



DANESMEAD, FULFORD CROSS, YORK YO10 4PB
TEL: (01904) 654983

YORK STEINER SCHOOL

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

Approved by:	Board of Trustees	Date:	14th June 2023
Last reviewed on:	June 2023		
Next review due by:	June 2025		

This Code of Conduct aims to establish a set of principles which underpin the expected conduct of staff at York Steiner School with the intention of encouraging staff to achieve the highest standards of conduct at work and of minimising the risk of improper conduct occurring.

The School requires that all staff have read and comply with the Code of Conduct. Where clarification is needed on any aspect of this document, this should be sought from the School HR/Admin Manager.

Breach or failure to observe the provisions of this document may lead to action being taken under the School Disciplinary Procedure.

This document is available to all staff either electronically or hardcopy from the School office.

The Code of Conduct is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of conduct and behaviour and in circumstances where guidance does not exist individuals are expected to use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the School and its pupils.

Scope

The Code of Conduct applies to:

- all members of staff, including teaching and support staff;
- volunteers, including trustees;
- casual workers;
- temporary and supply staff, either from agencies or engaged directly;
- student placements, including those undertaking initial teacher training and apprentices.

References to 'Staff' throughout the Code of Conduct refer to all of the above groups.

Staff are expected to act in accordance with the School's policies and procedures at all times. It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that they read, understand and comply with the School's policies and procedures and are aware of where they are located. Should any staff be unsure about a policy, they are required to discuss this with their manager and seek clarity.

Any links within this document to other documents are for ease of use and do not form part of this Code of Conduct.

Compliance with the Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct forms part of an employee's contract. Failure to comply with it and with the associated school policies may result in disciplinary action being taken and the School reserves the right to take legal action against staff where breaches of the Code warrant such action.

Appropriate Relationships

Pupils

Individuals who work or volunteer in a school environment are in a position of trust. Staff should be mindful of the need to maintain professional boundaries 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. Please see Appendix 3 (point 13) of the Safeguarding Policy (low level concerns and self-referral).

Staff must avoid unnecessary physical contact with children, but we do recognise it is appropriate in certain circumstances.

Please refer to the School's relevant policies: Touch and Physical Contact and the Intimate Care policies for Early Years or the Physical Handling main School policy and Use of Reasonable Force section of the Positive Behaviour Management Policy.

If you feel that you have made physical contact with a pupil that could be misinterpreted this should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Parents

Staff are expected to interact with parents in a polite and respectful manner and recognise parents' entitlement to express any concerns they may have about their child's learning, safety or wellbeing. Staff should avoid discussing school matters with parents outside school if approached and should instead refer the parent to the normal school communication channels.

It is not considered appropriate or acceptable for a Class Teacher to have intimate sexual

relations with a parent in their class. Any breach of this will be taken very seriously in line with the School's Disciplinary Procedure and in most cases will lead to the Class Teacher leaving the employment of York Steiner School.

Conduct Outside of Work

Care should be taken by staff to avoid any conflict of interest between activities undertaken outside school and responsibilities within school. In no case should outside activities bring the School into disrepute.

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 will almost certainly be regarded as unacceptable.

Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the School, School community or employer into disrepute.

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.

Where staff are in doubt as to whether there is a conflict of interest advice must be sought from the School Management Group (SMG).

Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information

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

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 (or by a member of staff), 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's/student's parent or 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 School's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a pupil/student. Staff must never promise a pupil/student that they will not act on information that they are told by the pupil/student.

Criminal Actions and Disqualifications

School employees must inform the HR/Admin Manager immediately if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution. The HR/Admin Manager will discuss this with the employee in the context of their role and responsibilities in order to help safeguard children and other employees at the School.

All staff are expected to inform the School where their relationships and associations, both within and outside of the workplace (including online), may have implications for the safeguarding of children in the School. If your circumstances change or if you or someone you reside with become disqualified, you must inform the HR/Admin Manager immediately

Declaration of Interests

Staff should consider carefully whether they need to declare to the School any relationship with an individual where this might cause a conflict with the School's activities, for example, a relationship with a Trustee, another staff member or a contractor who provides services to the School. Where such a declaration is necessary this should be made to the Head Teacher or HR/Admin Manager.

Dress and Appearance

An individual's dress and appearance are a matter of personal choice; however, staff should ensure that they dress appropriately, decently and safely for a school environment and for the role they undertake, as well as setting a good example to both pupils and visitors.

Staff should have particular regard to the health and safety risks involved with certain lessons i.e. physical education/woodwork and the need to dress appropriately and safely when undertaking these activities, such as wearing appropriate footwear, removing jewellery etc.

The School recognises the diversity of cultures and religions of its staff and will take a sensitive approach when this affects dress and uniform requirements. However, priority will be given to health and safety, security and other similar considerations of other staff, pupils and the School.

Equal Opportunities

The Board of Trustees is committed to equality for all in the appointment, development, training and promotion of staff, and in all dealings with pupils and parents of the School. It also recognises that all members of staff have the right to work in a safe environment without fear of discrimination, harassment or abuse.

All pupils, colleagues, parents, members of the public and wider school community have the right to be treated with fairness and equality and must not be discriminated against. The School expects staff to uphold these principles.

Please refer to the School's Inclusion, Equality and Diversity policy for further guidance.

Finance

As per the staff discount policy, staff who are also parents are offered a generous discount on school parental payments. Staff must complete and return all financial agreement forms within designated timescales and make all payments on time. If there are exceptional circumstances warranting a deviation from this, it must be agreed in writing by the School Management Group (SMG).

Staff are not permitted to get into debt with the School. If there are exceptional circumstances these will be considered by the Finance Manager and in agreement with SMG, will be managed in line with the School debt policy.

Any expenses on behalf of the School must be authorised by your manager before being incurred. All expenses must be claimed back within the same academic year.

All staff must work within the budget set for their department and any overspending without prior authorisation from the Head Teacher, HR/Admin Manager or Finance Manager will be treated as cause for disciplinary action.

Gifts and Hospitality

There may be occasions where children or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff, for example as an end of year 'thank-you', and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value or to suggest to pupils that gifts would be appropriate or desired.

Gifts to individual pupils from staff will be exceptional (except in the context of regular practice by a class teacher or kindergarten teacher for all the pupils of the class) and should be discussed with a colleague if there is any possibility of such a gift being misconstrued by the pupil.

Staff should not solicit or accept any gift, hospitality or other reward from external parties which influences the way in which they carry out their duties or leads the giver to expect preferential treatment.

Health & Safety

Staff must adhere to the School's Health and Safety policy and should ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and others in the School environment safe. Teachers are responsible for the health and safety in the rooms in which they work.

Please refer to the School's Health and Safety policy for further information.

Professional Standards at Work

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

Furthermore, staff must have regard for the ethos and values of the School, as well as its policies and procedures and act in accordance with these at all times, including in their dealings with those who come into contact with the School e.g. visitors.

Staff must act in accordance with their duty of care to pupils and ensure that the safety and welfare of the children and young people at the School are accorded the highest priority. In this and other ways staff should always maintain standards of conduct and behaviour which sustain their professional standing and that of the School.

Teachers are reminded of, and are expected to uphold, their wider responsibilities as set out in the [Teachers' Standards](#), which came into force in September 2012, including an understanding of, and acting within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities. These standards will apply to all teachers regardless of their career stage and define the minimum level of practice expected.

Teachers should ensure that personal beliefs and opinions are not expressed in ways which put the reputation of the School at risk.

Mandatory training and continuing professional development

All Staff must ensure that all mandatory training is completed in a timely manner. Staff will be reminded by the HR/Admin Manager before any mandatory training becomes out of date. Staff are also required to attend CPD courses to ensure the School is offering the best education to all the children.

Treating other people with dignity and respect

All staff are expected to treat other colleagues, pupils and external contacts, such as parents, with dignity and respect. Staff are required to comply with the School's policies in respect of colleagues, pupils and other contacts such as parents. These policies include Anti-harassment & bullying, Anti-bullying and the Disciplinary Policy & Procedure. Unacceptable behaviour such as discrimination, bullying, harassment or intimidation will not be tolerated in school. This includes physical and verbal abuse.

Honesty and integrity

Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.

All staff must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or if they request, agree or accept, or receive a bribe from another person. If you believe that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act, you should refer to the School's Speak Up (Whistleblowing) Policy and Procedure.

Gifts from suppliers or associates of the School must be declared to the School Finance Manager, with the exception of "one off" token gifts from students or parents. Personal gifts

from individual members of staff to individual students are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted. Presents for the entire class are acceptable.

Safeguarding

York Steiner School recognises its statutory and moral duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and understands that staff play a vital role in meeting these responsibilities. Staff must be aware of their individual safeguarding responsibilities, including to provide a safe environment in which children can learn, to be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect, to identify children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm and to take appropriate action in such cases to prevent concerns from escalating.

It may be possible that a member of staff acts in a way that does not cause risk to children (low level concern) but their conduct is however inappropriate. A member of staff who has a concern about another member of staff, supply staff, volunteer, contractor who, on reflection, recognises that their actions could have been viewed as a risk should inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead/ Head Teacher. If the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Head Teacher cannot be contacted, the Chair of Trustees should be contacted instead. Please refer to Appendix 1 of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

All members of staff must be aware of the School's systems for supporting child safeguarding, including the role of the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), currently Ruth Crabtree (Head Teacher).

Concerns about the welfare of a child must be raised without delay to:

Ruth Crabtree -	Designated Safeguarding Lead
Karen Foster -	Deputy Safeguarding & Early Years Lead
Kirsty Mills -	Deputy Safeguarding & Main School Lead
Tracey Lucas -	Deputy Safeguarding & Main School Lead

In the event that none of the above are available please contact:

City of York Children's Safeguarding team (Front Door) 01904 551900

There should be no delay in reporting a concern if there is risk of immediate serious harm to a child.

Staff should be familiar with the School's Safeguarding & Child protection policy. All staff will receive appropriate child protection training and will be provided with guidance on child safeguarding as part of their induction to the School. All staff must complete annual safeguarding refresher training.

In accordance with the statutory guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1](#) (September 2020) published by the Department for Education, all staff at York Steiner School are required to read Part One 'Safeguarding information for all staff' and Annex A, these documents will be provided with a copy as part of the induction to the School process.

Smoking, Alcohol and Other Substances

Staff must not smoke on school premises or outside school gates. Any member of staff wishing to smoke must leave the School grounds. Staff must not consume or be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or other illegal substances on or near school premises during working hours, or when they are representing the School in any capacity. If alcohol or drug usage impacts on an employee's working life, the School has the right to discuss the matter with the employee and take appropriate action, having considered factors such as the School's reputation and public confidence. Staff must refrain from the consumption of alcohol at events where children or parents are present (e.g. leaving parties, school trips). Please refer to the Banned Items & Substance Misuse Policy.

Transporting Children

In certain circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to transport children offsite, for example games lessons or out of school activities. The member of staff planning the offsite visit is responsible for planning and providing oversight of all transport arrangements and to respond to any difficulties that may arise. Staff should ensure that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. Staff should ensure that the driver has the appropriate licence 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.

Use of School Premises and Equipment

School equipment and premises are available only for school-related activities and should not be used for fulfilment of another job or post, or for excessive or regular personal use. This includes photocopy facilities, stationery, telephones, computers and premises. Any school equipment that is used outside school premises, for example laptops, should be returned to

the School when the employee leaves employment or upon request by the HR/Admin Manager.

Use of IT Including Social Media

Social networking sites offer the opportunity for communication with children, young people and their parents outside normal professional boundaries. School staff must take care to protect their privacy and protect themselves from risk of allegations in relation to inappropriate relationships and cyberbullying. Staff must not develop or maintain online relationships with pupils through social networking sites, instant messaging or other media, whether this is through school or personal IT facilities.

If staff use phones to photograph pupils, they must download the images onto the school system and delete the images from the phone.

Please refer to the School's Social Media, Digital Image, Mobile Phone and Electronic Information & Communications policies.

Speak Up (Whistleblowing)

[The Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013](#) gives protection to people who disclose reasonable concerns about serious misconduct or malpractice at work. This is sometimes known as 'whistleblowing'. The Board of Trustees will treat all matters of malpractice very seriously and allegations about such matters will be dealt with quickly and with appropriate confidentiality.

Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibilities in bringing matters of concern to the attention of the School Management Group. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

Please refer to the Schools Speak Up (Whistleblowing) Policy for more details.

This policy should be read in conjunction with all other safeguarding policies as they all work together to safeguard the child, staff and school. These policies collectively support Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023.