



ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

SAFER WORKING PRACTICES FOR ADULTS - STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

All Saints is committed to safeguarding children and promoting children's welfare and expects all staff, governors, volunteers and visitors to share this commitment and maintain a vigilant and safe environment. It is our willingness to work in a safe manner and challenge inappropriate behaviour that underpins this commitment. Everyone, regardless of position, role or responsibilities, is expected to adhere to this 'Code of Conduct' and the *Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings* (updated in February 2022 by The Safer Recruitment Consortium), which is available online at: <https://c-cluster-110.uploads.documents.cimpress.io/v1/uploads/d71d6fd8-b99e-4327-b8fd-1ac968b768a4~110/original?tenant=vbu-digital>

Everyone must also read and understand part one of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE September 2023).

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1161275/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2023_part_one.pdf

This code of conduct aims to support adults so they don't work in a manner, which might lead to an allegation against them. Equally it aims to reduce the opportunity for any adult intent on grooming or harming a child or young person. It encourages you to work in an open and transparent way that should avoid someone questioning your motives, intentions or suitability to work with young people. It is a key principle of this code of conduct that **everyone** understands their responsibility to share **without delay** any concerns they may have about a child's welfare or an adult's behaviour towards a young person. In addition, **everyone** has a responsibility to escalate their concerns to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on 0151 443 3928 or CPconference@knowsley.gov.uk or via Knowsley Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 0151 443 2600, if they feel that safeguarding concerns they have raised about a child or adult working at the school are not being addressed by the school.

Code of Conduct:

- If you have any concerns that a child is being harmed, abused or neglected you **must share your concerns immediately**, both verbally and via CPOMS with Lynne Jackson, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or Brian Bradley, Assistant Headteacher, or Tony McGuinness, Headteacher, who are also members of the Safeguarding Team. Always listen carefully to the child and record what they tell you in their own words. Never promise to keep a secret.
- If you receive an allegation against an adult working in the school or observe behaviour that concerns you, you **must** discuss your concerns **without delay** with the Headteacher or DSL. Concerns regarding the Headteacher should be directed to John Thornhill, Chair of Governors, via email jthornhill@allsaintschs.org.uk or the LADO. The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally or via Local Authority procedures - Tel: 0800 028 0285 (8:00am - 8:00pm, Monday to Friday) or email help@nspcc.org.uk.
- Anyone (in emergencies or if they need to) can make a referral about their concerns for a child to Knowsley MASH on 0151 443 2600.

You should:

- Always act and be seen to act in the child's best interests. The welfare of the child is paramount.
- Treat information you receive about pupils and families in a discreet and confidential manner unless sharing information is appropriate to ensure their welfare.
- Share safeguarding information appropriately in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures. Seek advice from the DSL if you are in any doubt about sharing information you hold or which has been requested of you.
- Be alert to the indicators of harm and abuse towards a child, including child on child abuse.
- Understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers, including child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment and be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. Victims should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem or made to feel ashamed for reporting abuse.
- Be mindful and sensitive to factors both inside and outside of school, which may impact on a child's behaviour, and try to defuse any situations before they escalate using positive behaviour management strategies.
- Dress appropriately according to your role, ensuring that clothing is not likely to distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding; be viewed as discriminatory, offensive, revealing or sexually provocative and is free from any political or other contentious slogans or images. This also applies when participating in online or virtual teaching/meetings.
- Act as an appropriate role model, treating all members of the school community with dignity, respect and tolerance.
- Ensure gifts given or received in situations which may be misconstrued are discussed with your Line Manager and recorded.
- Report any indications (verbal, written or physical) that suggest a child may be infatuated with you or another member of staff to your Line Manager.
- Always explain to a child the reason why any physical contact is necessary and what form it will take. Consider alternatives, where it is anticipated that a child might misinterpret any such contact. Ensure the way you offer comfort or reassurance to a distressed child is age appropriate. Where physical contact is required, it is good practice for it to be within the sight of others.
- Carry out home visits with a colleague, wherever possible, and always try to give parents/carers advance warning unless there is good reason not to, e.g. because the visit has been prompted by safeguarding concerns. You should have access to a mobile phone and never enter a house if a parent/carer is not present other than in an emergency. You should also have a clear understanding of the actions that should be taken if it is believed that a child or parent/carer is at immediate risk of harm.
- Ensure that you adhere to the school's guidance if you are arranging an educational visit. Risk assessments should be undertaken and the appropriate consents in place prior to the visit. Another adult should always be present during the visits, unless otherwise agreed by the Headteacher.
- Adhere to all of the school's policies, particularly those related to safeguarding – including child protection, behaviour, attendance, anti-bullying, allegations management and whistleblowing.
- Ensure that your use of technology does not bring the school into disrepute. Abide by the school's Acceptable Use Policy for Staff and E-Safety Guidance. Ensure that you are familiar with the section entitled '*Use of Technology for Online/Virtual Teaching and Meetings*' before delivering any lessons online.
- Ensure that pupils can't be exposed to indecent or inappropriate images. Always make sure that any films or materials shown to children are age appropriate.
- Always maintain professional boundaries. This is as relevant in the online world as it is in the classroom; staff engaging with pupils and/or parents/carers online, have a responsibility to model safe practices at all times.

- Apply the same professional standards regardless of culture, disability, gender, identity, language, racial origin, religious belief and sexual orientation.
- Report any behaviour or situations which you may feel give rise to a complaint or misunderstanding in respect of your own actions. Also share situations with your Line Manager if you feel your actions might have sat outside of this code of conduct.
- Inform the Headteacher of any cautions, convictions or relevant orders accrued throughout your employment and/or if you are charged with a criminal offence.
- Remember that the behaviour of those with whom you have a relationship or association, or others in your personal life, may impact on your work with children.
- Inform the Headteacher of any name changes that you have not previously declared.
- Be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in disciplinary action being taken against you, 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 Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA).
- Share any *low-level concerns** with the Headteacher If you believe that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct (including inappropriate conduct outside of work) and does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO. It doesn't matter how small the concern is, even if it is no more than a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt'; your intervention may allow for the individual's behaviour/practice to be addressed at an early stage, so that they are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries; minimising the risk of abuse and protecting themselves from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.
- Report the behaviour of another adult in the school to the Headteacher when it breaches this code of conduct or the school's safeguarding policies, in order to prevent a child from being harmed/abused; deliberately invented/malicious allegations are extremely rare.

* **Low-level concerns** - *Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to, being over friendly with children, having favourites, engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door or using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.*

Never:

- Act in a way both at work and/or in your personal life that brings yourself, school or the (teaching) profession into disrepute.
- Use your position to gain access to information for your own advantage and/or a pupil's or family's detriment.
- Make, encourage or ignore others making personal comments, which scapegoat, demean, discriminate or humiliate any member of the school community including ignoring any form of child on child abuse. Downplaying certain behaviours, such as sexual harassment, can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours that normalises abuse, leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.
- Use your power to intimidate, bully, threaten, coerce or intentionally undermine others. This includes shouting in anger and aggressively to punish them rather than raising your voice to be heard or to warn in an emergency/safety situation. Physical force should never be used as a punishment.
- Undermine fundamental British values including democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance for those with different faiths, beliefs or from different cultures. You should not express any prejudicial views or attempt to influence or impose your personal values, attitudes or beliefs on pupils.
- Use inappropriate language to or in the presence of pupils or engage in inappropriate conversations with them or in their presence about your personal or sexual relationships.
- Develop 'personal' or sexual relationships with children and young people, including making or encouraging others to make sexual remarks to, or about a pupil, or having inappropriate sexual banter, in person or using technology. In addition, the Sexual

Offences Act 2003 makes it clear that all members of staff are in a position of trust and would therefore be committing a criminal offence to have a sexual relationship with a young person in full time education/below the age of 18, even if the young person is over the age of consent.

- Discriminate favourably or unfavourably towards a child.
- Give personal contact details to pupils on roll or former pupils under the age of 18, communicate with or respond to contact from them outside of the purposes of your work using social networks, email, text, etc. or meet a young person out of school unless part of a planned school activity with the knowledge of your Line Manager. If you need to contact a pupil or parent/carer by phone in a professional capacity and you do not have access to a work phone, you should always use 'caller withheld' to ensure that the pupil or parent/carer is not able to identify your personal contact details.
- Have conversations on social networking sites that make reference to children, parents/carers or other colleagues at the school or be derogatory about the school. Never make any statements or post images on social networking sites that might cause someone to question your suitability to act as a role model to young people or bring your own or the school's reputation into disrepute. You should never communicate with parents/carers through social network sites and you are strongly advised to declare any existing friendships/relationships to your Line Manager. You should always inform the Headteacher of any requests or arrangements where parents/carers wish to use your services outside of the workplace, e.g. tutoring.
- Take photographs of children for your own personal use or store images of them on your personal equipment. Ensure photographs are only stored on the designated secure place on the school's network and deleted from portable equipment. Avoid taking photographs in one-to-one situations. Never take images of a child in a state of undress or semi-undress or of a child's injury (e.g. following a disclosure of abuse), even if requested to do so by Children's Social Care. You should never make an audio/video recordings of a child's disclosure either.
- Display or distribute any images of children or post photographs of them on the school's website or social media accounts without their parents'/carers' consent. (Some children may be put at risk by their whereabouts being made public).
- Use your personal mobile phone in areas used by children unless in emergencies or under an agreed protocol set out by the Headteacher.
- Undertake one-to-one activities out of the sight of others unless it is a planned activity with the knowledge of your Line Manager and in keeping with your particular responsibilities. Wherever possible, ensure that there is visual access and/or an open door in one-to-one situations and avoid the use of 'engaged' or equivalent signs, which may create an opportunity for secrecy or the interpretation of secrecy. Always report any situation where a pupil becomes distressed, anxious or angry.
- Consume or be under the influence of alcohol or any substance, including prescribed medication, which may affect your ability to care for children.
- Transport children unsafely, for example, by driving whilst using your mobile phone, failing to ensure that seat belts are worn or driving without appropriate insurance. Any trips should be planned and with the knowledge of your Line Manager. Unforeseen events should be reported to your Line Manager. It is good practice to have another adult to act as an escort during the journey.
- Have physical contact with young people that might be misconstrued or considered indecent or harmful. Never engage in horseplay or fun fights with pupils. Ensure you are always able to give an account of the reasons for physical contact or physical intervention. Any physical contact with a child that was needed to control or restrain a child should be the minimum required.

All school employees should have a clear understanding of their responsibilities under this Code of Conduct. It aims to help them avoid poor working practices that *may* lead to their behaviour being *investigated* and the *consideration* of disciplinary procedures.