CASTLE COURT
SCHOOL

Code of Conduct for Staff

To be read in conjunction with:

Guidance for Safer Working Practices
for adults working with children and young people (2022)

DfE Advice: Behaviour in Schools (2024)

First Aid Policy, Administration of Medicines Policy, Intimate Care Policy, Behaviour, Discipline and Exclusion Policy, e-Safety policy, Whistle Blowing Policy, Child Protection Policy, Complaints Procedures, Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy, Trips and Educational Visits Policy, Staff Handbook, Staff Supervision Policy, Social Media Policy, Physical Contact and Restraint Policy, Lone Working Policy (EYFS), Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)

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Required reading for all colleagues/volunteers
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Katie Johnson (Head)

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1. Introduction

This policy uses as its base ***Guidance for Safer Working Practices for adults working with children and young people*** (SWP 2022). While it is not statutory guidance, it is a very good starting point for those working in schools. This code of conduct aims to codify those aspects of SWP 2022 that need particular explanation to 'fit' our community, directing readers to other policies or national guidance for further details.

This policy is to be read by all new staff at the start of the academic year; current staff are to familiarise themselves with it regularly for best practice. It is also essential reading for regular volunteers. The aim of this document is not to catch colleagues out or to create a culture of fear/suspicion, but to codify agreed practices and protocols with a view to safeguarding children and fellow professionals within our school community. This Code provides details on appropriate and safe behaviours for all adults working with children in paid or unpaid capacities, in all settings and in all contexts.

Throughout this document the terms 'child' and 'pupil' are used interchangeably, as are 'adults', 'colleagues' and 'members of staff'; anything pertaining to members of staff also relates to volunteers. Where 'senior colleagues' are referred to, any member of the Leadership Team may be approached, however in most instances there is a colleague on the Leadership Team with responsibility for a particular area (e.g. if your concern relates to trips, please see the Director of Sport who is also the Educational Visits' Co-ordinator).

All adults working in Education, have a crucial role to play in the lives of children. This guidance has been produced to help all staff establish the safest possible learning and working environment which safeguards children and reduces the risk of them being falsely accused of improper or unprofessional conduct.

2. Responsibilities

All staff are accountable for the way in which they: exercise authority; manage risk; use resources; and safeguard children. All staff have a responsibility to keep pupils safe and to protect them from abuse (physical, emotional, sexual and neglect). Staff should maintain professional curiosity and respectfully question information where doing so may help identify safeguarding concerns. Pupils have a right to be safe and to be treated with respect and dignity. It follows that trusted adults are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure their safety and wellbeing. Failure to do so may be regarded as professional misconduct.

The safeguarding culture of the school is, in part, exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between adults and pupils and behaviour by all staff that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement. When individuals accept a role working in an education setting, they should understand and acknowledge the responsibilities and trust involved in that role. The school has a duty of care towards its staff under Health and Safety legislation to provide a safe working environment for staff. Likewise, staff have a duty of care towards themselves and others, to work in a responsible manner

that is both safe and embodies the excellence which the school as an organisation seeks to uphold.

3. Making a Professional Judgement

This code of conduct cannot provide a complete checklist of what is or is not appropriate behaviour for colleagues in all circumstances. It does highlight however, behaviour which is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable. There may be rare occasions and circumstances in which colleagues have to make decisions or take action in the best interests of the pupil which could contravene this guidance or where no guidance exists. Individuals are expected to make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the children in their charge and in so doing, will be seen to be acting reasonably. Such judgements, in these circumstances, should always be recorded and shared with a senior colleague. Adults should always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably.

4. Power and Positions of Trust

As a result of their knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, all adults working with children and young people are in positions of trust in relation to the young people in their care. The relationship between a person working with a child/ren is one in which the adult has a position of power or influence. It is vital for adults to understand this power; that the relationship cannot be one between equals and the responsibility they must exercise as a consequence. There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people. Adults have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification. Adults should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. They should report and record any incident with this potential to a senior colleague. This is as relevant in the online world as it is in the classroom; staff engaging with pupils and/or parents online have a responsibility to model safe practice at all times.

Where a person aged 18 or over is in a specified position of trust[1] with a child under 18, it is an offence for that person to engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of that child, or to cause or incite that child to engage in or watch sexual activity.

5. Confidentiality

The storing and processing of personal information is governed by the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018. Castle Court provides clear advice to staff about their responsibilities under this legislation in the school's Data Protection Policy and staff should use these principles when considering sharing confidential information.

Staff may have access to special category personal data about pupils and their families which must be kept confidential at all times and only shared when legally permissible to do so and in the interest of the child. Records should only be shared with those who have a legitimate professional need to see them.

Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil 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 child. Confidential information should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need-to-know basis. In circumstances where the pupil's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.

Staff also need to ensure that they do not discuss confidential information relating to pupils or their families away from the workplace, particularly where such conversations might be overheard by members of the public: this is both to protect the confidentiality of the pupil and his/her family, and to maintain the excellent reputation of the school in the local community. This also extends to the use of social media websites. Members of staff have a professional responsibility to ensure that such information about pupils and their parents does not become 'common knowledge' in the wider community.

There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a pupil, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a responsibility to pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated safeguarding responsibilities or to statutory services.

If a child or their parent makes a disclosure regarding abuse or neglect, the member of staff must always take any such concerns seriously and follow the school's procedures. The adult should not promise confidentiality to a child or parent but should give reassurance that the information will be treated sensitively.

If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential, he or she should seek guidance from the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to senior management.

Allegations made against staff or other adults should be passed directly to the Head. Where an allegation is made against the Head, this should be taken directly to the Chair of the Governors.

6. Standards of Behaviour

All adults working with children and young people have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children and young people. It is therefore expected that they will adopt very high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of the public in general and all those with whom they work.

Staff must treat all pupils, families and colleagues with dignity and respect irrespective of age, disability, sex, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership. Staff must not engage in bullying, harassment, discrimination, victimisation or retaliation against colleagues, pupils, parents or visitors.

There may be times, for example, when a colleague's behaviour or actions in their personal life come under scrutiny from local communities, the media or public authorities, including with regard to their own children, or children or adults in the community. Staff should be

aware that their behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, could compromise their position within the work setting in relation to the protection of children, loss of trust and confidence, or bringing the employer into disrepute. Such behaviour may also result in prohibition from teaching by the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) a bar from engaging in regulated activity, or action by another relevant regulatory body.

Staff should notify the Head immediately of any matter which may affect their suitability to work with children or their ability to fulfil safeguarding responsibilities.

7. Attendance and Punctuality

Staff are expected to maintain a high standard of attendance and punctuality in order to ensure the effective operation of the School and the safety and wellbeing of pupils.

Staff must:

- Attend work as scheduled and be ready to perform their duties at the required start time.
- Arrive with sufficient time to prepare classrooms, resources and activities before pupils arrive.
- Notify the Director of Operations, and as soon as reasonably practicable, if they are unable to attend work or are likely to be late.
- Follow the School's Absence Reporting Procedure and provide any required certification or documentation.
- Attend meetings, training sessions, duties and other professional commitments punctually.
- Avoid arranging personal appointments during working hours wherever possible.

Persistent absence, lateness, failure to follow reporting procedures, or unauthorised absence may be managed under the School's Capability and Disciplinary Procedures.

Staff must follow the required signing-in and signing-out procedures and comply with site security arrangements.

8. Dress and Appearance

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression and some individuals will wish to exercise their own cultural customs. At Castle Court, we expect colleagues to dress in ways which are appropriate to their role and this may need to be different to how they dress when not at work. Staff should ensure they are dressed professionally, decently and appropriately for the tasks they undertake; this also applies to online or virtual teaching. Those who dress in a manner which could be considered as offensive and inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations. Those who have a number of roles within the school (eg classroom teacher and sports coach) may need to plan ahead and change clothing during the working day, when this is practicably possible.

Although small items signifying religious observance (for example, a cross) may be

appropriate, colleagues should avoid the wearing of politically or otherwise contentious slogans.

9. 'Fitness' to Work – alcohol and medicines

At Castle Court, we understand that the children are only going to have the very best education if we, as members of staff, are fit and able to work. All members of staff must therefore not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance which may affect their ability to look after the children in their care. Colleagues with concerns about this (either for themselves or for fellow colleagues) should take those concerns to the Head. The Head will assess the circumstances, seek HR, Occupational Health and safeguarding advice where appropriate and consult the LADO where the concern meets the allegations threshold.

Similarly, all colleagues have a responsibility to ensure that any medication they are taking does not affect their ability to look after the children in their care. Colleagues with concerns over this should seek medical advice and inform the Head of any effects their medication may have on their fitness to work as soon as is practicable. Staff must not bring in their own 'over the counter' medicines as the School Medical Officer has a supply – securely stored – for their use. Colleagues who bring in prescribed medicines have a responsibility to ensure they are stored in a locked drawer/cupboard in their own classroom or lodged with the School Medical Officer for safe storage in the locked cupboard / fridge in the Medical Centre.

10. Handling the Media

Colleagues should not speak to the media in any circumstance without first speaking to the Head. The Head will give guidance on how any situation should be handled. Colleagues with concerns about a developing situation in the local community (involving, for example, a parent of a child in the school, a former pupil or a colleague) should inform the Head so that steps can be taken to monitor any connections made with the school and – where possible – to minimise reputational damage for the school. In addition, the school has a policy on handling the media which is made available to members of the admin department: this is available on request from the school office if other colleagues would like to read it.

11. Gifts, Reward, Favouritism and Exclusion

The giving of gifts or rewards to children or young people should be part of an agreed policy for supporting positive behaviour or recognising particular achievements. In some situations, the giving of gifts as rewards may be accepted practice for a group of children, whilst in other situations the giving of a gift to an individual child or young person will be part of an agreed plan, recorded and discussed with a senior manager and the parent or carer.

It is acknowledged that there are specific occasions when adults may wish to give a child a gift. This is only acceptable practice where, in line with the agreed policy, the colleague has first discussed the giving of the gift and the reason for it, with a senior colleague and parent or carer, and the action is recorded. Any gifts should be given openly and not be based on favouritism. Colleagues need to be aware however, that the giving of gifts can be misinterpreted by others as a gesture either to bribe or groom[2] a young person. While

[2]grooming – the act of gaining the trust of a child so that sexual abuse can take place.

national guidance no longer makes suggestions about budgetary arrangement, colleagues are advised not to give gifts to pupils paid for out of a colleague's personal funds: they should be budgeted for in advance and paid for from school budgets.

Care should also be taken to ensure that colleagues do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. Any gift with a monetary value of over £50 should be declared using the school's pro-forma. There are occasions when pupils or parents may wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to adults (e.g. on special occasions or as a thank-you) and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value. Such concerns should be raised with the Head. Members of staff and governors are expected to have a knowledge of the school's Anti-bribery and Corruption Policy and to follow its terms strictly.

Colleagues should exercise care when selecting pupils for specific activities or privileges to avoid perceptions of favouritism or unfairness. Methods and criteria for selection should always be transparent and subject to scrutiny. Wherever possible, all selection processes should be seen to be fair and undertaken and agreed by more than one member of staff. Similarly, the methods and criteria for exclusion should also be transparent and subject to scrutiny.

Staff should also avoid behaviour that could reasonably be interpreted as favouritism or the development of a special relationship with an individual pupil. This may include:

- excessive praise of an individual child
- disproportionate time spent with one child
- unnecessary individual communication

Any concerns should be reported to the Head.

12. Infatuations and 'crushes'

All staff need to recognise that it is not uncommon for pupils to be strongly attracted to a member of staff and/or develop a 'crush' or infatuation. They should make every effort to ensure that their own behaviour cannot be brought into question, does not appear to encourage this and be aware that such infatuations may carry a risk of their words or actions being misinterpreted. Any member of staff who receives a report, overhears something, or otherwise notices any sign, however small or seemingly insignificant, that a young person has become or may be becoming infatuated with either themselves or a colleague, should immediately report this to the Head. In this way appropriate early intervention can be taken which can prevent escalation and avoid hurt, embarrassment or distress for those concerned.

The Head should give careful thought to those circumstances where the staff member, pupil and their parents should be spoken to and should ensure a plan to manage the situation is put in place. This plan should respond sensitively to the child and staff member and maintain the dignity of all. This plan should involve all parties, be robust and regularly monitored and reviewed.

13. Social Contact outside the workplace

It is acknowledged that staff may have genuine friendships and social contact with parents of pupils, independent of the professional relationship. Staff should, however, also be aware that professionals who sexually harm children often seek to establish relationships and contact outside of the workplace with both the child and their parents, in order to 'groom' the adult and the child and/or create opportunities for sexual abuse.

It is also important to recognise that social contact may provide opportunities for other types of grooming such as for the purpose of sexual exploitation or radicalisation. Staff should recognise that some types of social contact with pupils or their families could be perceived as harmful or exerting inappropriate influence on children, and may bring the setting into disrepute. If a pupil or parent seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise her/his professional judgement in that moment and then inform the Head as soon as possible except in those cases where the colleague has children in the same year-group as the parent concerned. This also applies to social contacts made through outside interests or the staff member's own family.

Colleagues must also ensure that contact with parents about school matters should only take place using the colleague's school email account. On such occasions where a parent (or pupil) contacts or attempts to contact a member of staff via a personal email address, the colleague should reply using their school email and make it clear that this is the correct channel for such communication. Colleagues who are also parents in the school should ensure that their personal email address is not publicised to parents.

All phone communication with parents needs to go via the school phone system; on trips, educational visits and away fixtures, colleagues should endeavour to communicate with parents via the school office. Where this is not possible, colleagues should use 141 when contacting a parent so that their personal number is withheld.

Colleagues who are also parents in the school should be very circumspect about giving out their mobile numbers to other parents; while it is assumed that those who are parents may well have good reason to contact other parents via their mobile phones, colleagues should raise any concerns at the first opportunity. In the event of colleagues who are parents forming friendships with other parents whose children are not in their own child(ren)'s year-group(s), the colleague should declare such friendships to the Head.

It is recognised that some adults may support a parent who may be in particular difficulty. Care needs to be exercised in those situations. Staff should ensure that professional relationships with parents do not develop into relationships of emotional dependency, counselling or advocacy beyond the member of staff's professional role.

This situation should be discussed with a senior colleague and where necessary referrals made to the appropriate support agency.

Any requests from parents who wish to make use of professional services offered by a colleague (such as baby-sitting or tutoring) should be discussed with the Head before any agreement is undertaken.

14. Communication with Pupils (including the Use of Technology)

In order to make best use of the many educational and social benefits of new and emerging technologies, pupils need opportunities to use and explore the digital world. Online risks are posed more by behaviours and values than the technology itself.

Staff should ensure that they establish safe and responsible online behaviours, working to local and national guidelines and acceptable-use policies which detail how new and emerging technologies may be used.

Communication with children both in the 'real' world and through web based and telecommunication interactions, such as when virtual or remote teaching, should take place within explicit professional boundaries. Staff should not request or respond to any personal information from children other than which may be necessary in their professional role. They should ensure that their communications are open and transparent and avoid any communication which could be interpreted as 'grooming behaviour'. This includes the use of computers, tablets, phones, texts, e-mails, instant messages, social media such as Instagram, Facebook and X, chatrooms, forums, blogs, websites, gaming sites, digital cameras, videos, web-cams and other hand-held devices. (Given the ever-changing world of technology it should be noted that this list gives examples only and is not exhaustive.)

Staff should not share any personal information with a pupil. They must not request, or respond to, any personal information from the pupil, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. Staff must ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny. Pupils should only contact colleagues within the school via school email addresses or relevant Microsoft Teams. Where pupils attempt to contact colleagues using another email address, colleagues must not reply and must discourage such use when they next see the pupil in person.

Adults should also be circumspect in their communications with pupils so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming. They should not give their personal contact details to pupils including e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers and details of personal web-based identities. E-mail communication between an adult and a pupil outside agreed protocols may lead to disciplinary and/or criminal investigations. This also includes communications through internet-based web sites. The use of personal mobile phones to communicate with pupils is strictly forbidden and may also lead to disciplinary and/or criminal investigations. Please see the school's eSafety Policy which includes further details on the acceptable use of IT by colleagues.

15. Social Media

While the school seeks to embrace technologically advanced approaches to education, colleagues have a responsibility to be very circumspect about their use of social media. The School has Social Media policy which is applicable to staff: this is part of the school's ongoing commitment to forward thinking, safe use of the internet. All colleagues are expected to read and adhere to this policy, which covers personal use of social media, interaction between colleagues, parents and pupils, and legitimate uses of social media for educational or professional purposes.

16. Physical Contact, Restraint and Physical Intervention

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with children, however, it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role and in relation to the pupil's individual needs and any agreed care plan.

Not all children feel comfortable about certain types of physical contact; this should be recognised and, wherever possible, adults should seek the pupil's permission before initiating contact and be sensitive to any signs that they may be uncomfortable or embarrassed. Staff should acknowledge that some pupils are more comfortable with touch than others and/or may be more comfortable with touch from some adults than others. 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 and/or form of communication which is acceptable to the pupil.

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one pupil, in one set of circumstances, may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. Any physical contact should be in response to the child's needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Adults should therefore, use their professional judgement at all times. Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action by them or a colleague could be misinterpreted, or if an action is observed which is possibly abusive, the incident and circumstances should be immediately reported to the manager and recorded. Where appropriate, the manager should consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer (the LADO).

Extra caution may be required where it is known that a child has suffered previous abuse or neglect. Staff need to be aware that the child may associate physical contact with such experiences. They also should recognise that these pupils may seek out inappropriate physical contact. In such circumstances staff should deter the child sensitively and help them to understand the importance of personal boundaries.

In certain curriculum areas (such as music, dance, drama and sport) it may be necessary for a colleague to initiate physical contact (e.g. to demonstrate a body position). Physical contact should take place only when it is necessary in relation to a particular activity. It should take place in a safe and open environment i.e., one easily observed by others and last for the minimum time necessary. The extent of the contact should be made clear and undertaken with the permission of the pupil. Contact should be relevant to their age / understanding and adults should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the pupil.

Staff in sports coaching positions within the school are expected to have read and abide by the CPSU Briefings 'Physical Contact and Young People in Sport'. In all cases, contact should be done with the permission of the pupil concerned.

The law and guidance for schools states that adults may use "reasonable force" in restraining or holding a child under the following circumstances:

- If a child is causing injury to themselves or another child
- If a child tries to physically attack a member of staff
- If a child is causing damage to property
- If a child is engaged in behaviour that compromises good order and discipline
- If a child is running out of the building or school grounds

Great care must be exercised in order that adults do not physically intervene in a manner which could be considered unlawful. Under no circumstances should physical force be used as a form of punishment. The use of unwarranted or disproportionate physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence. Where the school judges that a child's behaviour presents a serious risk to themselves or others, they must always put in place a robust risk assessment which is reviewed regularly and, where relevant, a physical intervention plan.

It is a requirement that a written record is kept on any occasion where restrictive intervention is used. This should be recorded as outlined in the School's Physical Contact and Restraint Policy.

17. Intimate / Personal Care

The school has its own Intimate Care Policy to ensure that the health, safety, independence and welfare of children is promoted and their dignity and privacy are respected. Arrangements for intimate and personal care should be open and transparent and accompanied by robust recording systems. Staff are expected to familiarise themselves with this policy on a regular basis.

Pupils should be encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their own personal care as is possible and practicable. When assistance is required, this should normally be undertaken by one member of staff, however, they should try to ensure that another appropriate adult is in the vicinity who is aware of the task to be undertaken and that, wherever possible, they are visible and/or audible. Intimate or personal care procedures should not involve more than one member of staff unless the pupil's intimate care plan specifies the reason for this.

A signed record should be kept of all intimate and personal care tasks undertaken and, where these have been carried out in another room, should include times left and returned.

Intimate and personal care should not be carried out by an adult that the child does not know. Anyone undertaking intimate / personal care in an education setting is in regulated activity and must have been checked against the relevant DBS barred list, even if the activity only happens once; this includes volunteers. Volunteers and visiting staff from other schools / agencies should not undertake care procedures without appropriate training.

Pupils are entitled to respect and privacy at all times and especially when in a state of undress, including, for example, when changing, toileting and showering. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard pupils, satisfy health and safety considerations and ensure that bullying or teasing does not occur. This supervision should be

appropriate to the needs and age of the children concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

At Castle Court, as pupils know that they are supervised while they change, there is no need for staff to announce their intention of entering the changing room, however care should be taken (in the boys' changing room) when passing the urinals. Under no circumstances should staff share washing or changing facilities with pupils, use urinals alongside (or potentially alongside) pupils or assist with any aspects of personal care which a pupil can undertake for themselves. Particular care should be taken when on school trips (eg on Ferries, at motorway services etc).

18. Behaviour Management

Corporal punishment and smacking are unlawful in all schools and education settings. Staff should not use any form of degrading or humiliating treatment to punish a child. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards children is completely unacceptable.

Staff should understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers, including child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

The school has its own behaviour management policy and staff are expected to adhere to this and familiarise themselves with it on a regular basis: in particular, all new staff are expected to sign to say that they have read and understood the Behaviour discipline and exclusion policy as part of their induction process. Staff are also alerted to the DfE advice entitled Behaviour in Schools (2024)

19. Sexual conduct

It is an offence for a member of staff in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity with a pupil under 18 years of age.

Sexual activity involves physical contact including penetrative and non-penetrative acts, however it also includes non-contact activities, such as causing pupils to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of pornographic material.

There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' where the purpose is to gain the trust of a child and manipulate the relationship so that sexual abuse can take place. All staff should undertake appropriate training so they are fully aware of those behaviours that may constitute 'grooming' and of their responsibility to always report to the Head any concerns about the behaviour of a colleague which could indicate that a pupil is being groomed.

Colleagues should ensure that their relationships with pupils clearly take place within the boundaries of a respectful professional relationship and that their language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. This means that colleagues should not have any form of communication with a pupil which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or

provocative (i.e. verbal comments, letters, notes, email, phone calls, texts, physical contact), make sexual remarks to, or about, a pupil or discuss their own sexual relationships with or in the presence of pupils.

20. One-to-One Situations

Colleagues need to appreciate that working in one-to-one situations with pupils may put them at greater risk of allegations or misunderstanding that call into question their professional integrity. Where possible, meetings with pupils on a one-to-one basis should not take place in remote or secluded areas; other colleagues working in the area should be informed beforehand and an assessment (however quick) should be undertaken as to whether another colleague should be present or close by. Where at all possible, such meetings should take place outside or in another public area of school where there are likely to be passers-by (e.g. Library, dining hall, hall foyer). Those one-to-one situations which are unavoidable (such as Learning Development lessons, MFL oral examinations and individual music lessons) should take place within agreed departmental and school risk management procedures. The use of 'engaged' or 'do not disturb' signs is strictly not permitted; where possible, doors should be left open or slightly ajar. Members of staff who have a concern about excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of another colleague's usual role and responsibilities have a responsibility to pass this on to the Head.

Any instances of a pupil becoming distressed, anxious or angry during a one-to-one session should be reported to the DSL promptly.

21. Lone Working

Colleagues should be particularly mindful of the hazards and risks associated with lone working: there is a separate policy on Lone Working for colleagues who work in EYFS (with specific reference to Badgers and Badger Cubs).

22. Home visits

In most everyday situations, it should not be necessary for members of staff to visit pupils in their homes. However, in very rare situations it may be necessary for a colleague to do so on an emergency or 'one-off' basis. Home visits should normally be undertaken by two members of staff. In such cases, the need for this visit should be discussed and approved by a member of the Senior Leadership Team prior to departure.

Any concerns emanating from the visit should be discussed with the same colleague on return. Out of courtesy, colleagues should 'check back in' with the senior colleague when they are safely home or back in school following such a visit.

Colleagues should not make unannounced visits to pupils' houses (even out of kindness, for example, to drop off some work), but should phone ahead first. Prior to any visit, the colleagues undertaking the visit should discuss possible 'outcomes' of the visit, including thresholds for further action and/or involvement of other agencies. Where time allows, these should be recorded in advance (whether in writing or, more practicably, via email), including contact details of relevant agencies where possible. If the visit relates particularly to a safeguarding concern, the DSL or DDSL (usually the Section Leader) who knows the child/family best should be one of the colleagues to make the visit.

In the event of a series of regular home visits being required for a particular child or family, this should only take place after a Risk Assessment has been completed, taking into account the location, the timings of the visit, knowledge of the family concerned and any others living in the household.

23. Transporting pupils

The transporting of pupils should, wherever possible, only be undertaken in school owned vehicles. Where such a vehicle is not available, or it is practically sensible to use another vehicle, colleagues may use their own vehicle, so long as that vehicle is roadworthy and appropriately insured, the maximum capacity is not exceeded and appropriate seat belts/ car seats are employed.

Colleagues should not offer lifts to pupils outside their normal working duties but there may be circumstances (such as, a pupil missing a minibus at the end of the school day) in which it is appropriate for a colleague to give a pupil a lift home. This should be undertaken in consultation with a senior colleague (usually the Head or the Assistant Heads) and the colleague concerned should phone ahead and discuss the arrangements with the parent/carer.

This discussion must include an assessment of the known behaviour/temperament of the child involved: if the colleague is in any way concerned that the safety of the journey may be compromised by the presence of the pupil, then a further colleague should be identified to travel with them (in most cases at Castle Court School, this will necessitate finding an alternative approach).

Out of courtesy, colleagues should 'check back in' with the senior colleague when they are safely home. There may be very rare occasions when a colleague needs to use a personal vehicle to transport a pupil in an emergency where not giving them a lift might place a pupil at risk. Such circumstances must be recorded and reported to a senior colleague and the parents of the pupil.

Where a colleague is taking their own child(ren) home from school with another child (on a play-date, to a sports fixture etc), it is assumed that the colleague is no longer acting in a professional capacity: the parent/carer of the other child(ren) should have already given the school permission for this to take place. There is – in such circumstances – no need for the colleague to seek permission or 'check back in', but the colleague should remain alert to anything untoward and report any concerns to the Head.

24. Trips and Educational Visits

The school has its own Trips and Educational Visits Policy with which colleagues are expected to familiarise themselves ahead of any trip being planned.

25. First Aid and Administration of medicines

The school has its own policies on First Aid and Administration of Medicines. Staff are expected to familiarise themselves with these on a regular basis.

26. Photography and Videos

The school's policy on the taking and storing of images is contained within the eSafety Policy. Colleagues are expected to familiarise themselves with this policy.

Staff should take extreme care to ensure that children and young people are not exposed, through any medium, to inappropriate or indecent images. There are no circumstances that will justify adults: making, downloading, possessing or distributing indecent images or pseudo-images of children (child abuse images). Accessing these images, whether using the school's or personal equipment, on or off the premises, or making, storing or disseminating such material is illegal.

If indecent images of children are discovered at the establishment or on the school or setting's equipment the DSL and Head should be informed immediately. Police advice should be sought without delay and LADO consultation undertaken where concerns relate to an adult working with children. The images/equipment should be secured and there should be no attempt to view or delete the images as this could jeopardise necessary criminal action. If the images are of children known to the school, a referral should also be made to children's social care in line with local arrangements.

Under no circumstances should any adult use school or setting equipment to access pornography. Personal equipment containing pornography or links to it should never be brought into or used in the workplace. This will raise serious concerns about the suitability of the adult to continue working with children and young people.

Staff should keep their passwords confidential and not allow unauthorised access to equipment. In the event of any indecent images of children or unsuitable material being discovered on a device the equipment should not be tampered with in any way. It should be secured and isolated from the network, and the DO contacted without delay. Adults should not attempt to investigate the matter or evaluate the material themselves as this may lead to a contamination of evidence and a possibility that they will be at risk of prosecution themselves.

Taking photos of pupils on personal devices should only be used where expressly authorised by the Head and in accordance with the school's photography protocols. Images must be transferred immediately to the school's approved storage platform and deleted without delay from personal devices in line with the directions in the declaration.

Staff working within EYFS must comply with the school's mobile phone and camera procedures at all times.

27. Duty to Report Concerns & Whistle Blowing

There is a duty to report (including self-reporting) any incident in which an adult has or may have behaved in a way that is inconsistent with the school's staff code of conduct including inappropriate behaviours inside, outside of work or online.

Staff should recognise their individual responsibility to raise any concerns regarding behaviour or conduct (including low level concerns) that falls short of the principles outlined in this document. It is crucial that any such concerns, including those which do not meet the

harm threshold (see KCSiE 2026), are shared responsibly and with the right person, and recorded and dealt with appropriately. Staff have a professional responsibility to self-report incidents where their conduct may have fallen below expected professional standards. The school has a Low Level Concerns Policy which all staff are required to read and adhere to.

Failure to report or respond to such concerns would constitute a failure in professional responsibilities to safeguard children and promote welfare.

Whistle blowing is the mechanism by which adults can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. The school has a Whistleblowing Policy under which colleagues are made aware that their employment rights are protected. Colleagues have a responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of the Head. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

Where allegations are made by pupils against a member of staff, the colleague in receipt of this information should take it to the Head (or, if it is about the Head, to the Chair of the Governors) not the Designated Safeguarding Lead. It is up to the Head (or, in the case of the Head, the Chair of Governors) to ensure that a log is kept of low-level concerns relating to the conduct of colleagues and to seek appropriate advice from the LADO if they meet the 'harms test' criteria set out in KCSiE 2026, or if there is a worrying pattern of behaviour.

28. Sharing Pupil Concerns and Recording Incidents

All colleagues should familiarise themselves with the systems within the school for sharing concerns or recording incidents: behavioural concerns should be logged using Trackit Lights, concerns of a possible safeguarding nature should be made using MyConcern or, for those without a MyConcern log-in, in writing an email to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Concerns should be recorded in the same way so that the Safeguarding Team is able to build up a fuller picture of the child concerned. All such sharing and recording should take place in-line with the school's Child Protection Policy (including Child Protection Procedures), Complaints Procedures and Behaviour, Discipline and Exclusion Policy. Concerns relating to e-Safety, self-harm and sharing of nude and semi-nude images should be brought to the DSL's attention in the first instance.

29. Personal Living Accommodation

As a general rule, colleagues must not invite any pupils into their personal living accommodation unless the reason to do so has been firmly established with a senior colleague and the child's parent/carer.

At Castle Court, no staff members are currently provided with on-site accommodation. In the event of the school accommodation being made available to a member of staff (for example, to the Head; a caretaker) this accommodation must not be used for any activity, play or learning relating to the activities of the school for pupils. Appropriate accommodation for such activities should be found elsewhere on site. Similarly, pupils must not be asked to assist adults with jobs or tasks at or in personal on-site accommodation.

30. Curriculum

Many areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is of a political or sensitive nature. Care should be taken to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the learning outcomes of the lesson planned. This can be supported by developing ground rules with pupils to ensure sensitive topics can be discussed in a safe learning environment, highlighting particular areas of risk and sensitivity and care should especially be taken when usual boundaries are less rigorously applied (eg drama).

The curriculum can sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussion about subject matter of a political or otherwise sensitive nature. Responding to children's questions requires careful judgement and staff should take guidance in these circumstances from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Care should be taken to comply with the school's policy on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) which should promote fundamental British values and be rigorously reviewed to ensure it is lawful and consistently applied. Staff should also comply at all times with the policy for relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) promoting healthy relationships inclusive of an understanding of consent. It should be noted that parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of any sex education provided but not from the National Curriculum for Science.

Where part of the school curriculum allows for pupil led projects, for example PSPQ, staff should be mindful of safeguarding considerations in the topic chosen and the methodology used. For example, pupils often choose topics with which they have had personal experience; this may indicate a previously unknown safeguarding issue or may raise concerns about the re-traumatisation of the pupils. Pupil projects are often conducted using questionnaires with peers; these should be checked for appropriateness to ensure the student respondents are not distressed by the questions asked and that any disclosures received through these questionnaires are picked up by the school's designated safeguarding lead. Other methodologies which might raise concerns include: pupils visiting unknown adults, alone, to interview them; conducting social experiments on peers or young children without parental consent; or accessing age inappropriate content online.

Review

This code of conduct is reviewed on an annual basis in September by the Head and presented to the Governors' Education Committee for scrutiny and approval.

Particular note should be taken of changes to SWP (first published in 2015; updated in 2019; Covid addendum published in 2020; updated in 2022).

Members of the Leadership Team welcome the healthy input of colleagues and other stakeholders in the school in the further development of this code of conduct: asking a question of clarification or requesting further information about an area covered in this code of conduct will be seen by members of the Leadership Team as part of the healthy dialogue required to ensure that Castle Court School remains a safe place for children, colleagues, parents and visitors.