BUTE HOUSE
PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Staff Behaviour (Code of Conduct) Policy

Person responsible	**Head & Director of People and Development**
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Contents

1. Introduction and Aims
2. Scope and Responsibilities
3. Staff Guidance
4. General Guidelines on Conduct with Pupils
5. Additional Guidance for Staff on Residential Trips
6. Online Safety
7. Photographs, Videos and Images of Children
8. One-to-One Contact with Pupils
9. Physical Contact During the Teaching of Practical Subjects
10. Visits to Pupils' Homes and Meeting Socially out of School
11. Staff Communication
12. Allegations Made by Pupils Against Staff
13. Concerns About a Colleague
14. Monitoring and Review

1. Introduction and Aims

By virtue of their employment in education, all staff are legally considered to be in a *relationship of trust* with pupils, and care must therefore be taken to ensure that there is no *abuse of trust* as set out in law. This Policy applies to all staff and volunteers in the School regardless of their position, role or responsibility. References to "staff" or "you" throughout this Policy relate to all the following groups:

- all members of staff, including teaching and support staff
- volunteers, including governors
- casual workers
- temporary and supply staff, either from agencies or engaged directly
- student placements, including those undertaking initial teacher training and apprentices

All staff have a role to play in safeguarding the pupils and ensuring that everyone can work in an environment that respects and values differences and diversity. Discrimination, bullying and harassment are not tolerated in the School and will be addressed as a serious matter.

The Staff Behaviour Policy includes advice on staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media and with reference to statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education. This Policy should also be read in conjunction with the Low-Level Concerns and Whistleblowing Policies.

Staff are expected to always behave – both inside and outside of School – in a manner that will not bring the School into disrepute, including on social media.

The aims of this Policy are:

- To protect children: the definition of a child under the *Children Act 1989* is a young person under the age of 18. This Policy is thus linked to the School's Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy.
- To protect staff against false or exaggerated claims or accusations by pupils. These may be mistaken, i.e. made in good faith by a pupil who has misinterpreted words or actions, or malicious, i.e. untrue and made with the intent to cause the recipient distress or anxiety. For the protection of staff, the definition of a pupil for this Policy is a young person up to the age of 18 who has ever attended the School or who is visiting the School.
- To comply with all relevant legislation: in particular, dealing with the protection of children, including the *Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000* which created a new offence of abuse of trust.
- To comply with all relevant guidelines on best practice issued by the Department for Education, the Home Office or other agencies.
- To ensure staff understand that safeguarding children from all risk of harm is an important part of a School's work and protecting them from extremism is one aspect of that.

2. Scope and Responsibilities

The relationship between staff and pupils is a professional one.

The basic assumption in this Policy and guidelines is that staff are acting professionally at all times, and are trusted by the School, by pupils and by parents.

All interactions between staff and pupils are carried out in a professional manner and context. All staff and members of the school community have a right to their privacy.

Confidentiality is vital for the smooth functioning of the School and preserving relationships of mutual trust.

Conversations with parents must always be strictly professional; other pupils or parents should not be discussed, nor should information private to the School be disclosed. Further information regarding privacy rights can be found in the School's privacy notices.

A personal relationship between staff and a pupil which includes any sexual activity, whether same or other sex, constitutes **gross misconduct**. It is also a criminal offence under the *Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000* for a person aged 18 or over who is in a position of trust in relation to another person under that age to engage in sexual activity with that person. Any such activity could thus result in summary dismissal under the School's disciplinary procedures, and imprisonment and unlimited fine under the law.

The Policy and guidelines apply in relation to all pupils, in all circumstances, and at all times including school holidays.

3. Staff Guidance

Staff are trusted by the School and by parents, yet allegations of unprofessional conduct or improper contact or words can arise at any time. All members of staff are thus reminded that professionalism and vigilance are required, both to ensure the safety of pupils in the School's care and to reduce the risk of an allegation of impropriety against a member of staff.

Members of staff should take particular care when dealing with a pupil who:

- Appears to be emotionally distressed, or generally vulnerable
- Seeks expressions of affection from a member of staff
- Appears to hold a grudge against a member of staff
- Acts in a sexually provocative way, is inclined to make exaggerated claims about herself and others or uses over-familiar tone with adults

The School trusts all staff to act professionally at all times, in accordance with the Policy, Teacher Standards and in accordance with the requirements of KCSIE and linked School Policies.

Where staff have a personal relationship with a pupil out of school who is not their own child, (e.g. personal friends of parents, membership of an out-of-school club or organisation, etc.), the Head must be informed so that this is recorded and kept on file for the protection of the member of staff.

In order to protect pupils, staff must report to the Head any concerns they may have, or that may have been reported to them by a pupil or parent, about staff-pupil relationships.

FGM (female genital mutilation) concerns must be reported immediately to the DSL, who will involve Hammersmith & Fulham's Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSP) as appropriate. If a member of staff discovers that FGM appears to have been carried out on a pupil, they should report this directly to the police. This is a mandatory duty for all staff.

Staff have a duty to uphold Fundamental British Values (FBV) and understand the prohibition on inviting extremist speakers (see Safeguarding Policy). All staff must be aware of the School's safer recruitment guidelines with regard to visiting speakers and should ensure that such visitors are suitable and appropriately supervised for the duration of their visit to the School.

All gifts from parents or pupils, including ex-pupils must be declared to the Head and DFO in writing where the value is above £100 or more. If in doubt of the value, staff are advised to declare. **There is no tax, financial or other implication to this declaration, it is merely to protect staff from accusations of bribery, or improper conduct.** Please see Anti-Bribery Policy.

4. General Guidelines on Conduct With Pupils

Avoid sitting or standing in very close proximity to a child, except as necessary to check work. For practical subjects, see below.

Avoid all unnecessary physical contact and apologise immediately if there is accidental physical contact.

If you have to have physical contact with a child, make sure that doors are open and others are in the immediate vicinity.

Language used to discipline a child must be in line with the Positive Behaviour Policy.

Distance yourself kindly if children stroke, hug or touch you, and help them to learn what is and is not appropriate towards adults outside the family.

Never administer corporal punishment.

Never use any form of aggressive contact such as holding, pushing, pulling or hitting, which could amount to a criminal assault.

Never use threatening words.

Always retain an appropriately warm and supportive yet detached professional relationship; **you are not a friend**.

Do not discuss or engage in conversation regarding very personal topics relating to yourself; your personal life is not relevant to your professional relationship with the pupil.

Avoid any words or actions that are over-familiar.

Avoid displays of affection either personally or in writing, including messages in greetings cards.

Always ensure that any written messages in any format are sent through the School office and that copies are kept on the child's file. A record is kept of *Secret Letters* from the Head for positive reinforcement of good behaviour.

Do not tell or suggest to a pupil that they are your friend, or a special person to you; your relationship is a professional one. Do not single out any pupil for special attention. **Avoid pupils interpreting your behaviour towards another child as favouritism or any suggestion that you have favourites**.

Avoid actions, words or expressions that could be interpreted as suggesting that you have an emotional relationship with any pupil.

No communication, in person or in writing, or meeting with pupils out of school hours and off school premises should take place without the knowledge and consent of the School and parents or guardians.

Specific guidance on the sharing of personal opinion regarding political views is expressed clearly in the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) policy, available on the shared U drive.

Members of staff must not take a pupil in their own car at any time. Please refer to Educational School Visits Policy for exceptions.

Mobile phone calls (and texting) should be kept to a minimum and be made at break or lunch times (out of normal working hours) in the staff room. **They should never be made when members of staff are in the company of children.** Phones should not be displayed in the classroom and must be kept with other personal belongings out of sight and reach of children. Mobile phones **should never** be taken into the playground when staff are on duty. Staff working in the EYFS setting are required to leave their mobile phones locked away in a safe place out of reach of children.

Mobile phones and personally owned devices, such as tablets, may not be used during lessons or in the presence of pupils. For guidance on the use of personal devices on trips and visits, please consult the Educational School Visits Policy. For specific health and safety reasons, such as safety checks or to undertake an 'off-site' registration, such devices can be used to access pupil contact and/or medical details, when off-site or in an emergency. The Bluetooth functionality of a mobile phone or tablet may not be used to send images or files to other mobile devices, except in an emergency.

When working directly with children, staff must not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance which may affect their ability to care for children. The possession or abuse of illegal drugs by staff will be viewed as gross misconduct and could result in dismissal. Staff must not attend School under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The School reserves the right to send home any member of staff who they suspect to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Staff must not consume or be under the influence of alcohol during the normal school day or during school trips, when on duty. At school events staff are expected to set an example to pupils and should not be intoxicated with alcohol. Similarly, staff are not permitted to smoke (including e-cigarettes or vapes) on school premises, or when accompanying pupils on educational trips.

Staff taking medication which they believe may affect their ability to care for children should seek medical advice, and only work directly with children if the advice is that the medication is unlikely to impair their ability to look after pupils. In this instance staff must disclose details to the Director of People and Development for support and guidance; a risk assessment will be undertaken and appropriate measures put in place to support the staff member and to ensure the safety of pupils.

No medications are to be kept in classrooms (see Administration of Medications Policy).

5. Additional Guidance for Staff on Residential Trips

Never take a child into your room.

Wake up another adult at night if a child takes more than a few minutes to settle.

Keep careful records of medical aid administered.

Be careful when entering dormitories, shower rooms and bathrooms.

6. Online Safety

Unless you have prior permission from the Head, do not give out, ask for or use personal home email addresses and personal mobile numbers for communication with pupils or parents. You must not give your personal mobile number, email address or home telephone number to a pupil or parent - on trips, use a school mobile. Always communicate openly through the parents' telephone numbers, via mail@butehouse.co.uk or your School email address, unless you have prior permission from the Head.

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the School or the school community into disrepute. Be professional on the internet - including Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, LinkedIn and any other social media networks. Privacy settings should be set to the highest level to protect and secure all social media accounts.

Do not contact or communicate with any pupil or parent through an internet chatroom or similar, including such sites as Facebook or other social network sites. If a parent or pupil attempts to make contact on social media, you should not engage and report it immediately to the Head.

Do not post anything inappropriate online, including comments, videos or photos which might embarrass yourself or the School.

Avoid any conduct that could be interpreted as a sexual advance or "grooming" and avoid words or expressions that could be interpreted as having any sexual innuendo.

7. Photographs, Videos and Images of Children

Photographs/stills or video footage of pupils should only be taken using school equipment for purposes authorised by the School and should be stored securely and only on school equipment.

Staff should not use personal mobile phones or personal cameras to take images of children in the School. In the case that a school device is not available, staff are required to transfer photos to a school drive and permanently delete them from their personal device upon return to school. Best practice is to use a school camera or smart phone.

8. One-to-one Contact With Pupils

Members of staff conducting a one-to-one meeting or lesson with a child should take particular care in the following ways:

- Use a room which has vision panels in the door, or keep the door open, and ensure that a colleague knows that a meeting or lesson is taking place.
- Arrange the meeting during normal school hours or immediately before or after school when there are plenty of other people about.

- Do not continue the meeting for any longer than is necessary.
- Avoid sitting or standing in close proximity to the child, except as necessary.
- Avoid all unnecessary physical contact and apologise immediately if there is accidental physical contact.
- The School's expectation is that pupils are able to carry out personal hygiene, including going to the toilet independently. Caution must be exercised (see Intimate Care Policy).
- Report to the Senior Deputy Head or, in their absence, the Head, any incident that causes you concern, make a written record either by email or through CPOMS 'Staff Safe' (dated and signed). Any allegations against the Head should be raised with the Chair of Governors.

9. Physical Contact During the Teaching of Practical Subjects

This section should be read in conjunction with the Use of Reasonable Force Policy.

Physical contact between a member of staff and a pupil may be necessary or beneficial in order to demonstrate a required action, or a correct technique, for example, during music lessons or PE, sports and games, or during first aid treatment (see First Aid Policy).

Members of staff should observe the following guidelines:

- Explain the intended action to the pupil e.g. "May I look in your eye?", "May I touch your arm?"
- Do not proceed with the action if the pupil appears apprehensive or reluctant, or if you have other concerns about the pupil's likely reaction.
- Ensure that you can be seen by others through a viewing panel or by being in a public space. If you are in any doubt, ask a colleague or another pupil to be present during the demonstration.
- Staff supervising pupils changing for PE, swimming or extra-curricular clubs, must respect the privacy of pupils and caution should be exercised if pupils require help. When changing, pupils are always supervised by female members of staff.

If you are at all concerned about anything which has occurred during the demonstration or the treatment, inform the Senior Deputy Head or in their absence, the Head, and make a written record (dated and signed).

10. Visits To Pupils' Homes and Meeting Socially Out of School

Staff are sometimes asked to the homes of pupils for social occasions. Social invitations from parents (except those with whom staff have a declared relationship, see *Staff Guidelines* section 3 above) should not be accepted, including to pupils' birthday parties. **Remember that your relationship with parents and pupils is a professional one, even after you or the child have left the School.**

Staff must not offer to babysit or give extra tuition, including sports coaching. (NB it is a condition of employment that Bute House staff do not coach or tutor the School's pupils; this requirement continues after children have left the School). See also Contractors Policy.

Staff must never invite children to their home. If staff know the family in another context, they should carefully read *Staff Guidelines* section 3 above. If any such situation is unavoidable for family reasons, another adult should always be present.

It is not appropriate for staff to meet pupils out of school. No social meeting between staff/ex staff and pupils/ex pupils should take place without the knowledge and consent of the Head and parents or guardians. The School must be informed of any such meetings to protect its staff.

11. Staff Communication

Mutual respect and trust are central to the School's ethos, and a key part of its values-led community. Staff must always communicate in a professional manner with each other, pupils and parents and external stakeholders. This includes the use of Slack and other online messaging platforms. Any deviation from professional communication may result in disciplinary action.

12. Allegations Made By Pupils Against Staff

Any complaint by a pupil against a member of staff will be investigated, following the School's procedure for investigating allegations against staff, which aims to protect both pupils and staff. This includes the DSL contacting the LADO as a first port of call.

If the investigation shows that on a balance of probabilities the allegation is not justified, pupil disciplinary or pastoral procedures will be invoked as appropriate.

If the investigation shows that on a balance of probabilities the allegation is justified, and it is of a sufficiently serious nature, procedures in the Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy will be carried out as appropriate. That includes notifying Hammersmith and Fulham's Child Protection Unit who may notify the police if they believe that there are grounds for thinking that a criminal offence has been committed.

If the investigation shows that on a balance of probabilities the allegation is justified, and it is of a sufficiently serious nature, then the Independent Schools Council, The Teaching Regulation Agency and The Disclosure and Barring Service will also be notified.

13. Concerns About a Colleague (see also Whistleblowing Policy and Low-Level Concerns Policy)

Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, without fear of repercussion.

All staff have a duty to report any behaviour by a colleague which raises concern. Staff should refer to the School's Whistleblowing Policy for further guidance. This is particularly important where the welfare of pupils may be at risk. Staff who have a low-level concern about another adult or wish to make a self-referral, should do so via the CPOMS StaffSafe platform in line with the Low-Level Concerns Policy.

14. Monitoring and Review

The Staff Behaviour Policy will be subject to review biennially (or more frequently if changes to legislation, regulation or statutory guidance so require) by the Head, the Director of People and Development and the Governing Body. The date of the next review is shown on the front page.