



Staff Behaviour (Code of Conduct) Policy

Person responsible	Head & Director of Finance & Operations
Last update	October 2023
Frequency of Review	Biennial
Date of last review by Governors	November 2023
Date of next review by Governors	November 2025

Introduction

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. The relationship between staff and pupils of Bute House Preparatory School is a professional one; it is not a personal relationship.

All staff have a role to play in safeguarding our pupils and ensuring that the pupils and staff 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.

Our 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 2023. This policy should also be read in conjunction with our Low-Level Concerns and Whistleblowing policies.

Staff are expected to behave both inside and outside school at all times in a manner that will not bring the school into disrepute, including on social media.

Policy Aims

- **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 malicious or mistaken, i.e. made in good faith by a pupil who has misinterpreted words or actions. 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 Bute House or who are visiting Bute House.
- **To comply with all relevant legislation.** In particular that 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 others.
- 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.

Principles

- 1 The relationship between staff and pupils is a professional one.
- 2 The basic assumption in this policy and guidelines is that staff are acting professionally at all times, and are trusted by the School and by parents.
- 3 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.

- 4 Confidentiality is important for the smooth functioning of the school and preserving relationships of mutual trust.
- 5 Conversations with parents should 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.
- 6 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 disciplinary procedures, and imprisonment and unlimited fine under the law.
- 7 The policy and guidelines apply in relation to all pupils, in all circumstances, and at all times including school holidays.

Staff Guidance

- 1 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 our care and to reduce the risk of an allegation of impropriety against a member of staff.
- 2 Members of staff should take particular care when dealing with a pupil who:
 - 2.1 Appears to be emotionally distressed, or generally vulnerable
 - 2.2 Is seeking expressions of affection from a member of staff
 - 2.3 Appears to hold a grudge against a member of staff
 - 2.4 Acts in a sexually provocative way, or who is inclined to make exaggerated claims about herself and others, or to fantasise, or one whose manner with adults is over-familiar
- 3 The School trusts you to act professionally at all times, and within the spirit of the policy and guidelines on staff-pupil relationships.
- 4 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.), then the Head should be informed of this so that this information may be kept on file for the protection of the member of staff.
- 5 In order to protect pupils, you must report to the Head any concerns that you may have yourself, or that may have been reported to you by a pupil or parent, about staff-pupil relationships.
- 6 FGM concerns should be reported immediately to the DSL, who will involve the LSCP as appropriate. If a member of staff discovers that FGM appears to have been carried out on a child, they should personally report this directly to the police. This is a mandatory duty for teachers.

7. Staff have a duty to uphold Fundamental British Values (FBV) and understand the prohibition on inviting extremist speakers (see Safeguarding Policy). All staff must have regard to the School's safer recruitment guidelines with regards to visiting speakers and will ensure that they are both suitable and appropriately supervised for the duration of their visit.
- 8 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, you are advised to declare. **There is no tax, financial or other implication to this declaration, it is merely to protect you from accusations of bribery, or improper conduct.** Please see Anti-Bribery Policy.

General Guidelines on Conduct With Pupils

- 1 Avoid sitting or standing in very close proximity to a child, except as necessary to check work. For practical subjects, see below.
- 2 Avoid all unnecessary physical contact and apologise immediately if there is accidental physical contact.
- 3 If you have to have physical contact with a child, make sure that doors are open and others are in the immediate vicinity.
- 4 Language used to discipline a child must be in line with our Positive Behaviour Policy.
- 5 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.
- 6 Never administer corporal punishment.
- 7 Never use any form of aggressive contact such as holding, pushing, pulling or hitting, which could amount to a criminal assault.
- 8 Avoid threatening words.
- 9 Retain at all times an appropriately warm and supportive yet detached professional relationship; **you are a teacher, not a friend.**
- 10 Avoid discussion of any very personal topics relating to yourself; your personal life is not relevant to your professional relationship with the pupil.
- 11 Avoid any words or actions that are over-familiar.
- 12 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.
- 13 Do not tell or suggest to a pupil that she is 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.**

- 14 Avoid actions, words or expressions that could be interpreted as suggesting that you have an emotional relationship with any pupil.
- 15 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 school, parents or guardians.
- 16 Members of staff should not take a pupil in their own car at any time.
- 17 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 their 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.
- 18 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.
- 19 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 children.

No medications are to be kept in classrooms (See Administration of Medicines Policy).

Additional Guidance for Staff on Residential Field Trips

1. Never take a child into your room.
2. Wake up another adult at night if a child takes more than a few minutes to settle.
3. Keep careful records of medical aid administered.
4. Be careful when entering dormitories, shower rooms and bathrooms.

Online Safety

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

1. Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school or the school community into disrepute. Staff should adopt the highest security and privacy settings on any personal profiles they have.

2. Be professional on the internet - including Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), TikTok and any other social media networks.
3. 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.
4. Do not post anything inappropriate online, including comments, videos or photos which might embarrass yourself or the school.
5. 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.

Photographs, Videos and Images of Children

- 1 Photographs/stills or video footage of pupils/students should only be taken using school equipment for purposes authorised by the school and should be stored securely and only on school equipment.
- 2 Staff must **not** use personal mobile phones or personal cameras to take images of children in the School setting. Do not use your own camera or mobile phone to take images of children, always use a school camera, phone or a school memory card/stick, at all times, including on residential or day trips away from the school.

One-to-one Contact With Pupils

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

1. 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.
2. Arrange the meeting during normal school hours or immediately before or after school when there are plenty of other people about.
3. Do not continue the meeting for any longer than is necessary to achieve its purposes.
4. Avoid sitting or standing in close proximity to the child, except as necessary.
5. Avoid all unnecessary physical contact and apologise immediately if there is accidental physical contact.
6. 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 Toileting Policy).

Report to the Deputy Head or, in their absence, the Head, any incident that causes you concern, and make a written record (dated and signed). Any allegations against the Head should be raised with the Chair of Governors.

Physical Contact During the Teaching of Practical Subjects

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

- 1 Physical contact between a member of staff and a pupil may be necessary and beneficial in order to demonstrate a required action, or a correct technique in, for example, Music lessons or during PE, sports and games, or during First Aid treatment. (see First Aid Policy)
- 2 Members of staff should observe the following guidelines:
 - 2.1 Explain the intended action to the child e.g. "May I look in your eye?", "May I touch your arm?"
 - 2.2 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
 - 2.3 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
 - 2.4 Staff supervising 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, girls are always supervised by female members of staff.

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

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 paragraph 4 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 Bute House.**

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 our pupils, this requirement continues after children have left the school). See also Policy on Staff Undertaking non-Bute House Work.

Staff must never invite children to their home. If you know the family in another context, please see Staff Guidelines paragraph 4 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 yourself.

Allegations Made By Pupils Against Staff

- 1 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 children and staff. This includes the DSL contacting the LADO as a first port of call.
- 2 If the investigation shows that on a balance of probabilities the allegation is not justified, then pupil disciplinary or pastoral procedures will be invoked as appropriate.
- 3 If the investigation shows that on a balance of probabilities the allegation is justified, and it is of a sufficiently serious nature, then the procedures in our Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy will be carried out as appropriate, including notification to 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.
- 4 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 be notified.

Concerns About a Colleague (See also Whistleblowing Policy)

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

All school staff have a duty to report any behaviour by a colleague which raises concern. Staff should refer to Bute House School's Whistleblowing Policy for further guidance. This is particularly important where the welfare of pupils/students may be at risk.

All staff must complete the form in appendix 1 to confirm they have read, understood and agree to comply with this policy. This form should be signed and dated and a copy retained on the member of staff's file.

Appendix 1

Confirmation of compliance

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with Bute House School's Staff Behaviour Policy.

Name

Position/Post Held.....

Signed

Date

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Deputy Head.