

King David Primary School



# SCHOOL POLICY

# Code of Conduct for all Staff

Produced by KDPS  
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# KING DAVID PRIMARY SCHOOL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL STAFF

## **Introduction**

This Code has been drawn up, to assist all members of staff in maintaining entirely proper and professional relationships with pupils. It relies heavily on the requirements of the Children Act 1989 and the Conditions of Employment of School Staff. It attempts to provide a clear and open picture of the boundaries of staff roles and the use of power. It is stressed that this Code is not a legal document but is intended to provide guidance to members of staff in carrying out their responsibilities.

As public employees, members of staff are accountable to the public in their exercise of authority, their management of risk the proper use of resource and the active protection of pupils from discrimination and avoidable harm. This document is designed both to be useful for all members of staff in avoiding situations that might lead to allegations against them, and to reassure the public that a strategy exists to safeguard pupils.

Members of staff need to be prudent about their own conduct and vigilant about the conduct of others, so that their relationships with their pupils remain, and are seen to remain, entirely proper and professional. It is recognised that members of staff are vulnerable to the possible consequences of their close professional relationships with their pupils and to the potential for malicious and misplaced allegations being made by pupils either deliberately or innocently.

The code is intended to safeguard the interests of both members of staff and the pupils within their care. The welfare of the child must always, however, be paramount and it is crucial, therefore, that members of staff are aware of the nature of child abuse and of existing procedures for dealing with potential cases.

Members of staff need to be aware of the potential for the misuse of computers for computer pornography and of the Guidelines on this subject.

## **Principles**

Duties placed on staff are:

1. to teach pupils assigned to them according to the educational needs of those pupils
2. to promote the general progress and well being of any group or class of pupils assigned to them
3. to ensure the health and safety of pupils whilst they are within the responsibility of the member of staff
4. to provide guidance and advice to pupils on educational, personal and social matters including information about sources of more expert advice on specific questions
5. to maintain good order and discipline among pupils and promote their development both when they are authorised to be on the school premises and when they are engaged in authorised school activities elsewhere

The principals underpinning the relationship between a member of staff and pupil are for the member of staff to give paramount consideration to the pupil's welfare by respecting and attempting to understand.

1. the ascertainable wishes and feelings of the pupil concerned (considered in the light of his/her age and understanding)
2. the pupil's physical, emotional and educational needs
3. the likely effect on the pupil of any change in his/her circumstances
4. the pupil's age, gender, background and any other relevant characteristics
5. any harm which the pupil has suffered or is at risk of suffering

All staff are in a position of trust and they owe a duty of care to the pupils for whom they are responsible.

### **GUIDELINES FOR MEMBERS OF STAFF**

#### **Physical Contact**

- a) There may be occasions when a pupil needs comfort or re-assurance which may include physical comforting such as a caring parent would give. Members of staff should use their discretion in such cases to ensure that what is normal and natural does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same child over a period of time.
- b) Some member of staff are likely to come into physical contact with their pupils from time to time in the course of their teaching, for example when showing a pupil how to use a piece of apparatus or equipment or while demonstrating a move or exercise during Games or P.E.

Members of staff should be aware of the limits within which such contact should properly take place and should consider the possibility of such contact being misinterpreted by the pupil.

- c) A pupil, parent/carer or observer may misconstrue physical contact. Such contact can include well intentioned informal and formal gestures such as putting a hand on the shoulder or arm, which if repeated with an individual pupil could lead to serious questions being raised. Any such comforting gestures must always be acceptable to the pupil concerned, i.e. there should be no unwanted physical contact, however well intentioned. Therefore as a general principle, member of staff should not have unnecessary physical contact with their pupils and it is unwise to attribute touching to their teaching style, their way of relating to pupils or their general disposition.
- d) There may be occasions where it is necessary for members of staff to restrain a pupil physically to prevent him/her from inflicting injury to him/herself or others. In such cases only the minimum force necessary must be used and any action taken must be to restrain the pupil. Where a member of staff has taken action to restrain a pupil he/she should report the matter as advised later in this policy.
- e) Any form of physical punishment of pupils is unlawful, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour unless it is by way of restraint. It is particularly important that employees understand this both to protect their own position and that of the school.

## The Practice of Physical Restraint

- a) Restraint can be defined as “The reasonable application of the minimum necessary force to overpower a child with the intention of preventing them from harming themselves or others, or from causing serious damage to property”.
- b) Restraint should only be used exceptionally, when unavoidable and in keeping with the incident leading to it. It should be primarily for the benefit of the young person(s) and, though immediate, should as far as possible be a considered response.
- c) Restraint should not be used as a form of punishment or in normal circumstances to enforce compliance with instruction. It should not be attempted where the member of staff is put at undue risk.
- d) Incidents of restraint should in appropriate circumstances, be subject of debriefing for staff involved and lead on to a review of strategies for managing pupil behaviour.
- e) Where members of staff themselves are the subject of physical attack by pupils or their carers, they should follow the normal school policy.

## Sexual Contact

There is no acceptable behaviour that has either explicit sexual connotations or innuendo. Any such behaviour will always be treated as extremely serious and must be reported immediately.

## Meeting with Pupils

- a) Members of staff should be aware of the potential risks, which may arise from interviewing individual pupils in private. It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place, but, where possible, such interviews should be conducted in a room with visual access or with the door open or in a room or area, which is likely to be frequented. **Meetings with pupils away from the school premises should not take place unless the specific approval of the Headteacher has been obtained.**
- b) Where such conditions cannot apply, members of staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. The use of ‘engaged’ signs or lights is not advisable. Where possible another pupil or another adult should be present or nearby during the interview.
- c) If it is necessary to detain a pupil for any length of time after the end of school hours, prior warning must be given to the pupil’s parents or guardians.

## Caring/First Aid

- a) If a pupil complains of an injury or sickness, a judgement should be made as to whether he/she should be referred to a qualified First Aider or advised to see his/his own Doctor. The pupil’s parents should also be informed, if appropriate.
- b) Members of staff who have to administer first aid should ensure wherever possible that another adult is present, if they are in any doubt as to whether necessary physical contact could be misconstrued. They should also follow the Borough Council’s guidelines on Administration of Medicines.

- c) Wherever possible, staff that have to help children with personal care should be accompanied by another adult and pupils should wherever possible, be encouraged to deal with such matters themselves.
- d) Where it is necessary to restrain a child or assist with/supervise dressing or undressing, members of staff must be careful to protect the dignity of the child
- e) Male members of staff should not as a general rule enter female toilets or female members of staff enter male toilets except in extreme situations (Such as fire, or where they may be a threat to life or limb).

### **Pastoral Role**

- a) Many members of staff have a pastoral responsibility for pupils and, in order to fulfil that role effectively, there will be occasions where conversations will cover particularly sensitive matters. Members of staff must in these circumstances use their discretion to ensure that, for example, any probing for details cannot be construed as unjustified intrusion.
- b) Any member of staff may from time to time be approached by pupils for advice. Pupils may also appear distressed and members of staff may feel the need to ask if all is well. In such cases members of staff must judge whether it is appropriate for them to offer counselling and advise or whether to refer the pupil to a member of staff of another gender or to one with acknowledged pastoral responsibility for that particular pupil. In certain circumstances, members of staff with a pastoral role may need to refer the pupil to another specialist agency for advice or help.
- c) In dealing with sensitive issues, members of staff must inform pupils at the start of the interview that they may have to disclose the information to another person, e.g. the Headteacher.

### **Extra Curricular Activities/Educational Visits Organised by School**

- a) Members of staff should follow existing relevant guidelines and be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting such as Waddow or any extended visit away from home, where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where members of staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school environment.
- b) In a more relaxed, informal environment, pupils can be much more challenging towards members of staff and overstep the professional boundaries of the member of staff/pupil relationship. In such circumstances where members of staff have a duty of care, they must be particularly careful in ensuring that pupils are under continual supervision, especially in relation to their personal safety when undertaking potentially dangerous activities such as water sports, or rock climbing etc.,
- c) Members of staff must also be especially vigilant in relation to access by pupils to alcohol and of the possibility of substance misuse.

### **Home Visits**

- a) Consider whether there is likely to be any risk, especially risk to themselves, before every visit, e.g. are there any new factors which may influence the visit such as changes to the pupil's family members or home environment.

- b) If the member of staff considers that the visit may involve a potential risk, then this should be discussed in advance with his/her Head teacher.

### **Social Contact**

- a) Social Contact with pupils, other than that which is school based or organised by the school, should be positively resisted.
- b) It is recognised that there may be occasions when accidental or reasonable social contact may be unavoidable, e.g. meeting pupils in shops, private parties, or at the houses of parents. In such circumstances, members of staff should be mindful at all times of their professional relationship with pupils.

### **General Relationships with Pupils**

- a) Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when dealing with adolescent boys and girls.
- b) Members of staff should be careful in their use of language/terminology, which may be misconstrued.
- c) The systematic use of insensitive, disparaging or sarcastic comments is unacceptable.
- d) If members of staff at any time feel that their relationship with a pupil is developing into one which would be inappropriate it is their responsibility to discuss the situation with their Headteacher

### **Reporting of Incidents which may lead to Complaints**

Where complaints are made about the conduct of staff, it is important that adequate support mechanisms are made available to them. Guidance on the availability of support is contained in the 'Procedure for Investigating Allegations of Child Abuse'. Very often support of a similar nature may be offered and provided by the member of staffs' trade unions and professional associations.

Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be misconstrued, the Headteacher should be informed immediately and the incident confirmed in writing by the member of staff involved. Where the incident involves the Headteacher, they should prepare a report for the Chairperson of Governors and the Local Education Authority. Such reporting is especially important in any case where a member of staff has been obliged to restrain a child physically to prevent him/her from inflicting injury to themselves or others.

Review date: September, 2017

Next review date: September 2019

Headteacher signed: *S Rosenberg*

Chair of Governors signed: *N. Joseph & S. Wiseglass*