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Notes

- This model Staff Behaviour Policy contains the statutory elements required by Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023
- This Staff Behaviour Policy sits alongside the Code of Conduct for Staff and our [Underpinning Principle of Relational Practice](#)
- This policy contains elements set out in Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those Working with Children and Young People in Education Settings (2019), its addendum (April 2020), and requirements set out by KCSiE 2023
- The policy does not set out an exhaustive list of behaviours that are recommended or those that must be avoided

Introduction

The Mead Trust is committed to providing positive academic, social and emotional outcomes for our children, underpinned by a strong safeguarding ethos. We are equally committed to the welfare of our staff, who are expected to adhere to the highest standards of professional behaviour to maintain confidence and respect of the general public and colleagues.

Our Governance Community will make sure that this policy reflects national and local requirements to protect and support the children and adults in our Trust.

We fulfil our local and national responsibilities as laid out in the following key documents:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)
- The procedures of Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership (SVPP)

This policy:

- Is based on the Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (May 2019 with April 2020 Addendum)
- Aims to provide a guide for adults about acceptable and desirable conduct to ensure that staff maintain safe working practice and so safeguard both children and adults
- Does not provide a complete checklist of appropriate behaviour for staff in every circumstance. Staff must make judgements about their behaviour to secure the best interests and welfare of the children in their charge and, in so doing, will be seen to be acting reasonably

In *very exceptional* circumstances where a member of staff believes it is the best interest of a child to breach these guidelines, that person **must** tell the Headteacher of the justification for any proposed, or action already taken, at the earliest opportunity. The Headteacher will make a written record of that discussion including any areas of disagreement and actions taken.

Scope

This policy is consistent with all other Trust policies and should be read alongside the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the Staff Code of Conduct as well as the following documents relevant to the safety and welfare of our children:

- Behaviour Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- SEND Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Complaints Policy

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers working at our Trust.

For the purposes of this policy:

- 'Staff' refers to all those working for the school, full time or part time, on a temporary basis, or permanent, in a paid or regular voluntary capacity
- A 'volunteer' is a person who performs an activity that involves spending time, unpaid in this school (except for approved expenses)
- A 'position of trust' is one in which one party is in a position of power or influence over another, due to their work or the nature of their activity

- 'Child' refers to all children up to the age of 18. All adults are in positions of trust in relation to every child (and student over the age of 18) at our Trust

It does not apply to employees of external contractors and providers of services (e.g. contract cleaners). Such staff are covered by the relevant Code of Conduct of their employing body.

Expectations

All staff:

- Are familiar with this policy
- Understand their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- Are aware that failure to meet the standards of behaviour and conduct in this policy may result in disciplinary action. This includes dismissal, criminal action and/or other proceedings including barring by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) from working in regulated activity

Mandatory procedures

Confidentiality

The sorting and processing of personal information is governed by GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations 2018), in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

Child records are shared with those who have a professional need to see them. When staff have access to confidential information about colleagues, children or their parents/carers, the staff must treat such information in a sensitive and confidential way, sharing it only in the interests of a child and when legally permitted to do so.

Members of our Governance Community do not routinely access child records. Exceptions to this would be for the purpose of an investigation in line with the Trust's complaint policy and procedures. Staff and Governance Community members will not use their position to gain access to information for their own advantage and/or a child's or family's detriment.

If a member of staff is concerned that a child is being abused, is at risk of being abused or may have been abused in the past, they will follow the agreed procedure set out in the flowchart 'What to do if you are worried about a child', displayed in our schools.

If a member of staff is ever in any doubt about whether to share information or not, they should get advice from a Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Staff relationships with children and parents - staff responsibilities

All staff know that:

- They are in positions of trust in relation to all children on roll within our Trust. They ensure that the power imbalance is never used for personal advantage or gratification. They avoid behaviour which might be interpreted by others as an abuse of the position of trust and report any incident with this potential to be construed as such to any member of the Senior Leadership Team. This includes sharing personal contact details with children or families
- They have a legal duty to protect the interests of children and accept the obligations inherent in that responsibility
- It is important that they determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication, using professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child

- They must not establish or seek to establish social contact with children to secure a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship
- They must inform the Headteacher of any pre-existing (prior to the member of staff or child starting at the school) or new relationship with a child or close family member, which they feel, might compromise the school or their own professional standing
- They should disclose any relationship or association (in the real world or online) that may impact on the Trust's ability to safeguard pupils
- It is an offence (Sexual Offences Act 2003) for a member of staff in a position of trust to engage in **any** form of sexual activity with a child under the age of 18

Certain behaviours are at odds with a position of trust. These include, but are not limited to:

- Harassment or discrimination based on any characteristic protected by the Equality Act 2010
- Loss of personal civility including, personal attacks or insults, displays of temper (such as throwing objects), unwanted physical contact (pushing, shoving, hitting) or the threat of the same
- Staff must not swear, blaspheme or use offensive language in front of pupils, nor use language which is discriminatory and demeaning in any way

Such behaviours are disciplinary offences and may be referred to the Designated Officer for Allegations at the Local Authority and / or the police.

Communication with children and parents, including social contact outside of the workplace

Staff must use their professional judgement when requesting or accepting any social contact (including through social media). This means that they must:

- Not accept any request from pupils for contact via any social media platform
- Make a judgement about whether to maintain the connection in any cases where contacts were made before the child started at the school (e.g. teacher being friend with a parent). Staff must discuss any decision to maintain such contact with the Headteacher

We acknowledge that staff may have friendships and social contact with parents of children outside of school. Staff will not engage in conduct outside work that could damage their professional reputation or the reputation of the school communities within the Trust.

Any contact between staff and children and / or parents that is deemed to bring the school or Trust into disrepute or that might lead a reasonable person to question the staff member's motivation or intentions will always be investigated and could lead to disciplinary action.

Staff must not make sexual innuendos or any comments of a sexual nature to any pupil (other than appropriate discussion in the context of sex and relationship education in the PSHE curriculum), nor make any comments trivialising alcohol or drug abuse.

Occasionally, pupils may develop an infatuation for a member of staff. In such situations, the advice of the Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher must be sought. Staff should deal with these situations sensitively and appropriately to maintain the dignity and safety of all concerned. They should remain aware, however, that such infatuations carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and should therefore make every effort to ensure that their own behaviour is beyond reproach.

Staff must inform the Headteacher of any proposed or pre-existing arrangements between them and the families of children on roll that take place outside school e.g. babysitting, sports coaching, music tuition.

Staff are advised to wait until after an ex-pupil's 18th birthday before accepting any request on social media.

Gifts, rewards, favouritism and exclusion

Staff must:

- Declare any gift they receive from a parent or child. This does not include small tokens of appreciation such as at Christmas or the end of the year. Gifts of this kind must not be expected or encouraged (for instance, by displaying them in the classroom) to avoid at all times, families feeling under pressure to provide a gift
- Not give gifts to individual children. Any rewards or treats will be given only as part of the school's agreed behaviour policy
- Advise the Headteacher about the offer of any gift or hospitality, from outside or inside the school, which might be interpreted as an attempt to influence staff conduct towards children, parents or other employees, or is of an usually high value (over £50)

Physical contact including intimate/personal care and behaviour management

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. Any physical contact will be in response to the child's needs, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, background and any agreed support or care plan.

The use of physical intervention including the use of reasonable force will always be in line with our Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy, Supporting Children with Medical Needs Policy, Behaviour For Learning Policy, and Physical Intervention procedures.

Staff understand that:

- On a daily basis, it may be entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with children and that they do so in ways appropriate to their professional role and in relation to the child's individual needs
- Some children are more comfortable with touch than others and / or may be more comfortable with touch from some adults than others. Whenever possible, adults seek the child's permission before initiating contact and are sensitive to any signs that the child may be uncomfortable or embarrassed
- They have a responsibility to ensure the way they offer comfort to a distressed child is age appropriate
- They must never touch a child in a way which may represent a misuse of authority or considered indecent
- Physical contact must never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult
- They should be aware of cultural or religious views about touching and be sensitive to the issues of gender

If a member of staff believes that an action by them or a colleague could be misinterpreted, or if an action is observed which is possibly abusive, the incident and circumstances will be immediately

reported to the Headteacher/DSL and recorded in writing. If appropriate, the Headteacher will consult with the Designated Officer for Allegations (DOFA).

Staff understand that a child who has suffered previous abuse or neglect may associate physical contact with such experiences. They recognise that such a child may seek out inappropriate physical contact and know to deter the child sensitively to help them to understand the importance of personal boundaries. Staff know that they must never indulge in play that involves rough-and-tumble or fun fights.

Children with disabilities may require more physical contact to assist their everyday learning. The arrangements are understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the child's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny. Staff always allow/encourage children, where able, to undertake self-care tasks independently.

If a child's behaviour presents a serious risk to themselves or others, a robust risk assessment and, where relevant, a physical intervention plan is always put in place and reviewed regularly. In all cases where physical intervention takes place, staff record the incident and subsequent actions and report these in line with the school's behaviour and safeguarding policies.

First aid

Staff adhere to the Health and Safety Policy, the policy for supporting pupils with medical conditions and for administering first aid or medication.

One to one situations

Staff carefully consider the welfare needs of children when with them in a one to one situation. All spaces in the school are set up to allow any activity to be easily observed by other staff in the school. Windows and doors are kept clear from display materials to allow rooms to be overlooked. Internal doors remain open when practicable.

Children are provided with age/developmentally appropriate advice about managing distressing feelings that may arise during 1-1 situations in school. Staff will record any time a child has appeared upset/angry during a 1-1 session and will report this to their line manager.

Home visits and transporting children

All work with children and parents/carers is whenever possible undertaken in the school. There are however occasions where it may be necessary to arrange a home visit e.g. as part of child's induction programme, during changes in operating practice due to a pandemic.

In such situations, these activities will only be undertaken with the knowledge and consent of senior leadership and parents/carers (unless there is a good reason not to, e.g. safeguarding concern). Where possible staff will work in pairs. A risk assessment will be undertaken and school will ensure staff understand the purpose and limitations of their home visit.

We use school transport routinely to transport children. In exceptional circumstances a member of staff transporting a child in their own vehicle will:

- Have prior written permission from parents and the school Headteacher
- Have the appropriate vehicle insurance for business use
- Have the correct ratio of children/adults
- Ensure that all passengers wear seat belts
- Ensure booster seats are used according to the current legislation

Educational visits and after-school activities

Staff remain in a position of trust during school activities that take place off the school site or out of school hours and so, they will ensure that their behaviour cannot be interpreted as seeking to establish an inappropriate relationship or friendship.

Organisers will conduct risk assessments and adhere to Health and Safety guidelines. Staff/child ratios will be specified and where overnight stays are involved, and the composition of groups of children and the supervising staff will be carefully planned to keep all children and staff safe.

Where out of school activities include overnight stays, careful consideration will be given to sleeping arrangements as part of the planning process. Children, staff and parents will be informed of these arrangements prior to the start of the trip and any proposed changes to the plans will be agreed with senior staff in the school in advance. Staff will not smoke or consume alcohol on any school trip.

Health and Safety arrangements require members of staff to keep colleagues aware of their whereabouts, during an out of school activity. This means staff will always have another adult present in out of school activities, unless otherwise agreed with senior staff in the school.

Staff appearance (Also applies to online and virtual teaching)

Staff must dress smartly, in clothing appropriate to the role, compliant with professional standards and not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative. It should not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding. Political slogans must be avoided.

Any staff with tattoos that might be viewed as offensive, provocative or likely to give rise to misunderstanding must ensure those tattoos always remain covered when that adult is working for the Trust.

The acceptable use of technologies

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute. Staff should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have.

Staff must be circumspect in their use of all social media or any other web-based presence that they may have, including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed directly or by association with websites/pages or posts established by others (e.g. 'liking', reposting or forwarding). This includes the use of dating websites where staff could encounter parents or students either with their own profile or acting covertly.

They must consider the long-term implications of any content published by them online, specifically how it might ever have an adverse effect on:

- Their reputation as an individual working in an education setting
- Their ability to maintain good professional boundaries with parents and with children
- The reputation of the school or Trust

Staff must not access any content from the internet on a personal device during school hours, on the school site, or on a school computer or device at any time that could bring the school / Trust into disrepute or that might lead a reasonable person to question the staff member's motivation or intentions.

All staff are aware of their part in ensuring the DFE filtering and monitoring standards and cyber security standards are upheld. If staff become aware of misuse by another member of staff (in or out of school), they must report those concerns using the concerns and allegations against staff (including supply teachers, third-party & self-employed staff, volunteers, contractors) procedures.

This includes any adults using the school premises, including out of hours lettings.

Exceptional operating circumstances

If the school is required to change the way its provision to children due to exceptional circumstances e.g. during a pandemic lockdown, staff safeguarding responsibilities to children will continue to apply, in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The DSL will ensure staff, children, and families are provided with written:

- Temporary changes to procedures for working with children e.g. online
- Timescales for such changes so that all children, families and staff understand when such arrangements will end, and arrangements revert to those in place prior to the events leading to the need for the temporary changes

Staff engaging in online activity should display the same standards of dress and conduct that they would in the real world; they should also role model this to pupils and parents. The following points should be considered:

- Think about the background; photos, artwork, identifying features, mirrors – ideally the backing should be neutral
- Staff and pupils should be in living / communal areas – no bedrooms
- Staff and pupils should be fully dressed
- Resources / videos must be age appropriate – the child may not have support immediately to hand at home if they feel distressed or anxious about content

It is the responsibility of the staff member to act as a moderator; raise any issues of suitability (of dress, setting, behaviour) with the child and / or parent immediately and end the online interaction if necessary.

If a staff member believes that a child or parent is recording the interaction, the session should be brought to an end or that child should be logged out immediately.

Photography and recording

Staff are not permitted to use their phones, cameras, smart technology, or any device that can be used for photographing or recording children, when on duty for any purpose. Phones must be kept in the designated areas within school, as specified by the Senior Leadership Team. Any pictures taken of children by staff will be in accordance to the Acceptable Use Policy. Staff will not:

- Take images of a child's injury, bruising or similar (e.g. following a disclosure of abuse)
- Make audio recordings of a child's disclosure

Concerns and allegations against staff (including supply teachers, third-party & self-employed staff volunteers and contractors, and adults from organisations or individuals using the school premises)

If a member of staff is concerned about the behaviour of a person working or volunteering at the school (including contractors), they will follow the agreed procedure set out in the flowchart 'Allegation against adults', displayed in school.

The Trust operates a 'low-level' concerns policy in accordance with KCSIE. 'Low-level' refers to behaviour that is: inconsistent with expectations set out in this policy, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and/or does not meet the allegations threshold, or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the DOFA.

All concerns, no matter how small, will be shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with promptly and appropriately. This will serve our commitment to create and embed a culture of openness, trust, and transparency in which the school's values and expected behaviour set out in this policy are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff.

'Low-level' concerns could include, but are not limited to:

- Being over friendly with children
- Having favourites
- 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 doors
- Using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language

We also encourage all staff to self-refer to their line manager or DSL where they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.

Whistleblowing

All staff and volunteers are expected and encouraged to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school safeguarding regime. All staff within the school who wish to raise an issue relating to the organisation with someone in confidence can use the following whistleblowing procedures.

In the first instance, concerns about poor or unsafe practice within must be raised with the Headteacher / DSL or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue in this way or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels may be open to them:

- A member of the Governance Community
- The [NSPCC whistleblowing helpline](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/whistleblowing) is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 or email: help@nspcc.org.uk if:
 - They think the concern will not be dealt with properly or
 - May be covered up or
 - If they raised a concern but it has not been acted upon or if they are worried they are being treated unfairly

Training

All members of staff and volunteers have read and confirmed they understand this Staff Behaviour Policy.

Induction

The welfare of all children on roll is of paramount importance. All staff including volunteers are provided with a copy of this policy at induction. The Senior Leadership Team welcome any questions about the expectations that are set out.

Staff support

Work in schools is both rewarding and demanding. We support staff by prioritising time to discuss the challenges of their role linked to any aspect of this Staff Behaviour Policy with their line manager and seek further support as appropriate.

Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed annually or earlier as required by changes to legislation or statutory guidance.