

## Staff Code of Conduct Policy

Barnardiston Hall expects the highest professional standards to be maintained by its entire staff.

Staff must ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate and reflect the age, gender and maturity of the pupils.

All aspects of an adult's demeanour, language and attitudes must be such that they cannot give rise to misunderstanding or misinterpretation by pupils, parents or colleagues.

All adults working in Barnardiston Hall are urged to consider how they can contribute to the safeguarding of children and their own position in the light of this, without giving up important personal principles of care and trust and the promotion of a "family atmosphere" within school.

Whenever doubt exists, any adult working with children should seek the advice of the Headmaster or experienced senior colleague(s). The Safeguarding Policy is to be followed.

### Physical Contact

Physical contact may be misconstrued by a pupil, parent or observer.

Touching pupils, including well-intentioned informal and formal gestures such as putting a hand on the shoulder or arm, can, if repeated regularly, lead to questions being raised.

Staff must not make gratuitous physical contact with pupils and should avoid attributing 'touching' to their teaching style as a way of relating to pupils.

There will be occasions when physical contact may be acceptable. In general, these will fall into one of four categories:

1. **Action to prevent harm or injury to the pupil or to others.**
2. **Use of minimum force and contact necessary to prevent harm or injury** is acceptable and defensible. Such incidents must always be reported to a colleague on duty.
3. **Comforting a pupil in distress.** Much will depend on the circumstances, the age of the pupil, the extent and cause of the distress and the alternative means of providing comfort.
4. **Unavoidable contact** (particularly in PE, Sport & Drama)

All teachers must be alert to the possibilities of misinterpreting any contact. To avoid such misunderstanding, all planned contact must be demonstrably unavoidable.

Where possible, alternative methods involving demonstrations by the teacher or a particularly competent pupil may be more appropriate than modifying a pupil's technique by physical contact.

Adults need to use their professional judgment and discretion in relation to appropriate behaviour. They should always consider how others might perceive the action, even if no one else is present, and ensure that it does not develop into unnecessary contact. Particular care must be taken in instances which involve the same pupil over a period of time.

In cases of doubt or uncertainty, staff should seek advice from the Headmaster or DSL.

**Adults should ensure that their actions recognise the possibility of misinterpretation and are open to the scrutiny of colleagues. ADULTS ARE IN A POSITION OF TRUST and abuse of that trust is a criminal offence (Sexual Offences Act 2003).**

### **Corporal punishment / Restraint**

Any form of physical punishment is prohibited under disciplinary procedures and is actionable in law (assault). This also applies to any form of physical response to misbehaviour. However, if a child is in danger, or likely to cause danger to other pupils, they can be physically restrained and/or physically redirected. All such intervention must be recorded and reported immediately to the Headmaster or DSL.

### **Private meetings**

Teachers and others must plan one-to-one or small group meetings so they are not open to misinterpretation.

It is good practice to:

- Avoid remote areas of the School.

- Ensure that the door is left open or visual contact with others is maintained.

Under no circumstances should meetings with individual pupils be arranged off the School premises without the prior approval of the Headmaster or Deputy.

Transporting individual children in private cars is discouraged.

### **Pupils with Special Needs**

If pupils require assistance with toileting from Class 3 upwards, it is good practice to arrange for the presence of another adult in the vicinity. See EYFS section for babies and younger children.

## **First Aid**

The existence of any life-threatening or serious condition will determine the suitability and necessity of physical contact. This is part of First Aid Training which staff must undertake every three years.

## **Comments and Discussions with Pupils**

Adults must avoid comments to, or about, pupils which could be taken to have sexual overtones or inappropriately relate to a pupil's dress or appearance.

It is unacceptable for employees to encourage debate and discussion between groups of students which could be interpreted as having sexual overtones and are not justified in the context of the teaching programme.

Schemes of Work highlight particular areas of risk and sensitivity. The School Nurse, who has Level 3 Safeguarding Training, is to attend all PSHEE work involving discussion of sexual matters. Teachers are to arrange this.

In order to discharge particular pastoral responsibilities, employees may, from time to time, need to engage in conversation with pupils and students which cover sensitive matters. Teachers must be guided by the safeguarding policies and training and use professional judgement to ensure that they are not drawn into inappropriate conversations.

The persistent and hurtful use of sarcastic, demeaning or insensitive comments towards young people and adults will be regarded as a form of abuse.

## **Infatuations and Crushes**

These need to be handled sensitively. Careless and insensitive reactions have been known to provoke false accusations.

It is in the interest of all parties to avoid adding to the pupil's problems by encouraging the crush or making jokes about the situation. Seek the advice of a senior colleague.

Other members of staff should discretely alert a colleague to the possibility of an infatuation.

Whilst the risk of infatuation is not limited to younger members of staff, newly-qualified teachers, Gap students and work experience students must recognise their particular vulnerability to pre-teen / teenage infatuation.

## **Boarding, Out of School and After-School Activities**

Adults should take care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere of a residential setting or an after-school activity.

A more relaxed relationship may promote successful activities but can be misinterpreted by young people and their parents. Adults should be aware of the particular care which should be taken with older, more mature students in these circumstances.

**It is extremely important to emphasise that the standards of professional conduct and behaviour expected of adults should be no different to that which applies within school.**

Adult accommodation is always separate from children's accommodation and bathroom areas are designated for adults or children.

It is **never** appropriate for a child to enter adult's accommodation whether or not the adult is occupying it at the time. Adults may enter children's accommodation appropriately and with due respect to their privacy.

In the case of Out and Abouts or events which involve overnight accommodation, whenever possible toileting and bathroom facilities should be designated for adult or children's use. Where this is not possible, adults must shower at times when children are not using the shared facility. When younger children are camping out, adults may sleep in the central area between the sleeping compartments, to prevent sleep-walking and deal with nightmares etc. It is good practice for at least two adults to be present.

Staff planning Out and About activities must gain assurance from the organisation being used that their staff are checked for suitability and that proper Safeguarding procedures are in place. This will form a part of the Out and About Risk Assessment.

## **Teaching materials**

The use of books, videos and films of an explicit or sensitive nature, particularly in relation to language or sexual behaviour, must be given careful consideration to ensure that its selection is not subsequently misinterpreted. There should always, therefore, be a clear link with the targets of the teacher's programme.

No video displaying a 12 or above age restriction must be shown to children under 12 years of age.

## **Reporting Incidents**

Adults must report any concerns they may have following any incident where s/he feels that his/her actions may have been misinterpreted.

As an immediate follow-up to the incident:

- Write a statement giving details of what was said, what happened and how the incident was left. Sign, date and write the time on these.
- Report the incident verbally to the Headmaster or Deputy as soon as possible.
- Copy your notes to the Headmaster and keep a copy for yourself. (Recent allegations of abuse have highlighted incidents which happened many years ago.)
- A written record must be made within the day if any form of restraint has been used with a pupil or whenever a pupil, parent or third party has complained about an action or expressed an intention to complain.

You have, in law, as an adult in a position of trust, a responsibility to speak up about safeguarding and welfare matters within School and to external agencies where necessary. Whistleblowing, in the first instance, should be to the Headmaster if it involves a member of staff, or to any member of the Senior Management Team or directly to Customer First. This is a statutory duty.

### **Personal Letters and On-Line and Text Communications**

It will rarely be appropriate for adults working with children to write personal notes or letters, or to send e-mail or text messages to individual students past or present or have contact with them via social media.

If an adult working with children believes it is necessary to write a personal note to a pupil, s/he should discuss the purpose and context with a senior colleague, who should refer to the Headmaster or DSL if they require further advice.

The increased availability of Internet 'chat rooms' and similar on-line forums also pose risks for children and teachers. While they are popular among young people and offer many positive experiences, there is widespread concern about their potential abuse by paedophiles attempting to groom new victims. **Teachers should not use unregulated chat rooms to contact children and should be aware that it is impossible to determine the age of any participant in these environments.**

A friendly and chatty style committed to e-mail or text messaging can easily be misconstrued by the recipient. The 'conversation' is effectively private to just two individuals, with all that this implies.

Teachers should keep passwords secure and ensure that no other person can gain access to their e-mail account and maliciously send messages which appear to have been written by them. Ensure your security settings on social media sites do not leave you vulnerable. Comments about work should not be made on social media; you never know who might be reading it!

**Staff should not use personal mobile phones or other electronic devices to contact pupils, past and present, or to record images of pupils.** Teachers and pupils should use teachers' school e-mail addresses only, even if they are sending messages while working at home. As these services can be monitored, they provide a measure of protection for both parties.

Adults must report the receipt of inappropriate e-mail, text or messages from any school-related source to the SDL Safeguarding and the E-safety Lead. A paper copy should be placed on file.

The School has a policy on the Use of Computers which staff must sign at induction.

*The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to promote the highest standards of care for young people and to protect adults working with children from the potentially devastating consequences of false allegations. Equally, it has to be remembered that many allegations have proved to be with foundation.*

### **Equal Treatment**

Barnardiston is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of an individual's race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or social background.

We aim to create a friendly, caring and discerning environment in which every individual is valued. We endeavour to contribute positively towards the growing autonomy, self-esteem and safety of each pupil and the development of members of staff.

### **ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR TEACHERS**

#### **The Start of the Day**

You should be in your classroom by 8:15am to greet the children as they arrive. Register them. Assembly on Mondays and Tuesday is at 2pm and on Friday it begins at 8:30am. You should accompany your Form to Assembly.

You will be asked to prepare, once a term, a Class Assembly.

#### **Keep Your Classroom Tidy**

Leave your classroom, especially if it is shared by others, in a way which you would be proud to show your mother!

#### **Duties**

Be aware that, when you are on duty, you have responsibility for the well-being of the children at play.

You need to be punctual and observant throughout the duty.

If a child comes to talk to you, position yourself so you can see and be seen.

If you have to leave your duty, please ask a colleague to cover it for you until you return.

If you are going to be absent on your duty day, please swap with a colleague and inform the Deputy Head, so all duties are covered.

### **End of Day**

Form Teachers shake their pupils' hands and dismiss them. Please make sure that your pupils leave the building properly dressed.

Ensure that your room is left tidy.

You will be expected to be in school until 5:30pm, during which time you may be asked to run a club, supervise prep or other necessary duty. Otherwise, it is a good time catch up with administration.

### **Staff Meetings**

Teaching staff are expected to attend academic staff meetings and In-Service Training, usually two days before the beginning of the term and one day at the end of term.

### **Extra-Curricular Activities**

Barnardiston is a busy school and staff are often called on to work out of school hours for the benefit of the children we teach. The School Management try to balance the load as much as possible.

Updated 1 May 2019