

# STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

## Whole School & EYFS

**Reviewed:** January 2020 (CW)

**Governor Review:** April 2020 (SH)

*Including Safer Working practices for all adults who work with children and young people in education settings, October 2015*

<http://www.safeguardingschools.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Guidance-for-Safer-Working-Practices-2015-final1.pdf> .

The aim of this code is to assist all members of the AESG community to be prudent about their own conduct and vigilant about the conduct of others, so that their relationships with girls and other colleagues remain, and are seen to remain, entirely proper and professional and that they always act in the best interests of the pupils at AESG.

### **A: Safer Working Practice**

All adults who have contact with children and young people have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare. A relationship between an adult and a child or young person is not a relationship between equals and thus adults are accountable for their conduct. Adults therefore have a responsibility to ensure that their power is not used for personal advantage and must avoid conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.

The key principles that AESG follow, from the Safer Working Practices document are:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- Staff should understand their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils
- Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions
- Staff should work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way
- Staff should acknowledge that deliberately invented/malicious allegations are extremely rare and that all concerns should be reported and recorded
- Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from their line manager if they have acted in a way which may give rise to concern
- Staff should apply the same professional standards regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and sexual orientation
- Staff should not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or any substance, including prescribed medication, which may affect their ability to care for children
- Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in disciplinary action being taken against them, criminal action and/or other proceedings including barring by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) from working in regulated activity, or for acts of serious misconduct prohibition from teaching by the Teacher Regulation Agency (TRA).
- Staff and managers should continually monitor and review practice to ensure this guidance is followed

- Staff should be aware of and understand their establishment's child protection policy, arrangements for managing allegations against staff, staff behaviour policy, whistle blowing procedure and their Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CESCP) procedures.

### **1. Confidentiality of information**

Staff may have access to confidential or personal information that is sensitive and private. This information must not be used for staff or others' advantages and must not be shared, except on a need-to-know basis. Should private information suggest that abuse of a child is alleged or suspected, the adult must pass information, immediately, to the member of staff with designated child protection responsibilities, at present the Deputy Head (Designated Safeguarding Lead), with the Head, School Nurse and Junior Pastoral Coordinator as DSL Deputies. If there is any doubt as to whether the information should be passed on s/he should ask the Deputy Head.

### **2. Curriculum**

Some areas of the curriculum contain subjects of a sensitive nature and could, for example, be sexually explicit. Staff teaching such subjects must prepare clear, written lesson plans based on the scheme of work and should be able to relate all resources to these plans. Staff should not enter into inappropriate discussions about sexual activity or any behaviour which could offend or harm others. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the sex education programme in PAL / PSHE but not from the biological aspect of human reproduction under the science curriculum. All details of the statutory regulations associated with this area of teaching are available to all staff.

As part of staff CPD, we encourage all teaching staff to work with examination boards as examination markers. If staff choose to do this, the School will support them with days out to complete CPD training. We expect that the marking and / or other preparation for this is undertaken outside of school hours.

### **3. Behaviour Management**

Students have a right to be treated with respect even where they behave in a challenging way. **Corporal punishment is forbidden as a form of punishment** as is sarcasm or demeaning or insensitive comments. Adults should try to defuse situations before they escalate into serious incidents. Sanctions or rewards used must be part of the AESG's behaviour management policy where the emphasis is on encouragement and praise to develop good behaviour patterns.

### **4. One-To-One Situations**

Reasonable precautions should be taken to reduce vulnerability to unjust allegations. Staff are advised not to hold pre-arranged meetings with students away from school premises, avoid meeting in secluded areas of the school or alone in private offices and arrange for a parent or colleague to be present or close by. Staff must report to the Deputy Head any situation where a child becomes distressed or angry during a one-to-one meeting. If a colleague thinks there may be a reason for a home visit, this must be discussed with the Deputy Head and a risk assessment carried out.

Those who provide one-to-one tuition in Music and Performing Arts lessons, for instance, should ensure that professional distance is maintained. Physical contact should be avoided and any concerns relating to such teaching situations should be reported to the DSL without delay. Staff are trained in this area via staff INSET at the start of every academic year.

### **5. Physical Contact and Intervention. (see Positive Handling Policy)**

- a. The general culture of 'limited touch' should be adopted. There are occasions when it is appropriate for staff to have physical contact with students, but this should be only in

- b. ways appropriate to their professional role, for example in sport, drama or music, where technique in using a piece of equipment is demonstrated or posture is adjusted or an injury needs to be assessed.
- c. When physical contact is made with a student it should be a response to the student's need at the time. For example, a distressed child who needs comfort in the event of bereavement or serious illness in the family. This should be a one-off occasion of limited duration, appropriate to their age (physical contact will occur more often with younger pupils) and sensitive to issues of gender, cultural and religious views of the child. It should never take place when alone with the child nor be open to misinterpretation.
- d. The policy on student restraint is clear: staff should not touch a child to move or restrain them unless they are about to harm themselves or someone else. Should a student be causing disruption which requires her to be removed from a classroom, the teacher should send for a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- e. Corporal punishment is prohibited. This relates to a pupil during any activity, whether or not within the school premises, and to all members of staff, whether they are members of the teaching staff or unpaid volunteers.
- f. With regards to intimate/ personal care, AESG has policies in place that staff must follow. All arrangements are open and transparent. Pupils are encouraged to act as independently as possible. (refer to Nappy Changing and Intimate Care Policies)

## **6. Transporting Students.**

- a. It is advisable that transport is not undertaken in a member of staff's private vehicle but if it is used, the vehicle should be insured for transporting students, be road-worthy, the maximum number of passengers must not be exceeded and another adult additional to the driver should act as an escort where possible. (See Excursions and Trips Policy) Staff should have the appropriate and up-to-date licence and insurance for the vehicle, ensure they are fit to drive and free from any drugs, alcohol or medicine which may impair the ability to drive. All occupants should wear seatbelts; this is the legal responsibility of the staff member.
- b. Staff are advised not to offer lifts to students outside their normal working duties unless there is an emergency or not giving the child a lift would place her at risk. Such a circumstance should be recorded in writing and passed on to the Deputy Head and consent from parents must be sought.

## **7. Gifts and Rewards (see Anti-Corruption & Bribery Policy)**

- a. Gifts and rewards to students should be part of school policy for supporting good effort, high attainment and community contributions. The giving of a gift to an individual child should be part of an agreed plan, or selection process discussed with a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Such gifts should be of insignificant value and should be given openly and not be based on favouritism. Staff should take care not to accept any gift that might be considered a bribe by others or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. Low-value tokens of appreciation are acceptable but not on a regular basis.
- b. Staff should take care to avoid perceptions of favouritism or injustice when selecting students for school teams, drama and music productions, visits or specific work tasks; methods and criteria for selection should be transparent.

## **8. Photography, Videos and Internet Use (please see the Online Safety Policy)**

- a. During the course of daily school life, there are many occasions when members of staff may need to take a photographic record of classroom activities for school purposes. Staff recording images as part of their work with students must be particularly careful that this does not compromise the safety, security, privacy or dignity of a student. Permission will have been granted or refused by parents or guardians via our Media Consent form. Staff must be in full control of what happens to the images. The student must be appropriately dressed.
- b. The school will commission such form of media via:
  - A member of staff using their school iPad, a school camera or recording equipment

- A parent who has the permission of the school to take the images for school purposes
- A commissioned freelance photographer or
- By a third party such as a speaker, business or associated organisation during a school trip or event. This may also include a member of staff or parent using their own equipment.

Where possible, staff should use equipment provided by the school. Mobile phones or similar devices must not be used in the absence of school equipment. Images must be taken in areas of the school where there are people, not in secretive areas.

- The signing of our Media Consent Form enables the school to use images for internal or external marketing purposes. In addition, even when consent has been provided, the School's Marketing Officer will aim to contact parents out of courtesy should their daughter be used in an external advertising campaigns or for radio interviews etc.
- In the majority of cases, pupils will not be named alongside images unless it is in the school newsletter, on the school website or Twitter account (first name only). With regards to press releases, images will be issued alongside pupil names - hometown may also be released.
- Staff should ensure that students do not view unsuitable material on the internet and any films shown to students must be age-appropriate. Staff may not use equipment belonging to school to access "adult material". Accessing, making and storing indecent images of children is illegal. In this case, the Police, the Local Authority Designated Officer and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) will be informed. Prosecution may be a consequence.
- The School is aware of its Child Protection and Safeguarding obligations and ensures that images are stored safely on the school network which is accessible to staff only.

## 9. Communication with students and their parents

- Staff are advised not to give personal contact details to students, or their parents, including email, home or mobile telephone numbers, personal social networking sites or other internet or web-based communication channels. Staff should set personal social networking sites as **private**, must not mention the name of the school on their site and only use the school ICT network to contact children for professional reasons and in accordance with school policies. Web-cams, web sites and blogs must be used appropriately. Staff should not share any personal information or request any personal information from any student other than what is appropriate as part of their professional role.
- Twitter accounts which are linked to the School must be known and monitored by the Development & Marketing Department.
- It is recognised that for visits or sports fixtures, for example, staff do need to use mobiles to keep in touch and should use the School mobiles. They are also reminded that communication between an adult and a student outside the agreed protocols above may lead to disciplinary investigations and may even constitute criminal behaviour.
- When staff are dealing with enquiries or complaints from parents, it is advised that the Head of Department and/or Head of Year is consulted, who may be better placed to deal with the issue. A written record of the main points must be kept using the Stage 1 Complaints document which should then be sent to the Head's PA.

## 10. Social Contact and Social Media

- Staff must maintain professional boundaries at all times. Staff should not make social contact with students for the purpose of friendship or other relationship. No student should be in, or invited into, the home of an adult who works with them. Under no circumstances should students assist with chores or tasks in the home of adults who works with them, nor should they run errands for them. If a parent seeks to establish social contact, the member of staff should exercise her/his professional judgement in

making a response. In all contact on school business, staff are advised to address parents formally as Mr, Mrs, Ms, Dr etc.

- b. There should be no secret social contact by staff with students or their parents. The sending of personal communication such as birthday or faith cards should always be discussed with their line manager.
- c. Parents may divulge particular personal difficulties to a member of staff. Care needs to be exercised not to exceed the professional role of the member of staff. Such a situation should be discussed with the Headmistress or Deputy Head so that a parent may be directed to support agencies where necessary.
- d. It must be remembered that it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over, such as a teacher, to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child; even if, in the case of those over 16, the relationship may be consensual.
- e. The School recognises that many employees make use of social media in a personal capacity outside the workplace and outside normal working hours. While they are not acting on behalf of the School in these circumstances, staff must be aware that they can still cause damage to the School if they are recognised as being a member of staff. Staff should remember that social media websites are public forums, even if they have set their account privacy settings at a restricted access. Therefore, they should not assume that their postings on any website will remain private. Staff must ensure that any postings are not potentially detrimental to the School and/or its reputation. Such postings must be removed immediately if requested and may result in disciplinary action being taken by the School. The school reserves the right to monitor staff use of social media on the Internet, both during routine audits of the computer system and in specific cases where a problem relating to excessive or unauthorised use is suspected.
- f. Staff must ensure that, if they use social media, they do not use any postings to damage working relationships with or between other members of staff, students and parents etc. For instance, posting information or images on social media whilst absent for sickness can damage working relationships and, potentially, damage the reputation of the School. Such postings must be removed immediately if requested and may result in disciplinary action being taken by the School.

## **11. Infatuations**

Infatuations carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted. A member of staff who becomes aware that a student is developing an infatuation should report this immediately to the Headmistress or the Deputy Head. The member of staff should write down any incidents or indications of infatuation (verbal, written or physical). The Deputy Head will request a written statement from the student and will then interview the student to discuss the inappropriateness of the behaviour and to obtain a written statement of intention to cease the behaviour. A plan to manage the situation should be put in place and should be regularly monitored and reviewed by the Head or Deputy Head.

## **12. Dress, appearance and behaviour**

- a. Staff are asked to adopt smart professional dress appropriate to their position of authority as an adult role model and also for the tasks they undertake as part of their work to inspire confidence in students, parents and the wider community.
- b. Dress should not be offensive, revealing, sexually provocative, distracting, embarrassing or culturally insensitive. Styles and colours of hair should be appropriate for the school environment and any jewellery worn should be appropriate to a professional appearance. No badges carrying party political or other contentious slogans or statements should be worn.
- c. Shoes should be sensible for working in a busy environment and be appropriate for use in specialist facilities. Health and Safety aspects of stairs and the ability to move quickly must be taken into consideration.

- d. Employees whose job does not take them into regular contact with students, parents, official visitors or members of the public may wear casual clothing to work providing that it is neat, clean and in a good state of repair and appropriate to AESG. Where the school provides an item or items of uniform to enable the employee to more appropriately carry out his/her duties this must be worn at all times whilst on duty; this includes health and safety wear. Any employee whose job involves working with machinery or working with food should follow the health and safety guidelines for that area.
- e. The Headmistress reserves the right to approach individuals who do not follow the dress code. In the case of persistent failure to follow this code, the Headmistress may take disciplinary action.

### **13. Position of trust and appropriate behaviour**

There is an expectation of high standards of personal conduct, good judgement and integrity both in school and in places other than school. It is an offence for a person aged 18 or over who is in a specified position of trust with a child under 18 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 activities or to compromise their suitability to work with students, for example through misuse of drugs or alcohol or acts of violence. The behaviour of an adult's partner or other family member may raise similar concerns and may be considered by an employer as to whether there may be a potential risk to students. Any sexual activity between a member of staff and a student will always be a matter for disciplinary action and may be a criminal offence.

### **B: Colleagues with children attending AESG**

All members of the school community are entitled to equality of opportunity and treatment. Girls whose parent(s) are staff in school must feel they are here as an individual. Teachers or support staff who have children in school must feel they are treated in the same way as any other parent would be treated.

#### **1. Communication**

It is expected that formal channels of communication will be used for almost all communication if there is an issue. For example, colleagues are asked not to engage in discussions on corridors, *en passant*, about the colleague's daughter or expect colleagues to pass messages on to their daughters. It is advised that communication is passed via the other parent or guardian to ensure care for all parties in any school related matter.

#### **2. Confidentiality**

All colleagues are reminded that there are many documents, such as reports, mark books, etc. that are confidential. As such, they must not be left around where a child could gain information to which they would not normally be privy. This applies equally to conversations about other students or colleagues.

#### **3. Relationships with daughter's friends and their parents**

Colleagues are asked to give due consideration to these and establish an appropriate professional boundary.

#### **4. Access to staff only areas**

Children of staff should not be allowed to spend time in any of the staff rooms, reprographics rooms or offices where other students would not normally be allowed. There is always a substantial amount of confidential material in these areas and most colleagues are likely to feel uncomfortable with student presence in their working space.

In the very unusual situation where there is a problem, received wisdom from colleagues with daughters in school suggests that *the other parent* deals with any issues that arise.

**C: Colleagues are expected to be aware of the code of conduct for girls, i.e. the behaviour expectations.**

Whilst some aspects of the rules for girls are clearly not applicable to staff, others are, for example the chewing of gum and eating/drinking in classrooms and on corridors.

**D: Professionalism between colleagues**

There is an expectation of high standards of personal conduct, good judgement and integrity between colleagues at AESG. Face to face communication is always best when dealing with difficult conversations.

In the case of formal communication, staff should always use their school email address and endeavour to work within appropriate timescales to send minutes, complete work allocated and inform one another of important dates or activities taking place within the department.

All communication with others should occur in a professional manner, without the use of aggressive or inappropriate language and all parties should appreciate that others may have different opinions.

In situations where there is a disagreement with regards to a course of action or the handling of a situation, staff are requested to keep concerns out of public areas, that they are addressed sensitively and seek advice from line managers or a member of the SLT.

**E: Colleagues are also directed to the following documents:**

- The GTC Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers (*This document seems utterly appropriate for support staff also*)
- The AESG Contract of employment and other personnel policies
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- The Data Protection Policy
- The ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Nappy Changing and Intimate Care Policies (EYFS)
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Online Safety Policy