccupied you take all necessary steps to clear your work station of any sensitive and confidential information.

This ensures that all sensitive and confidential information, whether it be on paper, a storage device, or a hardware device, is properly locked away or disposed of when a workstation is not in use. This policy will reduce the risk of unauthorized access, data protection breaches, loss of, and damage to information during and outside of normal business hours or when workstations are left unattended.

Whenever a desk is unoccupied for an extended period of time the following will apply:

- All sensitive and confidential paperwork must be removed from the desk and locked in a drawer or filing cabinet. This includes mass storage devices such as CDs, DVDs, and USB drives;
- All waste paper which contains sensitive or confidential information must be placed in the designated confidential waste bins. Under no circumstances should this information be placed in regular waste paper bins;
- Computer workstations must be locked when the desk is unoccupied and completely shut down at the end of the work day;
- Laptops, tablets, and other hardware devices must be removed from the desk and locked in a drawer or filing cabinet;
- Keys for accessing drawers or filing cabinets should not be left unattended at a desk.

Printers and fax machines should be treated with the same care.

## **Personal Searches**

The school may reasonably request to search your clothing, personal baggage, personal storage areas or vehicles. An authorised person must conduct any such search in the presence of an independent witness. Should you refuse such a request, the school will require the appropriate authorities to conduct the search on behalf of the school. Failure to co-operate with the school in this respect may be treated as gross misconduct.

## **Personal Property**

You are solely responsible for the safety of your personal possessions on school premises and should ensure that your personal possessions are kept in a safe place at all times. If you find an item of lost property on the premises, you are required to inform management immediately.

## **Environment**

In order to provide a cost-effective service, you are requested to use school equipment, materials and services efficiently. You should try to reduce wastage and the subsequent impact on the environment by ensuring that you close windows, avoid using unnecessary lighting or heating or leaving taps running, switch off equipment when it is not in use and handle all materials with care.

## **Meetings**

The School will normally arrange for summary minutes to be taken at any formal meeting. It is not the policy of the School to record meetings by any other means (e.g. digital, audio recording and photographs). You (or any party accompanying you) must not record any meeting without the express permission of the School in advance. Where a meeting is to be recorded then parties must agree to it in advance. If requested, a copy of the minutes/recording will be provided (in line with data protection principles).

## **Exercise of Professional Judgement**

This guidance cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for staff. There will be occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or take action in the best interests of the child or young person which could contravene this guidance or where no guidance exists. Individuals are expected to make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the children in their charge and in so doing, will be seen to be acting reasonably.

Where no specific guidance exists staff should:

- discuss the circumstances that informed their action, or their proposed action, with a senior colleague. This will help to ensure that the safest practices are employed and reduce the risk of actions being misinterpreted
- always discuss any misunderstanding, accidents or threats with the Headmistress.
- always record discussions and actions taken with their justifications.

## **Social Contact**

Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils or their parents for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. Even if the child or parents seek to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise her/his professional judgement in making a response and be aware that such social contact could be misconstrued.

Staff should not give their personal mobile phone numbers or email addresses to parents or carers, nor should they communicate with them through social media, by text message or personal email. If they need to speak to a parent by telephone, they should use one of the school's telephones and email through the school office.

They should advise the Headmistress of any regular social contact they have with a pupil which may give rise to concern and report and record any situation, which they feel, might compromise the school or their own professional standing.

If a member of staff is asked to babysit or provide holiday childcare to a pupil of Broadhurst School, she must decline. It is the School's policy that staff are not permitted to work for families with children at Broadhurst School and should always seek permission from the Headmistress before working for any other family.

## **Physical Contact**

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role.

A 'no touch' approach is impractical for most staff and may in some circumstances be inappropriate. When physical contact is made with pupils this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate given their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. Staff should therefore, use their professional judgement at all times.

Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported to the Headmistress and recorded as soon as possible and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the child's file.

This means that staff should be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described. They should never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent and always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny. Staff should never indulge in excessive horseplay or fun fights.

Physical contact, which occurs regularly with an individual child or young person, is likely to raise questions unless the justification for this is part of a formally agreed plan (for example in relation to pupils with SEN or physical disabilities). Any such contact should be the subject of an agreed and open school policy and subject to review. Where feasible, staff should seek the child's permission before initiating contact. Staff should listen, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and – so far as is possible - use a level of contact which is acceptable to the child for the minimum time necessary.

Extra caution may be required where it is known that a child has suffered previous abuse or neglect. In the child's view, physical contact might be associated with such experiences and lead to staff being vulnerable to allegations of abuse. It is recognised that many such children are extremely needy and seek out inappropriate physical contact. In such circumstances staff should deter the child sensitively by helping them to understand the importance of personal boundaries.

The general culture of 'limited touch' should be adapted, where appropriate, to the individual requirements of each child. Children with special needs may require more physical contact to assist their everyday learning. The arrangements should be understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the child's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny.

### **Physical Education and other activities which require physical contact**

Some staff, for example those who teach PE and games, will, on occasions, have to initiate physical contact with pupils in order to support a child so they can perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument or assist them with an exercise. This should be done with the pupil's agreement. The adult should always explain to a pupil the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take.

Contact under these circumstances should be for the minimum time necessary to complete the activity and take place in an open environment. Staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the child.

In the case of intimate care of a pupil, staff should refer to the Intimate Care Policy.

### **Physical Restraint**

Any physical restraint is only permissible when a child is in imminent danger of inflicting an injury on himself or on another, and then only as a last resort when all efforts to diffuse the situation have failed. Another member of staff should, if possible, be present to act as a witness. All incidents of the use of physical restraint should be recorded in writing and reported immediately to the Headmistress/DSL who will decide what to do next. As an EYFS setting, parents will be informed of any physical restraint used on their child the same day or as soon as reasonably practicable.

### **Pupils in distress or needing someone to talk to**

There may be occasions when a distressed child needs comfort and reassurance. This may include age-appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance s/he should seek further advice from a member of SMT. Adults should consider the way in which they offer comfort to a distressed pupil and always tell a colleague when and how they offered comfort to a distressed child.

In general, pupils should be encouraged to discuss with their parents or guardians' issues that are troubling them. It is however appropriate to suggest that a pupil sees a trusted adult in school, their class teacher or assistant teacher. In these situations, staff need to ensure that their behaviour does not inadvertently lay them open to allegations of abuse.

### **Behaviour Management**

All pupils have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Corporal punishment is unlawful in all schools. Equally, staff should not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a pupil. The use of humour can help to defuse a situation. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards pupils is not acceptable in any situation. Adults should not use force as a form of punishment and try to defuse situations before they escalate. They should adhere to the school's behaviour management policy.



## Sexual contact with young people

Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a child is both inappropriate and illegal. Children are protected by the same laws as adults in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour. They are additionally protected by specific legal provisions regardless of whether the child consents or not. This includes the prohibition on adults in a position of trust. It is an offence for a person aged 18 or over, such as a teacher, to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if, in the case of those over 16, the relationship is consensual.

Adults should not pursue sexual relationships with children either in or out of school and avoid any form of communication with a child that could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative. There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' where the sole purpose is to gain the trust of a child and manipulate that relationship so sexual abuse can take place. Staff should be aware that conferring special attention and favour upon a child might be construed as being part of a 'grooming' process, which is an offence.

## One to one situations

Staff working in one to one situations with children may be more vulnerable to allegations. Teachers and others should recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure the safety and security needs of both staff and pupils are met. Adults should:

- avoid meetings with pupils in remote, secluded areas of school
- ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in one to one situations
- inform other staff of the meeting beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by
- always report any situation where a child becomes distressed or angry to a senior colleague
- consider the needs and circumstances of the child/children involved.

## Transporting Children

Wherever possible and practicable it is advisable that transport is undertaken other than in private vehicles, with at least one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort. It is inadvisable for a teacher to give a lift in a car to a pupil alone.

Staff should ensure that their behaviour is safe and that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. They should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.

***If there are exceptional circumstances that make unaccompanied transportation of pupils unavoidable, the journey should be made known to the Headmistress before embarking on the journey or another senior member of staff.***

## Educational Visits

Staff should take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere of a school outing. During school activities that take place off the school site or out of school hours, a more relaxed discipline or informal dress and language code may be acceptable. However, staff remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour cannot be interpreted as seeking to establish an inappropriate relationship or friendship. Adults should always have another adult present in out of school activities, unless otherwise agreed with senior staff in school and ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times.

## Photography, videos and other creative arts

Many school activities involve recording images. These may be undertaken as part of the curriculum, for publicity, or to celebrate achievement. Staff need to be aware of the potential for these aspects of teaching to be misused for pornographic or 'grooming' purposes. Careful consideration should be given as to how these activities are organised and undertaken. Particular regard needs to be given when they involve young or vulnerable pupils who may be unable to question why or how the activities are taking place.

Children who have been previously abused in this way may feel threatened by the use of photography, filming etc in the teaching environment. Staff should remain sensitive to any children who appear uncomfortable and should recognise the potential for misinterpretation.

Adults should be clear about the purpose of the activity and about what will happen to the photographs when the lesson/activity is concluded. **Photographs should be taken on the school equipment only and the taking of images on personal mobile phones/lpads is strictly prohibited.** Staff should be able to justify images of children in their possession and avoid making images in one to one situations.

## Cyber Security

Staff should follow the Acceptable User and Cyber-Security Policies at all times.

## Online Safety

As schools increasingly work online, it is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues. Child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and sexual predation- technology, often provide the platforms that facilitate harm.

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into three areas of risk:

- content - being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material
- contact - being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users
- conduct - personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes harm

The school does all that it reasonably can to limit pupils' exposure to the above risks from the school's IT system. Appropriate monitoring systems are in place, which are informed in part by the risk assessment carried out as required by our Prevent duty.

As part of the induction process and as part of a collection of key policies that must read, all staff are familiarised with the school's Online Safety and Acceptable User (including Cyber Security) Policy. This policy sets out clearly the school's approach to online safety, the use of technology in school, staff use of social media and the mechanisms in place to identify, intervene and escalate any incident where appropriate. This policy is reviewed on an annual basis. All staff receive training and updates on online safety and this forms an integral and considered part of the school's overarching approach to safeguarding.

When signing in, visitors are made aware that personal mobile devices, such as mobile phones and tablets, must not be used on the School site in the presence of children.

## Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and the Headmistress and report any behaviour by colleagues that raise concern. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

A “whistleblower” is someone who discovers something that is wrong and alerts his employer or the relevant authorities to what is going on. The law protects whistleblowers from their employer subjecting them to detriment or dismissal by reason of their having “blown the whistle” and from detrimental treatment by their colleagues. There are procedures for reporting and handling concerns, provision for mediation and dispute resolution where necessary. Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with the school or feels that their concerns are genuinely not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels may be open to them.

General guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing> or they can use the **NSPCC whistleblowing helpline (Tel: 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00am-8:00pm, Monday to Friday and email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk))**. Please refer to the Whistleblowing Policy and the Complaints Policy for further details. Information on when to and how to report concerns are disseminated through new staff induction and basic safeguarding training.

- **Camden Council’s confidential and independent helpline for protected disclosure on 0800 734199**
- **The Ofsted whistle-blowing line on 0300 123 3155**
- **The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline on 0800 028 0285.**

The Headmistress is responsible for ensuring that these numbers are advertised on the school premises and made available to staff and pupils.

## Low Level Concerns

A low level concern is any inappropriate, problematic and concerning behaviour concern that an adult has acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work
- doesn’t meet the threshold of harm or is not considered serious enough for the school or college to refer to the local authority.

Low-level concerns are part of a spectrum of behaviour. This includes:

- inadvertent or thoughtless behaviour
- behaviour that might be considered inappropriate depending on the circumstances
- behaviour which is intended to enable abuse.

Examples of such behaviour could include:

- being over friendly with children
- having favourites
- adults taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or abusive language.
- Why do schools need to respond to low-level concerns?
- Having clear procedures for responding to low-level concerns is part of creating a school culture of openness, transparency and trust. It helps ensure that adults consistently model the school’s values and helps keep children safe and protected from humiliation. It will also protect adults working in school from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.

Any concern, however small should be reported to the Headmistress. A concern can still be significant even if it does not meet the threshold of harm.

Schools should ensure adults understand:

- what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate behaviour
- what a low-level concern is
- the importance of sharing low-level concerns
- how to report any concerns
- the process for recording, reviewing and responding to concerns.

### **Procedure for reporting Low Level Concerns**

All low level concerns that do not meet the harm threshold, should be shared in an attempt to create a school culture of openness, trust and transparency in which Broadhurst School's values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff. These values are set out in the staff Code of Conduct Policy.

Reports about supply staff and contractors should be notified to their employers so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified

When a low-level concern has been raised by a third party, the Headmistress should collect as much evidence as possible by speaking where possible with the person who raised the concern, to the individual involved and to any witnesses.

Reports of low-level concerns should be recorded in writing, with details of the concern, the context in which it arose and action taken.

The name of the person reporting should be noted, respecting wishes to remain anonymous as far as reasonably possible.

Records of low-level concerns should be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified and responded to.

Where a pattern of behaviour is identified, the school should decide on a course of action. This might be internal disciplinary procedures, or referral to the LADO if the harms threshold is met.

The school must consider if any wider cultural issues in school that enabled the behaviour to occur and if appropriate policies could be revised or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of recurrence.

The rationale for all decisions and actions taken must be recorded.

The school must consider if any wider cultural issues in school that enabled the behaviour to occur and if appropriate policies could be revised or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of recurrence.

## **Breach of this policy**

A breach of the school's standards of behaviour is likely to result in disciplinary action being taken.

### **Gross Misconduct**

Set out below are details of behaviour that the school views as gross misconduct, which is likely to result in dismissal without notice. This list is not exhaustive. Such behaviour includes:

- theft, dishonesty or fraud
- deliberate recording of incorrect working hours
- unauthorised absence
- smoking on school or a third party's premises or in a vehicle belonging to the school
- sleeping during working hours
- assault, acts of violence or aggression
- bullying
- unacceptable use of obscene or abusive language
- possession or use of or being under the influence of non-medicinal drugs or alcohol on school premises or during working hours
- wilful damage to school, employee or third party property
- serious insubordination
- serious or gross negligence
- bringing the school into disrepute
- falsification of records or other school documents, including those relating to obtaining employment
- unlawful discrimination, including acts of indecency or harassment
- refusal to carry out reasonable management instructions
- gambling, bribery or corruption
- serious breach of health and safety policies and procedures
- breach of confidentiality, including the unauthorised disclosure of school information to the media or any other party
- unauthorised accessing or use of computer data
- unauthorised copying of computer software