



# Staff Code of Conduct

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## 1. Aims, scope and principles

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

References to “**Staff**” throughout this policy relate to all of the following groups:

- all members of staff including teaching and support staff;
- governors;
- volunteers;
- casual workers;
- temporary and supply staff, either from agencies or engaged directly; and
- student placements, including those undertaking initial teacher training and apprentices.

References to “**Pupils**” throughout this policy relate to all of the following groups:

- all current pupils of The Unicorn School
- individuals under the age of 18 who have, in the past, been pupils of The Unicorn School; and
- individuals who ceased to be a pupil of The Unicorn School within the last 12 months.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect. Many of the principles in this code of conduct are based on the [Teachers’ Standards](#).

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

We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers’ Standards. We expect all support staff, governors and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

Staff must have regard for the ethos and values of the school and must not do or say anything which may bring the school or governing body into disrepute. Care should be taken by staff to avoid any conflict of interest between activities undertaken outside school, and responsibilities within school. Staff have an individual responsibility to maintain their personal reputation and that of the school, both during and outside school hours. Staff are expected to set good examples to pupils, parents, colleagues and visitors by arriving on time and being well prepared for their roles in school.

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

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

## 2. Legislation and guidance

We are required to set out a staff code of conduct under regulation 7 of [The School Staffing \(England\) Regulations 2009](#). **Is this still current? I think this may have superseded it:** [Staffing & Employment Advice for Schools October 2021](#)

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance '[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)', we should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

## 3. General obligations

Staff set an example to pupils. They will:

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

Welcoming families and other visitors as members of the school community is at the heart of the school. However, we also have a duty of care to ensure the safety and welfare of all those who use the school premises and we work under strict national and local safeguarding (Child Protection) guidelines. **As a result all regular visitors who have not had an advance DBS (Disclosure Barring Service) will need to be accompanied in school by a member of staff (unless the school has received a 'letter of comfort' from partner agencies).** Reception staff would like clarification on this. Visitors will be issued with a green lanyard. All staff will appropriately enquire regarding unknown adults who are on site without a lanyard or badge. New staff members, visitors and students should be introduced to the Head teacher and SMT, where appropriate.

## **Parking**

Due to the tight space on site, there is no on-site parking for staff or visitors (unless they have additional access needs). Subject to availability, we may be able to issue you with a permit to park in the Royal British Legion car park – please ask at reception. Free, on street parking is available on neighbouring streets.

## **Severe Weather Conditions Procedure**

Staff must make every reasonable effort to get to school if they can safely do so. If you are unable to get to school, or if you are going to be late due to traffic, you must contact school as soon as possible. Information on any aspect of school closure will be communicated to staff through mobile phone text and via the school website at [www.unicornoxford.co.uk](http://www.unicornoxford.co.uk) There may be exceptional times when the school is closed to pupils and staff, if this is the case the text message and school website will make this very clear.

## **Smoking**

The Unicorn recognises that smoking and passive smoking are a risk to health. We have a **NO SMOKING** policy. In line with national legislation all buildings and outbuildings are designated no smoking areas. Staff wishing to smoke should do so off the school premises. We would request that you appropriately dispose of any cigarette ends appropriately. It is the responsibility of each individual employee to uphold and comply with the smoking regulations.

## **4. Safeguarding**

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

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

Our safeguarding policy and procedures are available, both on SharePoint and on the school's website.

All staff including visiting professionals and supply staff must ensure that they are aware of our procedures.

Clear Safeguarding procedures are shared with all individuals and regular updates are given regarding procedures, responsibilities and actions. The Unicorn is committed to

safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all our pupils and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. The Unicorn operates a stringent safeguarding and child protection policy, in line with OCC guidelines. All staff will be asked to complete an enhanced DBS (Disclosure Barring Service) check. Any employee who fails to disclose past or current information, that involves criminal acts (other than minor driving offences) at the time of employment or during employment, may leave themselves in a vulnerable position that may lead to disciplinary action or dismissal.

Staff must maintain professional boundaries with pupils and always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate and equitably. Staff should act in an open and transparent way that would not lead to any questions as to their actions or intent.

## **5. Staff/pupil relationships**

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

Where staff members and pupils must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

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

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

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, this should be reported directly to the headteacher.

There may be occasions when a pupil is in distress and in need of comfort as a reassurance. This may include age appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

Individual work with pupils should not be undertaken in isolated areas or rooms where there is no external viewing panel. Where it is necessary to close doors for reasons of confidentiality or privacy a colleague should be made aware of this and asked to remain vigilant. Unicorn staff should not privately tutor Unicorn pupils out of school hours.

All safeguarding issues must be referred to the Headteacher (Andrew Day), DSL (Ann-Marie Martin) or Deputy DSLs Alex Gardner and Alex de Jong.

## **Intimate Care and Moving and Handling**

Staff are provided with guidance on this and should always act as caring professionals allowing pupils to develop independence wherever possible. Please ensure you are familiar with the guidance and systems outlined in each individual's IEP and EHCP (if applicable). All staff that are required to move and handle children need to engage in appropriate training.

Due to the nature and needs of many of the pupils at The Unicorn there are occasions when it is entirely appropriate for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. When physical contact is made with pupils it should be in response to their needs at that time, appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender and background. Where possible, staff should seek the child's permission, or inform them before initiating contact.

## **7. Acceptable use of technology**

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

Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school equipment for personal use, in school hours or in front of pupils. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.

All on-line activity of pupils and staff is monitored through an external partner's software and reports regularly generated.

### **Communication and social media**

School staff's social media profiles should **not** be available to pupils. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, staff should use the maximum security settings available.

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

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at the school without their consent.

Staff should be aware of the school's e-safety policy.

Staff are expected to regularly read their emails and respond appropriately. Communication is a two-way process eg. emailing, phone calls, text messages, staff meetings, and notice boards. The electronic diary is on the school server via SchoolBase. Staff are asked to add details of school events, visitors, trips out of school, meetings etc. to the SchoolBase calendar so all staff are aware of what is happening in school.

Staff will set an example at all times by speaking appropriately and respectfully to each other and to the pupils and respond professionally. Swearing and derogatory language is not permitted. Meeting rooms and offices should be used to have any adult confidential conversations. Staff should not shout or behave in a threatening or bullying way at any time. Our language and behaviour will be appropriate models to others; staff should always be vigilant in the way they conduct themselves.

### **Online Safety**

Staff should always follow The Unicorn's on-line safety and the Acceptable Use Policy. Photographs/stills or video footage of pupils should only be taken using school equipment for purposes authorised by the school and should be stored securely and only on school equipment. Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites. Staff should remain mindful of their digital footprint and exercise caution in all their use of social media or any other web-based presence they have. This includes written content, videos or photographs and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts or following certain individuals or groups.

Staff should not use social media sites or email to contact pupils in anyway. School email should be used for business and no photos should be stored on personal mobile devices. School laptops transported should be used sensitively and within the realms of professional work only. Confidentiality Facebooking, Blogging or Tweeting personal or confidential information regarding pupils (except via the school website), colleagues or the work place is forbidden and if this occurs may lead to disciplinary action being taken.

## **8. Confidentiality**

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

This information will never be:

- Disclosed to anyone without the relevant authority
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child is at risk of harm.

## **9. Honesty and integrity**

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities. Staff will ensure that all information given to the school about their qualifications and professional experience is correct.

## **10. Dress code**

Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner. Outfits will not be overly revealing, and we ask that tattoos are covered up.

Clothes will not display any offensive or political slogans. Dress code is necessary to convey a professional image to the school and individuals. Staff are individually accountable for their general presentation, appearance and personal hygiene and have a responsibility to consider how their appearance may be perceived by others. Staff should wear clothing which

- is appropriate to their role / activity eg. trainers should be worn for PE sessions, swim wear for hydro sessions etc. No blue denim or camouflage clothing
- is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative eg. underwear, low necklines, bare midriffs etc.)
- does not create a health and safety issue moving around a busy school, supporting with a range of equipment
- does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding (eg. political slogans, badges or symbols which may cause offence etc.)
- is not considered to be discrimination and is culturally sensitive
- does not place themselves or others at risk (dangling jewellery etc.)
- jewellery must not be worn which could present as a health and safety hazard.

It is recognised that there may be specific occasions where the usual dress code may not be appropriate eg. residential/outdoor adventure visits etc. In these instances, guidance will be provided so that both students and adult's dress codes are appropriate. In accordance with current practice the dress code maybe relaxed on training days when pupils are not present, and on enrichment and theme days. This will be at the discretion of the SMT.

Footwear must be safe, sensible, smart, and clean and have regard to health and safety considerations. Staff need to be aware that shoes with covered toes are worn to avoid



injuries. Fingernails should not be too long, or sharp that they present as a health and safety hazard to others.

## **11. Conduct outside of work**

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school, or the teaching profession into disrepute. This covers relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school on social media.

## **12. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually but may be revised as needed. It will be ratified by the full governing body.

### **13. Links with other policies**

This policy links with our policies on:

- Staff disciplinary procedures, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct. It also sets out examples of what we will deem as misconduct and gross misconduct
- Staff grievance procedures
- Safeguarding
- E-safety

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