

Hawthorn Tree Primary School
Staff Code of Conduct Policy

Author: Hawthorn Tree School
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This policy sets out clear guidance on the standards of behaviour expected from all staff within Hawthorn Tree School. The principles underlying the guidance aim to encourage staff to achieve the highest possible standards of conduct and minimise the risk of inappropriate conduct occurring.

1.2 School staff are in a unique position of trust and influence as role models for pupils/students. Therefore, staff must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all pupils/students within the school.

1.3 Staff also have an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, both inside and outside working hours and work setting.

1.4 This policy applies to all staff and volunteers in the school regardless of their position, role or responsibility. References to 'staff' throughout the policy relate to all of the following groups:

- 1.4.1 All members of staff including teaching and support staff
- 1.4.2 Volunteers, including governors
- 1.4.3 Casual workers
- 1.4.4 Temporary and supply staff, either from agencies or engaged directly
- 1.4.5 Student placements, including those undertaking initial teacher training and apprentices.

1.5 Hawthorn Tree School requires that all staff have read and agree to comply with this policy.

1.6 Breach or failure to observe this policy will result in action being taken under the School's disciplinary procedures including, but not limited to, dismissal.

1.7 This code of conduct is not an exhaustive list of acceptable and unacceptable standards of behaviour. In situations where guidance does not exist in this policy staff are expected to exercise their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the pupils/students and the School.

2.0 Professional Behaviour and Conduct

2.1 Staff are expected to demonstrate the highest possible standards of personal and professional conduct and behaviour and consistently act with honesty and integrity. Hawthorn Tree School expects staff to treat each other, pupils/students, parents and the wider community with dignity and respect at all times.

2.2 Staff must act in accordance with their duty of care to pupils and ensure that the safety and welfare of pupils are accorded the highest priority.

2.3 Staff should show fairness in their treatment of children and avoid behaviours such as embarrassing or humiliating pupils/students, making jokes at the expense of pupils/students, discriminating against or favouring pupils/students and sarcasm.

2.4 Staff must show tolerance of and respect the rights of others and should uphold the fundamental British values including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

2.5 Staff must have regard for the ethos and values of the school and must not do or say anything which may bring the school into disrepute, please refer to Hawthorn Tree Schools' Disciplinary & Capability Policy. Care should be taken by staff to avoid any conflict of interest between activities undertaken outside school and responsibilities within school. Staff should act in accordance with the school's policies and procedures at all times.

2.6 Staff should ensure they are up to date with information and should check emails, pigeon holes and briefing notices daily to ensure they are aware of situations and events that will affect them. Class teachers must ensure that notices sent via email are given to all children.

2.7 The contribution to and reading of the pupil individual logs on My Concern relating to behavioural, social and emotional needs are paramount. Staff must ensure that these logs are regularly checked or added to once conversations with pupil's family members have taken place.

2.8 Like in all organisations, the more staff put in the more they get out and therefore being engaged fully in all activities is an essential part of school life. In accordance with directed time staff are required to attend all relevant meetings including Parental Consultation evenings. Teaching and teaching support staff are also encouraged to play their part in the wider professional life of the school.

2.9 Staff should avoid confrontation with students and always try to diffuse the situation. They should not shout in a rude manner in order to humiliate a student and should be firm and calm. They should be careful to criticise the behaviour rather than the student.

2.10 Private tutoring should not be carried out on the school premises. It is also recommended that staff who privately tutor students should inform the Head teacher of the names of any students who are on roll at the school in case there are any pertinent issues of which they need to be aware.

2.11 Staff who are examiners should not mark papers on the school premises.

3.0 General staff dress and appearance

3.1 Staff are seen as a role model and, as such, should always give careful consideration to how they dress and act. Staff must ensure they are dressed safely and appropriately for the tasks they

undertake. Those who dress or appear in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations of misconduct.

3.2 All staff should be mindful that their dress sets an example to pupils. If staff dress smartly, pupils are more likely to follow suit. Staff should therefore exercise professional judgement, thinking about the 'Professional Conduct' aspect of the Teachers Standards, when deciding what to wear during the course of a normal school day. No jeans, coloured denim (e.g. black jeans) or jeggings. Leggings, worn with a nearly knee length skirt, dress, tunic or tabard are acceptable. For health & safety reasons, staff should also not wear flip-flops, however, secured sandals are acceptable.

3.3 Whilst it is not possible to list every possible clothing option here, it is hoped that staff will support the safer code of professional conduct and will dress in a way that reflects the high esteem in which we are held by children and their families.

3.4 Staff may wear PE clothes on outdoor PE days or sports days.

3.5 Teaching assistants attending to support the learning of pupils in a PE or Games lesson should at a minimum have a change of appropriate shoes

3.6 Hair should be neat and tidy with no extreme hairstyling or hair colouring. Hair and beards should not compromise health and safety. Long hair should be tied back when handling food, or when undertaking physical activities or interventions with pupils.

3.7 Where possible, tattoo's and body Tattoos and body art should be covered, however, we recognise that certain areas of the body, such as wrists, forearms, hands, ankles etc are harder to cover. Therefore, we ask staff to exercise their professional judgement in this manner.

3.8 Discreet earrings are acceptable but all other body piercings should be covered or removed while on school premises.

3.9 How staff present themselves, their appearance, body language, actions and use of language sets an example to the students. The School has high expectations of staff and for this reason request that staff, when in front of the students should not:

- chew gum;
- use mobile phones for personal use (unless essential) during school hours or use their mobile phones in corridors;
- use inappropriate language in either oral or written form.

4.0 Smoking, alcohol, e-cigarettes and other substances

4.1 Hawthorn Tree School sites are non-smoking sites. Staff must not smoke or use e-cigarettes on school premises or outside school gates. Any member of staff wishing to smoke or use an e-cigarette must leave the school grounds.

4.2 Staff must not smoke or use an e-cigarette whilst working with or supervising pupils' offsite.

4.3 Staff must not consume or be under the influence of illicit drugs or other illegal substances on or near school premises.

4.4 Alcohol may be consumed responsibly on the school premises when the Head teacher has given express permission such as during an evening or weekend social function or a celebration event (limited to one glass per person).

4.5 Staff's duty of care towards pupils on trips and visits is paramount and should never be compromised. Staff are not permitted to drink alcohol on day or residential trips.

5.0 Relationships with Pupils/Students

5.1 Staff are required to read the Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy and follow the guidance outlined in the annual Child Protection update sheet. This is issued to staff every September. Staff are also required to read at least Part 1 and section 5 of the DfE document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'

5.2 Staff must maintain professional boundaries with pupils/students appropriate to their position and must always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably. Staff should act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to question their actions or intent. Staff should think carefully about their conduct so that misinterpretations are minimised.

5.3 Staff must not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. If a young person seeks to establish social contact you should exercise your professional judgement in making a response and be aware that such social contact could be misconstrued.

5.4 Staff should work in an open environment where possible. If staff are in a one to one meeting or interview with a student, they should keep the door open where possible or ensure that there is clear visual access. An exception to this will only occur for safeguarding, mentoring, individual assessments or pupils sharing confidential information where discretion is valued.

5.5 If a student's belongings are to be searched, a member of staff of the same sex of the student should do this in the presence of a member of the Senior Leadership Team. *(Please refer to the DfE document Searching, Screening and Confiscation Advice for Schools DfE July 2022)*

5.6 Contact with pupils/students should be through the school's authorised mechanisms. Personal phone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via all social media platforms should not be used and staff should not share their home address with pupils/students. If contacted via an inappropriate route the member of staff must inform the Head teacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately (see Acceptable Use of ICT – Staff policy).

5.7 School staff must not accept friend invitations or become friends with any pupil/student of the school on any social media platform. No 'friending', 'linking', 'joining' or 'following' must take place until a student is no longer on roll as a student at Hawthorn Tree School. Staff should also

refrain from following the Twitter or other similar social media accounts of pupils/students or their parents. Staff must read the school's e-safety policy carefully and follow all advice and guidance contained within it.

6.0 Infatuations

6.1 It is not unusual for pupils or, sometimes, their parents to develop infatuations towards members of staff. All such situations must be responded to sensitively to maintain the dignity of those concerned.

6.2 Staff should also be aware that such circumstances carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against staff. Any indications of an infatuation towards yourself or another member of staff must be reported to your line manager.

7.0 Gifts/Hospitality

7.1 Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift/offer of hospitality that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. However, there may be occasions where pupils/students or parents wish to give a small token of appreciation to staff, for example at religious festivities or at the end of the year.

7.2 It is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or to suggest to pupils/students that gifts are appropriate or desired. Money must not be accepted as a gift. If you are unsure whether to accept a gift you should consult your line manager.

7.3 If staff believe that gifts are over a certain value (£25), they are to consult a member of the SLT for guidance, advice or to log the specific item and who this was from.

8.0 Physical Contact with Pupils

8.1 There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. A 'no touch' approach is impractical for most staff and may in some circumstances be inappropriate. When physical contact is made with pupils it should be in response to their needs at that time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. For further guidance on this please refer to the School's policy on **Use of Reasonable Force to Control or Restrain Pupils Policy**.

8.2 Where feasible, staff should seek the child's permission before initiating contact. Staff should listen, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and, so far as is possible, use a level of contact which is acceptable to the child for the minimum time necessary.

8.3 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. Staff should therefore, use their professional judgement at all times.

8.4 Staff should be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described. Staff should never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent. Always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny. Staff must not engage in rough play, tickling or fun fights with pupils/students.

8.5 Extra caution should be exercised where a child is known to have suffered previous abuse or neglect. Such experiences may sometimes make a child exceptionally needy and demanding of physical contact and staff should respond sensitively by deterring the child through helping them to understand the importance of personal boundaries.

8.6 Staff supervising PE and games or providing musical tuition should demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument on another member of staff if possible. However, they may be required to initiate physical contact with pupils/students to support a child to perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument or to assist them with an exercise. Contact under these circumstances should be done with the pupil/student's agreement, for the minimum time necessary and in an open environment. Staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the pupil/student.

8.7 Physical contact must never be secretive, for the gratification of the adult or represent a misuse of authority.

8.8 If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported to your line manager, recorded and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the child's file.

9.0 Child in distress

9.1 There may be occasions when a pupil/student is in distress and in need of comfort as a reassurance. This may include age appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

9.2 Such incidents should always be recorded and shared with your line manager. If you have a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance you should seek further advice from your line manager.

10.0 Showers and changing

10.1 There needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard young people, meet health and safety requirements and to ensure that bullying does not take place. The supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the pupils/students and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

10.2 Staff should be vigilant about their own behaviour and announce their intention of entering a changing room. Personal and school devices with a camera or video function should not be taken

into areas where children are showering or changing. Staff must not change or shower in the same place as children.

11.0 One to one situations

11.1 Staff working individually with pupils/students should be aware of the potential vulnerability of pupils/students and staff in such situations. Staff should manage these situations with regard to the safety of the pupil/student and to themselves.

12.0 Transporting pupils

12.1 In exceptional circumstances it may be appropriate for staff to transport pupils/students offsite, for example sports fixtures, swimming lessons or other out of school activities. A designated member of staff should be appointed to plan and provide oversight of all transport arrangements and to respond to any difficulties that may arise.

12.2 Staff should ensure that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. Staff should ensure that the driver has the appropriate license for the vehicle, that the vehicle is roadworthy, has a valid MOT certificate and is appropriately insured for business use and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.

12.3 Staff should ensure that the driver is not distracted while the vehicle is in motion for any reason other than an emergency and should also ensure all passengers are wearing correctly fastened seatbelt. Students should be seated in the back of the car where possible. Staff should never transport pupils/students while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Conversation should be professional.

12.4 Prior to transporting pupils offsite consent (preferably written) must be obtained from pupil/students' parent/guardian and staff should be aware that the safety and welfare of the pupils/students is their responsibility until this is safely passed back to their parent/carers. Staff will need to inform parents/carers who will be transporting the pupils to such events.

13.0 Online Safety

13.1 Staff should follow the school's E-Safety policy for staff and the Acceptable Use Policy at all times and have regard for the school's E-Safety policy for pupils.

13.2 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 settings on any personal profiles they have.

13.3 Staff should remain mindful of their digital footprint and exercise caution in all their use of social media or any other web based presence they have. This includes written content, videos or photographs and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts or following certain individuals or groups. Staff should exercise care when using dating websites where staff could encounter students.

13.4 Staff must not make contact with pupils or ex pupils, must not accept or initiate friend requests nor follow pupil/student or ex pupil accounts on any social media platform. Staff must not communicate with pupils/students or ex pupils via social media, websites, instant messenger accounts or text message. The only acceptable method of contact is via the use of school email accounts or telephone equipment.

13.5 Staff should not make contact with pupils' family members, accept or initiate friend requests or follow pupils' family member's account on any social media platform.

13.6 However, the School acknowledges that staff who are also parents may wish to make contact with other parents, who are friends, over social media. Staff must exercise caution and professional judgement in these circumstances and should not have any contact with pupils' family members via social media if that contact is likely to constitute a conflict of interest or call into question their objectivity.

13.7 Mobile phones and personally-owned devices such as tablets may not be used during lessons or formal school time. They should be switched off (or silent) at all times. Mobile phones and personal devices, cameras and videoing equipment are not permitted in certain areas within the school site such as changing rooms and toilets.

13.8 The camera and filming functions of mobile devices must not be used in school, on school trips or on official school business.

13.9 Mobile phones and personally-owned mobile devices brought in to school are the responsibility of the device owner. The School accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of personally-owned mobile phones or mobile devices.

14.0 Photography, video and images of children

14.1 Many school activities involve recording images as part of the curriculum, extra school activities, publicity or to celebrate an achievement. In accordance with The General Data Protection Regulation Act (2018), the image of a pupil/student is personal data. Therefore, it is a requirement under the Act for consent to be obtained from the parent/guardian of a pupil/student for any images made.

14.2 Using images for publicity purposes will require the age-appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their parent/guardian. Images should not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without their consent. Staff should also be clear about the purpose of the activity and what will happen to the photographs/images/video footage when the lesson or activity is concluded.

14.3 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.

14.4 Staff should remain aware of the potential for images of pupils/students to be misused to create indecent images of children and/or for grooming purposes. Therefore, careful consideration should be given to how activities which are being filmed or photographed are organised and undertaken. Particular care should be given when filming or photographing young or vulnerable pupils/students who may be unable to question how or why the activities are taking place. Staff should also be mindful that pupils/students who have been abused through the use of video or photography may feel threatened by its use in a teaching environment.

15.0 Confidentiality

15.1 Members of staff may have access to confidential information about pupils/students, their parents/carers or their siblings. Staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil/student on a need to know basis.

15.2 Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil/student or her/his family for their own, or others' advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other organisations). Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the pupil/student.

15.3 All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a pupil/student is bullied by another pupil/student, this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate school procedure. It must not be discussed outside the school, including with the pupil/student's parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the school except by a senior member of staff with the appropriate authority to deal with the matter.

15.4 Staff have a statutory obligation to share with the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead any information which gives rise to concern about the welfare or safety of a pupil/student or that might suggest a pupil/student is in need or at risk of significant harm. Staff should pass on information without delay in accordance with the School's safeguarding policy and procedures and this should be recorded. Staff must never promise a pupil/student that they will not act on or pass on any information that they are told by the pupil/student.

15.5 Staff should refer to Keeping Children Safe In Education for advice regarding Information sharing Part 2: the management of safeguarding paragraph 94. If you are in any doubt about whether to share you should seek guidance from a member of the senior leadership team.

15.6 Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the senior leadership team and only approved staff and Governors should communicate to the media about the school.

16.0 Parents as employees

16.1 It is acknowledged that some staff also have children who attend the school. It is recognised that in these cases the staff fulfil a dual role of parent and employee.

16.2 Parents as employees should ensure that they uphold boundaries between the two roles and that their behaviour does not constitute a conflict of interest. For example, they must maintain the same level of confidentiality despite social expectations. Parent-staff should discuss any inter-role conflict with their line manager.

17.0 Whistleblowing

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

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

18.0 Compliance

18.1 New members of staff must complete the form in appendix 1 to confirm they have read, understood and agree to comply with this policy. Any updates of the policy for current staff should be read, signed and dated on My Concern.



'Where everybody is somebody'

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Resilience Respect Diversity Compassion Innovation

Appendix 1

Confirmation of compliance

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with the Hawthorn Tree School's Staff Code of Conduct.

Name

Position/Post Held.....

Signed Date

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Senior Administrator.

