



CODE OF CONDUCT 2016

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Purpose and principles

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 Administrator.

Breach or failure to observe the provisions of this document may lead to action being taken under the school disciplinary procedure located on file in school office.

This document is available to all staff 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.

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

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](#), including an understanding of, and acting within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

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 Whistleblowing procedure for schools.

Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to the HR Mandate Holder, 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.

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 Officer (DSO), currently Maurice Dobie (main school).

Concerns about the welfare of a child must be raised without delay to the school's DSO in the first instance or Karen Foster (Early Years Safeguarding Lead), Fiona Dudley (Safeguarding Team member) or Marc Walker (Trustee responsible for Safeguarding). In the event that none of the above are available the City Of York Children's Safeguarding team (Front Door) should be contacted on (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.

In accordance with the statutory guidance published by the Department for Education '[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)' (July 2015) all staff as York Steiner School are required to read Part One 'Safeguarding information for all staff' and will be provided with a copy as part of their induction to the school. The full document is available via the above link or from www.gov.uk.

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.

Staff must avoid unnecessary physical contact with children, but we do recognise it is appropriate in certain circumstances please refer to the school's Physical Handling Policy. If you feel that you have made physical contact with a pupil that could be misinterpreted this should be reported to the DSO.

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.

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.

Staff should not use personal phones and cameras to photograph pupils.

Please refer to the school's e-safety policy.

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 Officer 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.

Dress and appearance

An individual's dress and appearance is 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 Equal Opportunities policy for further guidance.

Health and 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.

Conduct outside 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 Chair of the School Management Group.

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 HR Mandate Holder.

Whistleblowing

The [Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998](#) (as amended) 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 Whistleblowing Policy for more details.

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.

Approval & Review

This policy has been approved by the Board of Trustees on

3rd March 2016

Policy review date:

February 2017