

Ralph Sadleir School



Students of Today, Citizens of Tomorrow

Staff Code of Conduct 2026–2027

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1. Aims, scope and principles

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

Many of the principles in this code of conduct are based on the Teachers' Standards.

School staff have an influential position in the school and will act as role models for students by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards.

We expect all support staff, governors and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

Our school's core values—Confidence, Determination, Kindness, Respect, and Responsibility—are the foundation of our work and must be actively demonstrated by all staff in every interaction with students, colleagues, and the wider community. Every staff member is expected to use these values as a guiding principle for their professional behaviour, decision-making, and contribution to a positive and supportive school ethos. Failure to uphold these core values and the spirit they represent will be addressed as a breach of this code of conduct, as maintaining the integrity of our school environment is a shared responsibility.

Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in our staff disciplinary procedures.

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its students.

2. Legislation and guidance

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026*, we must maintain a staff code of conduct, which should (among other things) cover low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistle-blowing, as well as acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices and generative AI), filtering and monitoring responsibilities, staff/student relationships, and communications, including the use of social media.

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. General obligations

Staff set an example to students. They will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- Never use inappropriate, offensive, discriminatory, or derogatory language in school
- Treat students and others with dignity and respect
- Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Not express personal beliefs in a way that exploits students' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within
- Adhere to the Teachers' Standards

4. Safeguarding

Staff have a duty to safeguard students from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect.

In accordance with *KCSIE 2026* guidance (which has withdrawn Annex A), **all staff members**, regardless of role or direct contact with children, are required to read **Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education in full** upon joining the school and annually thereafter.

Staff will familiarise themselves with our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures, as well as the Prevent duty, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

A copy of our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures is available in the staffroom and electronically on the staff shared drive.

4.1 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that anyone working in the school, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place inside or outside of school

We will deal with any such allegation quickly and in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be the headteacher, or the chair of governors where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation.

4.2 Low-level concerns about members of staff

A low-level concern is behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harm threshold, but is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt'. For example, this may include:

- Being over-friendly with children, *including using nicknames or pet names*
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on a personal device
- Engaging in 1-to-1 activities where they can't easily be seen
- Humiliating or belittling students
- Using personal generative AI or unapproved digital tools to create materials featuring students

Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work. All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy. [Click here for the form](#). We also encourage staff to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage staff to report it.

All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way. Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed, and the staff member supported to correct it, at an early stage.

4.3 Whistle-blowing

Whistle-blowing reports wrongdoing that it is “in the public interest”. Examples linked to safeguarding include:

- Students’ or staff members’ health and safety being put in danger
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement
- Bypassing or disabling school IT filtering and monitoring systems
- Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest

Staff are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. Their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and their confidentiality will be respected. The school aims to encourage openness and will support whistleblowers who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

Staff should report their concern to the headteacher. If the concern is about the headteacher or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to Julia Tye, Chair of Trustees.

5. Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature that has a purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. It also includes treating someone less favourably because they’ve submitted or refused to submit to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature in the past, or harassment related to sex or gender reassignment.

When this behaviour is unwanted, it includes (but isn’t limited to):

- Unwanted physical conduct or ‘horseplay’ including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing
- Continued suggestions for sexual activity after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome
- Sending, creating, or displaying material that is pornographic, indecent, or digitally manipulated (including AI deepfakes)
- Unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless)
- Offensive emails, text messages, social media content, or AI-generated messaging
- Comments and jokes of a sexual nature
- Sexually suggestive looks and staring
- Sexual propositions and advances
- Physical contact such as massaging, hugging or kissing
- Sexual contact or harassment on social media platforms

Staff will help create a positive environment that works to prevent sexual harassment, misogyny, and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). This includes actively calling out and reporting sexual harassment or misogynistic behaviour that they witness. All witnesses will be provided with appropriate support and will be protected from victimisation.

6. Staff-student relationships

Staff will observe proper boundaries with students that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so.

If staff members and students must spend time on a 1-to-1 basis, staff will make sure that:

- This takes place in a public place that others can access
- Others can see into the room
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

Staff should avoid contact with students outside of school hours if possible. Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and students. This includes social media profiles, messaging apps, and

personal email addresses.

While we are aware many students and their parents/carers may wish to give gifts to staff (e.g., at the end of the school year), gifts from staff to individual students are not acceptable.

7. Communication and social media

School staff's social media profiles should not be available to students. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name, as students may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead, and set public profiles to private.

Staff should not attempt to contact students or their parents/carers via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship. They will not make any efforts to find students' or parents/carers' social media profiles.

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images or videos online that identify children who are students at the school without explicit school authorization and parent/carer consent.

8. Acceptable use of technology and Generative AI

Staff will not use technology in school or belonging to the school to view, generate, or share material that is illegal, inappropriate, or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, gambling, and viewing or creating pornography, deepfakes, or offensive content.

8.1 Filtering, Monitoring, and IT Systems

In line with *KCSIE 2026* requirements, the school maintains robust filtering and monitoring systems, which are reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team and IT management. Staff must:

- Never attempt to bypass, disable, or alter IT filtering, firewall, or monitoring systems.
- Promptly report any identified gaps, technical failures, or inappropriate unblocked content to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and IT support team.
- Understand that all emails, internet activity, and file storage on school systems are subject to monitoring.

8.2 Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Staff using Generative AI tools (Google Gemini) for administrative or educational purposes must adhere strictly to the following guidelines:

- **Data Protection:** Never input personal identifiable data of students or staff (names, addresses, IDs, safeguarding details) into public or unapproved AI platforms.
- **Deepfakes and Indecent Images:** Banning absolute creation, generation, downloading, or sharing of AI-generated indecent, semi-indecent, or sexually explicit images/media involving children or staff (deepfakes). Any breach will be treated as gross misconduct and reported to law enforcement.
- **Accuracy & Bias:** Staff remain fully accountable for any output generated by AI used in lesson plans, assessments, or official communications. Content must be checked for accuracy and bias.

8.3 Personal Devices and Mobile Phones

Staff will not use personal mobile phones, smartwatches, or laptops for **personal matters** during direct teaching hours or in front of students. Any personal use must occur in designated staff areas during non-working time (breaks/lunch). Personal mobile phones or cameras must never be used to photograph or record students.

9. Confidentiality

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the school, staff, students and their parents/carers.

This information should never be:

- Disclosed to anyone unless required by law or with consent from the relevant party or parties

- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

This does not overrule a staff member's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, as detailed further in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

10. Honesty and integrity

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with students, handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities.

Staff will not accept bribes. Gifts that are worth more than £30 must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the school is correct. This should include:

- Background information (including any past or current investigations/cautions related to conduct outside of school)
- Qualifications
- Professional experience

Where there are any updates to the information provided to the school, the member of staff will advise the school as such as soon as reasonably practicable.

11. Dress code

Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner.

- Outfits will not be overly revealing.
- Clothes will not display any offensive or political slogans.

12. Conduct outside of work

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school, or the teaching profession, into disrepute. This covers conduct including but not limited to relevant criminal offences, such as violence, sexual misconduct, misogynistic or discriminatory abuse, as well as negative comments about the school on social media or creating inappropriate digital/AI content outside working hours. Any conduct of this nature could lead to disciplinary action.

13. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually in line with statutory updates to *Keeping Children Safe in Education*. It will be approved by the headteacher and governing board.

14. Links with other policies

This policy links with our policies on:

- Staff disciplinary procedures
- Staff grievance procedures
- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Gifts and hospitality policy
- Online safety, filtering and monitoring policy
- AI acceptable use policy
- Whistle-blowing policy