

# **VALENTINES HIGH SCHOOL STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT**



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Next review date January 2019

# **VALENTINES HIGH SCHOOL STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT 2016-2017**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Valentines High School has expectations of every adult who works in the school. (This applies to all paid staff and volunteers). In addition to this Code of Conduct, all teaching staff employed under the Teachers 'Terms and Conditions of Employment have a statutory obligation to adhere to the 'Teachers' Standards 2012' and Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards – Personal and Professional Conduct.

## **2. PURPOSE, SCOPE AND PRINCIPLES**

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school staff are expected to observe as detailed in para 12, Keeping children Safe in Education, September 2016. School staff are role models and are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the students within the school.

This Code of Conduct applies to all staff and volunteers in the school. Governors must adhere to their own Code of Conduct.

## **3. DRESS**

Staff are expected to dress professionally at all times. Staff must wear their ID badge and lanyard at all times. Staff are role models and as such are expected to set a good example. They should be neat, clean, smart and tidy wearing clothes which are commensurate with their post in the school. A guide to acceptable/expected dress is detailed below:

As an example:

- No aspect of an employee's dress or appearance should be politically motivated, sexually provocative, discriminatory, insensitive or offensive.
- Facial coverings will be expected to be removed whilst the teacher is on duty, to optimise good communication and to help identify individual teachers.
- Jewellery and piercings should not be worn excessively nor amount to an unacceptable risk either to the employee or to the pupil.
- If visible, tattoos must not cause offence to others; if tattoos are likely to cause offence, they must be covered up whilst on duty.
- Male and female staff should wear clothing suitable for a smart secondary education environment.

- Female staff will wear smart clothes (i.e. not strappy vest tops). Very short skirts and low cut tops are not appropriate
- Male staff will wear shoes, smart trousers, shirt and tie.
- Denim garments are not permitted
- Staff must avoid under dressing for the day and, therefore, beach wear is not permitted
- Flip-flops and sandals are not acceptable
- Staff taking part in sport lessons or activities will wear appropriate sportswear and footwear to include a polo shirt and visible sports socks
- Staff taking part in other practical lessons may wear clothing appropriate to the practical activity but must conform to the criteria above.
- On INSET days when students are not in school, staff are permitted to dress more casually
- During the summer months when the temperature rises, staff should be mindful that the students will wear the same uniform. Staff attire should still be smart and appropriate for secondary education environment as indicated above.

#### **4. GIFTS, REWARDS, FAVOURITISM AND EXCLUSION**

Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.

There are occasions when pupils or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff e.g. at Christmas or as a thank-you and this is usually acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.

Similarly, it is inadvisable to give such personal gifts to pupils or their families. This could be interpreted as a gesture either to bribe or groom. It might also be perceived that a 'favour' of some kind is expected in return.

Staff should exercise care when selecting children for specific activities, jobs or privileges in order to avoid perceptions of favouritism or injustice.

This means that staff should:

- be aware of and understand the school's relevant policies, e.g. rewarding positive behaviour
- ensure that gifts received or given in situations which may be misconstrued are declared and recorded
- only give gifts to a pupil as part of the school reward system
- where giving gifts other than as above, ensure that these are of insignificant value and given to all pupils equally. Please refer to the Gifts & Hospitality policy for more details.

#### **5. SMOKING/ALCOHOL AND DRUGS**

The recreational taking or involvement in controlled drugs is illegal and cases involving drugs may lead to Police involvement. Alcohol may not be consumed during working

hours. Where the Headteacher reasonably suspects that an employee is unfit for work due to alcohol or drugs, they will require the employee to leave work immediately. The employee will not be permitted to return until they are fit for work. The employee will be required to take any such leave as annual leave or unpaid leave. Such occurrences will be investigated upon the employee's return to work and may result in disciplinary action.

Staff are not permitted to smoke anywhere on the school premises or grounds or within view of the school. This includes e-cigarettes and vaping. Staff should be role models to children and young people, so any smoking should be done outside the school premises and completely out of sight of students.

## **6. CONDUCT WITH STUDENTS**

High standards of behaviour will be expected and promoted at all times in lessons and throughout every aspect of school life. All members of staff are expected to set high standards and use a positive approach to behaviour management. Staff are expected to work with all students, irrespective of their demeanour or ability and should never attempt to refuse to do so. Incidents of poor behaviour will be dealt with according to the school's Discipline policy.

All staff set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by students. All staff must therefore, demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage students to do the same. Staff must therefore avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.

Staff should be careful not to be alone with students. They should leave a door open, or ask for someone to sit in if concerned about an interview, speaking exam or similar situation.

All staff must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

## **7. INFATUATIONS AND 'CRUSHES'**

All staff need to recognise that it is not uncommon for pupils to be strongly attracted to a member of staff and/or develop a 'crush' or infatuation. They should make every effort to ensure that their own behaviour cannot be brought into question, does not appear to encourage this and be aware that such infatuations may carry a risk of their words or actions being misinterpreted.

Any member of staff who receives a report, overhears something, or otherwise notices any sign, however small or seemingly insignificant, that a young person has become or may be becoming infatuated with either themselves or a colleague, should immediately report this to the Head teacher or member of Leadership. In this way appropriate early intervention can be taken which can prevent escalation and avoid hurt, embarrassment or distress for those concerned.

This means that staff should:

- report any indications (verbal, written or physical) that suggest a pupil may be infatuated with a member of staff
- always maintain professional boundaries
- This means that senior leaders should put action plans in place where concerns are brought to their attention
- If the Headteacher has the concern that a young person is becoming infatuated with them, they should report this to the chair of governors.

## **8. USE OF CARS**

Staff should never give lifts to students without the appropriate insurance and without clearing it with a senior member of staff. Two members of staff should accompany any children in cars. It is a legal requirement that all passengers wear seatbelts and the driver should ensure that they do so.

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.

## **9. DATA PROTECTION**

Staff should not disclose any information about students, staff colleagues to members of the public. Only approved staff should communicate to the media about the school.

All personal data must be kept secure. The storage of data on a hard disk or memory stick is insecure. To make such storage more secure it is recommended that it is password protected or encrypted. Personal data should never be stored on unencrypted portable media/memory sticks. The safest long term storage of data would be the school's staff only shared area.

Many educational activities involve recording images. These may be undertaken for displays, publicity, to celebrate achievement and to provide records of evidence of the activity. Under no circumstances should staff be expected or allowed to use their personal equipment to take images of pupils at or on behalf of the school or setting.

## **10. TECHNOLOGY**

In order to make best use of the many educational and social benefits of new and emerging technologies, pupils need opportunities to use and explore the digital world. E-safety risks are posed more by behaviours and values than the technology itself.

Staff should ensure that they establish safe and responsible online behaviours, working to local and national guidelines and acceptable use policies which detail how new and emerging technologies may be used.

Communication with children both in the 'real' world and through web based and telecommunication interactions should take place within explicit professional boundaries. This includes the use of computers, tablets, phones, texts, e-mails, instant messages, social media such as Facebook and Twitter, chat-rooms, forums, blogs, websites, gaming sites, digital cameras, videos, web-cams and other hand held devices. (Given the ever changing world of technology it should be noted that this list gives examples only and is not exhaustive.)

Staff should not request or respond to any personal information from children other than which may be necessary in their professional role:

- Only school equipment should be used to take photos of students. Photos should be uploaded to the secure staff shared drive and images erased from the portable device
- A school PC or laptop should only be used for school work and not for personal use. Staff should ensure that they have absolute control of a school laptop allocated to their use
- Staff are expected to restrict internet access to work related sites with work hours and on school equipment. Any abuse of this privilege may result in disciplinary action
- A school email account should be used for all work related communication. It must not be used to circulate personal email. Abuse of this may result in disciplinary action
- Use only equipment and Internet services provided by the school or setting. Ensure that their use of technologies could not bring their employer into disrepute. Transparent and avoid any communication which could be interpreted as 'grooming behaviour'.
- Only the ICT technicians should install software onto school equipment
- The Central Server monitors all access and inappropriate use will result in disciplinary action
- Staff and students must comply with the Acceptable Use of ICT Policy
- Staff should not give their personal contact details to children for example, e-mail address, home or mobile telephone numbers, details of web based identities. If children locate these by any other means and attempt to contact or correspond with the staff member, the adult should not respond and must report the matter to their manager. The child should be firmly and politely informed that this is not acceptable.
- Not seek to communicate/make contact or respond to contact with pupils outside of the purposes of their work

## 11. PHOTOGRAPHY

Whilst images are regularly used for very positive purposes, staff need to be aware of the potential for these to be taken and/or misused or manipulated for pornographic or 'grooming' purposes. Staff should remain sensitive to any pupil who appears uncomfortable and should recognise the potential for misinterpretation.

This means that staff should:

- adhere to the school policy
- only publish images of pupils where they and their parent/carer have given explicit written consent to do so (check list in the Main Office)
- only take images where the pupil is happy for them to do so
- only retain images when there is a clear and agreed purpose for doing so
- store images in an appropriate secure place in the school or setting
- ensure that a senior member of staff is aware that the photography/image equipment is being used and for what purpose
- be able to justify images of pupils in their possession
- avoid making images in one to one situations

This means that adults should not:

- take images of pupils for their personal use
- display or distribute images of pupils unless they are sure that they have parental consent to do so (and, where appropriate, consent from the child)
- take images of children using personal equipment
- take images of children in a state of undress or semi-undress
- take images of children which could be considered as indecent or sexual

Making and using images of pupils will require the age appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their parents/carers. Images should not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without such consent.

For the protection of children, it is recommended that when using images for publicity purposes that the following guidance should be followed:

- if the image is used, avoid naming the child, (or, as a minimum, use first names rather than surnames)
- if the child is named, avoid using their image
- schools and settings should establish whether the image will be retained for further use, where and for how long
- images should be securely stored and used only by those authorised to do so.

### **Exposure to inappropriate images**

Staff should take extreme care to ensure that children and young people are not exposed, through any medium, to inappropriate or indecent images.

There are no circumstances that will justify adults: making, downloading, possessing or distributing indecent images or pseudo-images of children (child abuse images). Accessing these images, whether using the school's or personal equipment, on or off the premises, or making, storing or disseminating such material is illegal.

If indecent images of children are on the school or setting's equipment an immediate referral should be made to the Headteacher or Safeguarding Lead/Child Protection Co-ordinator and the police contacted if relevant. The images/equipment should be secured and there should be no attempt to view or delete the images as this could jeopardise necessary criminal action. If the images are of children known to the school, a referral should also be made to children's social services in line with local arrangements.

Under no circumstances should any adult use school or setting equipment to access pornography. Personal equipment containing pornography or links to it should never be brought into or used in the workplace. This will raise serious concerns about the suitability of the adult to continue working with young people.

This means that staff should:

- abide by the school's acceptable use and e-safety policies
- ensure that children cannot be exposed to indecent or inappropriate images
- ensure that any films or material shown to children are age appropriate

Staff should keep their passwords confidential and not allow unauthorised access to equipment. In the event of any indecent images of children or unsuitable material being discovered on a device the equipment should not be tampered with in any way. It should be secured and isolated from the network. Adults should not attempt to investigate the matter or evaluate the material themselves as this may lead to a contamination of evidence and a possibility they will be at risk of prosecution themselves

## 12. SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

Social networking e.g. Facebook, My Space, **Snapchat** and texting is a way of life for many adults. Staff should be aware of the potential risk to their professional reputation and that comments made on a social network site which relate to the school, students and staff could lead to disciplinary action. Please observe the following:

- Staff should not use school equipment, or the school internet connection to access or update personal social websites
- Staff should not have any student who attends the school as "friends"
- It is recommended that staff do not have parents as 'friends'
- Staff should use strong passwords and apply security settings so that all aspects of their profile are secure and controlled
- Staff should NOT post anything, on a social website or text, about the school community including about incidents, students and staff
- Staff are expected to uphold professionalism and dignity on a public website, which would include the use of language, including profile name and contents, including photos. They should think of this in respect of being a role model. Staff should not



use inappropriate comments in relation to gender, race, disability, age, religion or sexual orientation

- Images of students taken during school time or an educational visit must **never** be posted without permission being sought
- Images of work colleagues should not be posted without their permission

### 13. PHYSICAL CONTACT

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with children, however, it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role and in relation to the pupil's individual needs and any agreed care plan.

Activities that require physical contact

In certain curriculum areas, such as PE, drama or music, staff may need to initiate some physical contact with children, for example, to demonstrate technique in the use of a piece of equipment, adjust posture, or support a child so they can perform an activity safely or prevent injury.

Physical contact should take place only when it is necessary in relation to a particular activity. It should take place in a safe and open environment i.e. one easily observed by others and last for the minimum time necessary. The extent of the contact should be made clear and undertaken with the permission of the pupil. Contact should be relevant to their age / understanding and adults should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the pupil.

This means that staff should:

- treat pupils with dignity and respect and avoid contact with intimate parts of the body
- always explain to a pupil the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take
- consider alternatives, where it is anticipated that a pupil might misinterpret any such contact
- be familiar with and follow recommended guidance and protocols
- conduct activities where they can be seen by others
- be aware of gender, cultural and religious issues that may need to be considered prior to initiating physical contact

Any incidents of physical contact that cause concern or fall outside of these protocols and guidance should be reported to a senior leader and parent or carer.

It is good practice if all parties clearly understand at the outset, what physical contact is necessary and appropriate in undertaking specific activities. Keeping parents/carers and pupils informed of the extent and nature of any physical contact may also prevent allegations of misconduct or abuse arising.

## 14. BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

Corporal punishment and smacking is unlawful in all schools.

Staff should not use any form of degrading or humiliating treatment to punish a child. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards children is completely unacceptable.

Where pupils display difficult or challenging behaviour, staff should follow the school's behaviour policy using strategies appropriate to the circumstance and situation.

Where a pupil has specific needs in respect of particularly challenging behaviour, a pupil support plan, including assessment of risk, should be drawn up and agreed by all parties, including, for example, a school nurse where appropriate.

This means that staff should:

- not use force as a form of punishment
- try to defuse situations before they escalate using Positive Behaviour Management strategies
- keep parents informed of any sanctions or behaviour management techniques used
- be mindful of and sensitive to factors both inside and outside of the school or setting which may impact on a pupil's behaviour
- follow the establishment's behaviour management policy
- behave as a role model
- avoid shouting at children other than as a warning in an emergency/safety situation

## 15. SEXUAL CONDUCT

Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a pupil is unacceptable. It is an offence for a member of staff in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity with a pupil under 18 years of age and sexual activity with a child could be a matter for criminal and/or disciplinary procedures.

This means that staff should:

- not have any form of sexual contact with a pupil from the school or setting
- avoid any form of touch or comment which is, or may be considered to be, indecent
- abuse of a position of trust

Pupils are protected by the same laws as adults in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour. They are additionally protected by specific legal provisions depending on their age and understanding. This includes the prohibition of sexual activity with children by adults in a position of trust.

Sexual activity involves physical contact including penetrative and non-penetrative acts, however it also includes non-contact activities, such as causing pupils to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of pornographic material.

There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' where the purpose is to gain the trust of a child, and manipulate the relationship so sexual abuse can take place. All staff should undertake appropriate training so they are fully aware of those behaviours that may constitute 'grooming' and of their responsibility to always report to a senior manager any concerns about the behaviour of a colleague which could indicate that a pupil is being groomed.

Staff must:

- avoid any form of communication with a pupil which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive, provocative or give rise to speculation e.g. verbal comments, letters, notes, by email or on social media, phone calls, texts, physical contact
- not make sexual remarks to or about a pupil
- not discuss sexual matters with or in the presence of pupils other than within agreed curriculum content or as part of their recognised job role

### **One To One Situations**

staff should:

- ensure that wherever possible there is visual access and/or an open door in one to one situations
- avoid use of 'engaged' or equivalent signs wherever possible. Such signs may create an opportunity for secrecy or the interpretation of secrecy
- always report any situation where a pupil becomes distressed or angry
- consider the needs and circumstances of the pupil involved

## **16. PERSONAL LIVING ACCOMMODATION**

Staff must not invite any pupils into their living accommodation unless the reason to do so has been firmly established and agreed with the Headteacher and the pupil's parents/carers.

This includes seeing pupils for e.g. discussion of reports, academic reviews, tutorials, pastoral care or counselling.

Under no circumstances should pupils be asked to assist adults with jobs or tasks, either for or without reward, at or in their private accommodation.

### **Overnight supervision and examinations**

There are occasions during exam periods when timetables clash and arrangements need to be made to preserve the integrity of the examination process. The examination board requires the centre to determine a method of supervision which ensures the candidate's wellbeing. As a result in some circumstances staff may be asked to volunteer to supervise students perhaps in their own homes.

Where arrangements are made for a staff member to supervise a pupil overnight then all necessary safeguards should be in place.

This means that staff should:

- be vigilant in maintaining their privacy, including when living in on-site accommodation
- be mindful of the need to avoid placing themselves in vulnerable situations
- be mindful of the need to maintain appropriate personal and professional boundaries
- not ask pupils to undertake jobs or errands for their personal benefit

This means that:

- schools should ensure that all arrangements reflect a duty of care towards pupils and staff

Where staff do supervise candidates overnight:

- a full health and safety risk assessment must be undertaken

## **17. FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT**

All staff with financial responsibility should comply with the powers delegated by the Governing Body. Staff should not solicit or accept any gift, loan, fee, hospitality or other reward which influences the way in which they carry out their duties. They should not influence or be influenced unfairly in the way they carry out their duties by ties of kinship or friendship, or by some other association or loyalty.

## **18. SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION**

Staff have a duty to safeguard students from:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect

The duty to safeguard students includes the duty to report concerns about a student to Designated Safeguarding Officer for the school.

## **19. CONDUCT OUTSIDE WORK**

Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.

In particular, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable.

Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school nor be to a level which may contravene the

working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance. The other employment should not have an adverse effect on the school, or students.

## 20. CONFIDENTIALITY

Where staff have access to confidential information about students or their parents/carers, staff must not reveal such information, except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the student.

All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential and this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate school procedures. It must not be discussed outside the school, including with a student's parent/carer, nor with colleagues in the school, except with a senior member of staff with the appropriate role and authority to deal with the matter.

However, staff have an obligation to share with the Designated Safeguarding Lead any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a student. Staff must **never** promise a student that they will not act on information that they are told by the student.

## 21. This Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with the following policies and documents:

- The Whistle Blowing Policy
- The Complaints Policy
- The Behaviour Policy
- Acceptable Use of ICT Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Preventing Radicalisation Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Incorporating Child Protection Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Inclusion and Race Equality Policy
- Curriculum Policy

## DISCIPLINARY ACTION

All staff need to recognise that failure to meet these standards of behaviour and conduct may result in disciplinary action.