

# PERRYFIELDS HIGH SCHOOL

*"Together We Achieve Excellence"*



## Staff Code of Conduct

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# **Perryfields High School**

## **Staff Code of Conduct**

**This policy should be read with reference to the following statement:**

All staff should be aware that the school has to immediately report to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or the police, any complaint or allegation from a student, parent or staff member where a member of staff is accused of behaving in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child; possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or behaving towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

This is a statutory requirement, which may result in a formal external multi-agency investigation.

(See DfE Guidance, *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019, last updated June 2020)* and *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018, last updated February 2019)*)

### **1. STATEMENT OF POLICY**

Perryfields High School is committed to creating a culture of vigilance and the highest professional standards. The school is committed to safeguarding all students and supporting staff to minimise the risk of being accused of improper conduct towards the young people with whom they come into contact through their employment.

Perryfields High School expects all its employees, volunteers and Governors to recognise their obligations to the school, the public, students and other employees and to conduct themselves properly at all times.

All school staff, volunteers and Governors have a duty to behave in a way that reflects positively on the school provides positive role models for the children and works within the law and policies set by the school.

As a member of a school community, each adult has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside working hours. This policy relates to both conduct at work and instances where conduct outside work has a direct relationship to the employee's duties. This includes conduct that is likely to bring the school into disrepute or raises concerns about an employee's suitability to continue to work in a position of trust.

In addition to this policy, all Teachers are also subject to the standards of personal and professional conduct in the Teachers' Standards.

### **2. PURPOSE**

The Code of Conduct aims to outline for all Perryfields staff, volunteers and Governors what behaviour is and is not acceptable. It also serves to protect and promote the interests of staff, volunteers, Governors and students with whom they work and in

doing so, provides a framework for safe professional practice and effective partnerships between staff, leaders and parents/carers.

The Code does not supersede local operating guidelines, nor the need for employees to fulfil their obligations laid down in their job description and contract of employment. It does not attempt to identify every school rule that exists, but highlights some key rules, which broadly apply to all employees.

All staff within the school have a legal and moral duty to keep students and young people safe and to protect them from sexual, physical and/or emotional harm. The duty that rests on an individual is to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the welfare of a student or young person is paramount. (Children Act 1989, Education Act 2002, Education and Inspections Act 2006).

### **3. BACKGROUND AND PRINCIPLES**

The Governing Body of Perryfields High School will foster a culture of the highest professional standards. This Code of Conduct sets out the standards expected and the duty upon all staff, volunteers and Governors to abide by it. References to adults and staff throughout this Code of Conduct refer to all those who work in a paid or unpaid capacity at the school, including but not limited to teachers, support staff, supply staff, contractors and volunteers.

All staff, Governors and volunteers have a duty to ensure a high standard of professional conduct and to keep students safe and to protect them from physical and emotional harm. This duty is, in part, exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between adults and students and behaviour by adults that demonstrate integrity, maturity and good judgment. Following this Code of Conduct will help to safeguard staff, Governors and volunteers from being maliciously, falsely or mistakenly suspected or accused of professional misconduct in relation to students.

Staff, Governors and volunteers must feel able to raise issues of concern and everyone must fully recognise the duty to do so, particularly in terms of safeguarding. A member of staff who, in good faith, 'whistleblows' or makes a public interest disclosure will have the protection of the relevant legislation.

### **4. SCOPE**

This Code of Conduct Policy applies to all Trustees, directors, Governors, teachers, support staff, volunteers, visiting staff and agency staff working with students on and off-site. It outlines the standards of conduct and practice that all of the above individuals are expected to follow when working with students and within the school.

Whilst this document covers a wide range of situations, it is recognised that it cannot cover every eventuality. This Code of Conduct cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for staff. However, it does highlight behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable in relation to students. There will be occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or take action in the best interests of the student, where no specific guidance has been given. Adults

are expected to make responsible and informed judgements about their own behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the students in their charge.

This Code of Conduct forms part of the school's disciplinary rules for staff and should be read and cross referenced to other relevant policies. A serious breach of the Code will be regarded as serious misconduct. A less serious breach may result in a disciplinary warning.

References made to a 'child' or 'children' refer to children and young people under the age of 18. 'Child' should be read to mean any student at Perryfields.

Staff are minded that under section 16 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is a criminal offence for a person aged 18 or over to have a sexual relationship with children under 18 where that person is in a position of trust; even if the relationship is consensual or where the person does not teach the child.

Where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff the Governing Body will follow the guidance set out in the DfE 'Keeping Children Safe In Education' guidance document. This statutory guidance provides a framework for managing allegations in which it is alleged that a member of staff has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or,
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

Reports relating to the conduct of staff which does not meet the above criteria will be dealt with in line with school procedures.

This Code of Conduct will be provided to all staff during their induction and all staff must sign to confirm that they will adhere to the Code at all times. Staff will be reminded of the contents of the Code at regular intervals.

## **5. SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN – UNDERPINNING PRINCIPLES**

Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility, and the school is committed to ensuring that all staff adopt a child-centred approach in which children are listened to and believed.

All staff must:

- Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour and always question whether their conduct is professional;
- 'Think the unthinkable' and acknowledge that children could be at risk of abuse within any institution, including the school;
- Act in the child's best interests and avoid conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions;
- Take advice from appropriate persons if in any doubt about actions taken;
- Refer any concerns regarding one's own conduct or the conduct of another in line with the whole school procedures;

- Identify and report any areas of risk or vulnerability in line with the *Safeguarding Policy*;
- Remove themselves from situations where they may be at risk of an allegation;
- Report any concerns regarding systematic failings to safeguarding children in line with the *LA Whistleblowing Policy*;
- Record any concerns relating to the conduct of staff;
- Work to the same professional standards regardless of gender or sexuality;
- Project a professional image to students, visitors and to each other.

## **5.1 PROCEDURES TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN AND PROTECT STAFF FROM FALSE ALLEGATIONS**

### **5.1.1 Private meetings with students (Contact with Students, Former Students and Families)**

As a general rule, staff should avoid contact with students outside of their professional remit within the school. In addition:

- Staff must not share personal contact details (including, but not limited to, social media details, mobile numbers, e-mail addresses or addresses) with students or families. This includes taking steps to prevent the accidental disclosure of personal information to students. If a student or their family makes personal contact with a member of staff (including via a friend request on social media), this must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Staff must not arrange to meet students outside of school, unless they are doing so as part of an authorised trip or visit (see Educational Trips and Visits Policy).
- Staff must not contact students or their family outside of working hours, unless doing so for educational purposes or with the permission of the Headteacher or Senior Leadership Team. Any contact made outside of school working hours must only be made using school telephones, mobiles or e-mail accounts.
- Staff must not visit student's homes unless doing so is clearly defined as a requirement of their role or when their attendance is requested by their Line Manager, a Designated Safeguarding Lead or member of the Senior Leadership Team. Where possible, home visits should not be conducted alone, and records should be kept of all visits. Staff must ensure they are never left alone with a student if they visit the student's home.
- Staff must not attend private student parties and should be aware of their professional reputation and responsibilities when attending external events at which students are also present.

Former students may be keen to maintain contact with members of staff at the school. Whilst the professional duty of care ends when a student leaves Perryfields, all staff must continue to maintain professional standards of behaviour. Any contact with former students should be made during office hours, and on site within the school. Staff in any doubt regarding contact with a current or former student should consult a Designated Safeguarding Lead. Former students must sign in, wear badges and adhere to the school's safeguarding rules.

Staff with existing contact with student's either prior to commencing employment at the school or prior to the student enrolling at the school are permitted to maintain this contact outside of the school, but must use professional judgement and respect this

Code of Conduct. Staff must not allow existing contact with students to influence their professional judgement.

Staff must not favour, or show special attention, to a particular student or group of students. This behaviour is just one of many warning signs of the grooming process and may, therefore, be misconstrued. The NSPCC's definition of grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or trafficking.

Staff must be particularly mindful when communicating with students via technology. Staff must establish and adhere to safe and responsible practices at all times.

### **5.1.2 One to One Working**

Staff working in one to one situations with students are more vulnerable to allegations. All staff should take care when engaging in one to one work with students. Where possible, such work should be conducted with at least two members of staff present, in an open area, or in a room or an area, which is likely to be frequented by other people.

Perryfields High School does, however, recognise that there are many occasions when confidential discussions may need to take place. Every attempt should be made to ensure that the safety and security needs of both staff and students are met.

Where such a meeting is demonstrably unavoidable staff should ensure that:

- The door to the room they are in with a child has a glass panel which is not obscured (unless medical assistance is being provided by the school's first aider)
- 'Do Not Disturb' signs are only used in exceptional circumstances, and must never be used in one to one discussions with students
- No member of staff is ever behind a locked door with a student
- No one to one meetings are scheduled in remote or secluded areas
- One to one meetings taking place outside of normal working arrangements are agreed in advance by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and parents. It may not be possible to obtain parental permission in some situations relating to safeguarding or child protection.

Staff working in one to one situations may be more vulnerable to allegations and students may be more vulnerable to harm by those seeking to abuse their trust. All staff should be mindful of one to one work, and plan lessons and meetings accordingly. Risk assessments should be undertaken in respect of adults for whom lone working is an integral part of their role. Please refer to the school's *Health and Safety Policy*.

### **5.1.3 Sexual Contact with Children and Young People and Abuse of Trust**

Any sexual behaviour, whether homosexual or heterosexual, by a member of staff, volunteer or Governor with or towards a child or young person is illegal. Children and

young people are protected by the same laws as adults in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour. They are additionally protected by specific legal provisions regardless of whether there is consent or not. All adults working at the school who have contact with students are in positions of trust. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 specifically established a criminal offence of the abuse of trust in relation to teachers and others who are in relationship of trust with 16 -18 year olds.

Sexual behaviour includes non-contact activities, such as causing a child or young person to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of indecent images of children. 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' defines sexual abuse as 'forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.'

There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' where the sole purpose is to gain the trust of a child or young person, and manipulate that relationship so that sexual abuse can take place. Staff and volunteers should be aware that conferring special attention and favour upon a student might be construed as being part of a 'grooming' process, which is a criminal offence.

#### **5.1.4 Physical Contact**

Physical contact with students should be avoided.

There may be occasions when it is appropriate for staff to have physical contact with students. This may involve situations where a student is in distress, requires first aid, or within certain curriculum areas, such as PE, Music or Drama.

Where physical contact is necessary, staff must adhere to the following advice:

- Staff must use their professional judgment;
- Where physical contact is required as part of a pre-planned activity, the nature of the physical contact should be communicated to all relevant parties in advance;
- Staff should be particularly mindful of instances which involve the same child over a period of time;
- Physical contact should only take place when it is absolutely necessary and should only be in response to the child's needs;
- Staff must always use their professional judgement and consider any specific circumstances that may be relevant to the individual child;
- Contact should be of limited duration, and should be appropriate to the student's age, stage of development and teaching context;
- Staff should listen to the child, observe the child's reactions and adapt their behaviour accordingly. Staff should remain sensitive to any signs of discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the student;
- Physical contact should never be secretive, for the gratification of adults or represent a misuse of authority.

Students are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes or taking a shower. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard students, 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 students concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

Staff with a job description which includes intimate care duties will have appropriate training and written guidance. No other member of staff or volunteer should be involved in intimate care duties except in an emergency.

If a member of staff believes that their actions or the actions of another member of staff may have been misinterpreted, they should inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Headteacher immediately.

### **5.1.5 Infatuations and Crushes**

Staff must recognise that a student may develop a strong attraction to them and/or develop an infatuation. Infatuations can involve both sexes on both a heterosexual and homosexual basis.

Staff experiencing this situation must not do anything that encourages the behaviour in any way and must not joke or make light of the situation. It should also be recognised that careless and insensitive reactions may provoke false accusations.

Staff should report without delay to a senior colleague if they become aware that they are the subject of an infatuation, so that action can be taken to minimise hurt, distress and risks to the adult or student concerned. Any staff member who becomes aware they are the subject of an infatuation must also inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Whilst the risk of infatuation is not limited to any particular group of staff, new staff and volunteers should recognise that they may be particularly vulnerable to adolescent infatuation.

If a member of staff becomes concerned that they are developing an unacceptable friendship or relationship with a student, they must seek guidance from the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Headteacher and ensure that the relationship does not develop further.

A member of staff or volunteer, who becomes aware that a student may be infatuated with themselves or a colleague, should report this without delay so that appropriate action can be taken. The situation will be taken seriously and the adult should be careful to ensure that no encouragement of any kind is given to the student. Whilst the risk of infatuation is not limited to younger members of staff, newly qualified teachers must recognise their particular vulnerability to adolescent infatuation.

Examples of situations which must be reported are given below

- Where a member of staff or volunteer is concerned that they might be developing a relationship with a student which could have the potential to represent an abuse of trust;
- Where a member of staff or volunteer is concerned that a student is becoming attracted to him or her or that there is a developing attachment or dependency;
- Where a member of staff or volunteer is concerned that actions or words have been misunderstood or misconstrued by a student such that an abuse of trust might be wrongly suspected by others;

- Where a member of staff or volunteer is concerned about the apparent development of a relationship by another member of staff or volunteer, or receives information about such a relationship.

### **5.1.6 Conversations with Students**

Many staff have a pastoral responsibility for students and in order to fulfil that role effectively, there will be occasions when conversations will cover particularly sensitive matters. Staff must, in these circumstances, use their discretion to ensure that, for example, any probing details cannot be construed as unjustifiable intrusion.

All staff may, from time to time, be approached by students for advice. Students may also appear distressed and staff may feel the need to ask if all is well. In such cases, staff must judge whether it is appropriate for them to offer advice or whether to refer the student to another member of staff with pastoral responsibility for the particular student, such as the Assistant Head of Year, Head of Year or Designated Safeguarding Lead. Staff must remember that discretion can never be guaranteed and anything of concern must be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in line with the Child Protection Policy.

Staff should avoid comments to or about students which could be taken to have sexual overtones. It is equally unacceptable for staff to encourage debate and discussion between groups of students which could be interpreted as having sexual overtones, which are not justified in the context of the teaching programme.

Staff must respect the rights of others and respect those with different beliefs. Staff must not express extreme views without balance on sensitive topics such as sexual orientation or religious beliefs. The use of sarcastic, demeaning or insensitive comments towards young people can also be potentially very damaging and must be avoided as this may constitute emotional abuse. In particular, staff must not make any racist, sexist, homophobic or otherwise discriminatory comments. Where an adult is suspected of promoting extreme political, religious or extremist views either formerly through the curriculum or informally, advice will be sought from the Prevent Officer at the Local Authority.

### **5.1.7 Choice and Use of Teaching Materials**

The use of teaching resources of an explicit or sensitive nature, particularly in relation to language or sexual behaviour, must be given careful consideration to ensure that its selection is not subsequently misinterpreted. There must always, therefore, be a clear link with the scheme of work. A conversation about the use of such resources should take place beforehand, with your line manager.

Some areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit or of a political or sensitive nature. Care should be taken to ensure that materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the learning outcomes identified by the scheme of work or lesson plan. This can be supported by developing ground rules with students to ensure sensitive topics can be discussed in a safe environment. The plan should highlight particular areas of risk and plans for how to address this should be noted.

The curriculum can sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussion about subject matter of a sexually explicit, political or otherwise sensitive nature. Responding to children's questions requires careful judgement and staff should take advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead, if required.

### **5.1.8 General Relationships and Attitudes**

All those working with children within the school are in a position of trust. This position creates a relationship whereby the adult has a position of power and influence. Staff must understand this power and that their relationship with children cannot be one between equals. The potential for exploitation and harm of students means that adults have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification. It is important to recognise that women as well as men may abuse a position of trust.

Staff should ensure that their relationships with students are appropriate to the age and gender of the student, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when dealing with adolescent boys and girls. Staff should be aware that some actions might be construed as sexual harassment.

It is unacceptable for a member of staff to have any kind of sexual or intimate relationship/contact with a student of any age or to encourage such relationships/contact. Such relationships/contact are a serious breach of trust and professional standards even when the student is over 18.

The Sexual Offences Act makes it a criminal offence for a teacher to involve a student under 18 in sexual activity, regardless of whether or not the student consents to that activity. The sexual activity referred to does not just involve physical contact, including penetrative and non-penetrative sexual acts. It may also include non-contact activities, such as causing children to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of indecent images of children.

### **5.1.9 Educational Visits and Extra-Curricular Activities**

Staff and volunteers should take particular care when supervising students in the less formal atmosphere of an educational visit, particularly in a residential setting, or after-school activity. Staff and volunteers remain in a position of trust and the same standards of conduct apply.

Staff and volunteers should always ensure that the male to female staff ratio is adequate for the effective supervision of both sexes. Similarly, the less formal approach adopted in extra-curricular activities can be open to misinterpretation. The standard of behaviour expected of staff will be no different from the behaviour expected within the school. Staff should be particularly careful when supervising older, more mature students in these circumstances.

Staff acting in any supervisory capacity must not drink alcohol, or be under the influence of alcohol, whilst they are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of students.

### **5.1.10 Transporting Students**

In certain situations e.g. out of school activities, staff may agree to transport students. Wherever possible, transport arrangements should be made in advance, with the oversight of a designated member of staff.

Staff should not routinely transport students in their own vehicle unless this is unavoidable; in which case specific approval from the designated member of staff and permission from the parent/carer of the child should be obtained in advance, or as soon as possible thereafter. Staff must also have Business Insurance included on their Car Insurance Policy.

Exceptions include staff employed to carry out regular home visits as part of their role (e.g. a Designated Safeguarding Lead and Attendance Officer).

Staff should ensure that their behaviour is safe and that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. They must ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.

Staff should not transport students alone, unless in exceptional circumstances. In such cases, prior approval should be obtained from a Designated Safeguarding Lead, or as soon as possible thereafter.

### **5.1.11 Photography, Videos and Other Creative Arts**

Many school activities involve recording images. These may be undertaken as part of the curriculum, extra school activities, for publicity, or to celebrate achievement. The Data Protection Act 1998 affects the use of photography and The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force on 25 May 2018, which will supersede the Data Protection Act. Staff must adhere to these regulations when taking photos and videos of students for official school use.

Staff need to be aware of the potential for such images to be misused to create indecent images of children and/or for 'grooming' purposes. Careful consideration should be given as to how these activities are organised and undertaken. Particular regard needs to be given when they involve young or vulnerable students who may be unable to question why or how the activities are taking place. Students who have been previously abused in this way may feel threatened by the use of photography, filming, etc., in the teaching environment.

Staff should remain sensitive to any student who appears uncomfortable and should recognise the potential for misinterpretation. It is also important to take into account the wishes of the child, remembering that some children do not wish to have their photograph taken.

Using images of students for publicity purposes will require appropriate written consent. Images must not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without such consent. The definition of a public place includes areas where visitors to the school have access.

When using a photograph the following guidance must be followed:

- ensure that appropriate consent has been received, in writing, before using images for publicity purposes
- if the photograph is used, avoid naming the student
- if the student is named, avoid using the photograph
- images must be securely stored and used only by those authorised to do so
- be clear about the purpose of the activity and about what will happen to the photographs when the lesson/activity is concluded
- ensure that a senior member of staff is aware that the photography/image equipment is being used and for what purpose
- ensure that all images are available for scrutiny in order to screen for acceptability
- be able to justify the images made
- do not make images in one to one situations
- do not take, display or distribute images of students unless there is consent to do so.
- do not store images on your own electronic devices
- do not transfer images from school devices to personal devices.

Staff must adhere to the school's Data Protection Regulations in force, at all times.

### **5.1.12 Restraint**

The school does not promote or encourage the use of restraint by staff. Restraint should only be used in exceptional circumstances, ideally by staff trained in restraint, and only in accordance with the school's *Managing Student Behaviour Policy*.

The school does acknowledge that the law permits anyone to defend themselves or others against an attack using reasonable force. Staff will be supported by the school so long as their use of force was reasonable, proportionate and within the law. The use of force is reasonable if it is proportionate to the consequences it is intended to prevent. This means the degree of force used should be no more than is needed to achieve the desired result.

Staff should first utilise all other less intrusive methods prior to resorting to the use of reasonable force. This could merely involve a member of staff's physical presence, speaking to and negotiating with the child or moving other children away from the scene. Staff should also consider doing nothing and walking away from the child, unless doing so places the child or others at risk.

All students have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Corporal punishment is unlawful in all schools. Staff and volunteers must not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a student. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards students is not acceptable in any situation. Shouting aggressively or hectoring is not acceptable in any situation. Deliberately intimidating students by overweening physical presence is not acceptable in any situation.

Physical force must never be used as a punishment, or to modify behaviour, or to make a student comply with instructions. Force must not be used to prevent a student leaving a room, unless in exceptional circumstances in which such force is necessary to protect

the student or others. Staff must acknowledge that physical force may, in law, be regarded as an assault.

If using reasonable force, staff should avoid holding a student in any way that could be considered indecent or could cause harm.

Any member of staff who is involved with, or witnesses the use of force on a student, must report it to the Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher immediately. This is to help prevent any misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the incident, and it will be helpful in the event of a complaint.

### **5.1.13 Searching Students**

Staff have powers to search students, including to tackle online bullying. Staff use this power under the specific authority of the Headteacher only and where there is good reason to do so, i.e. that something, if not found, could be used to harm children or adults, disrupt teaching or break the school rules. No member of staff will search students in a blanket way. Staff would always seek to carry out any exceptional search of students with prior consent, where appropriate, and in keeping with the law. It is advised to search a student in the presence of another member of staff, for example a Head of Year or Assistant Head of Year.

## **6. CONDUCT OUTSIDE OF WORK**

All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of students. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their peers, students and the public in general. An individual's behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, should not compromise her/his position within the work setting or bring the school into disrepute.

Staff must not engage in conduct (including through other employment) outside work which could reasonably be expected to damage the reputation and standing of the school or any members of the school community. Staff must exercise caution when using technology, including social networking sites, and be aware of the risks to themselves and others.

On occasions when adults are socialising in groups, in public locations, it is important that no opportunity is given to students to compromise the professional standards of staff. Staff should be mindful that the majority of students have access to mobile phones with cameras, and are therefore advised to moderate their behaviour accordingly when in the presence of students.

Staff must inform the Headteacher immediately if they are arrested or subject to a criminal conviction or caution. Where concerns arise, the Headteacher will inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) at the Local Authority and carry out a formal risk assessment to identify and mitigate any potential risks to students and staff.

## **7. SETTING AN EXAMPLE**

All adults who work in the school set examples of behaviour and conduct which may be used as a model by other staff and by students. All adults must, therefore, demonstrate the highest standards of conduct. All adults must behave in a way that cannot risk giving rise to allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct. This Code is intended to support all adults to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable.

## **8. GENERAL CONDUCT**

### **8.1 Absence and Timekeeping**

Once agreed and clear, working hours should be adhered to and all staff should be reliable in starting work at the designated time. Staff must not absent themselves without permission and knowledge of the Headteacher or senior leader/line manager.

Staff must not display poor or bad timekeeping, including lateness for school or classes.

If any member of staff is going to be late for work, for whatever reason, they should telephone their line manager as soon as they realise so that cover work can be put in place.

Staff must comply with the school's Leave of Absence and Sickness Reporting procedures.

Any member of staff attending a meeting either in the school or outside as a delegated representative of Perryfields, should be on time, stay for the full meeting and report back as appropriate. If any problems arise, then the Senior Deputy Headteacher/Headteacher and/or the person organising the meeting should be informed as soon as possible.

### **8.2 Management Instructions**

Staff are expected to comply with reasonable management instructions, and to observe and follow any operational regulations and standing orders of the school. This includes observing all procedural and statutory requirements, e.g. in the provision of advice and information; in appointing staff; in complying with health and safety rules; in the use of public funds.

### **8.3 Behaviour and Language**

Staff are expected to treat colleagues or members of the public with respect and not to misuse your authority.

Staff must not behave in a manner likely to cause offence to students, parents, staff, Governors or members of the public or likely to offend decency.

Staff must not fight with or physically assault colleagues, managers or members of the public. Nor must they mistreat persons in the care of the school. If staff are physically assaulted by a member of the public, they are permitted to defend themselves from the attack in accordance with the law in force at that time.

Staff must not swear, blaspheme or use any sort of offensive or inappropriate language in front of students. They should not use language which is discriminatory or demeaning in relation to gender (including gender reassignment), religion, race, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability or age. Staff should not make sexual remarks or innuendos, patronise or humiliate students. Discussion of issues of a sexual nature (other than in the context of the curriculum) should be kept to a minimum and only conducted where necessary from a pastoral perspective. Any concerns arising from such discussions should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

#### **8.4 Alcohol and Drugs**

You should not drink alcohol or be under the influence of illicit drugs (including new psychoactive substances) during working hours. This is strictly prohibited, including on school trips (whether a day trip or a residential visit) and will render the user liable to dismissal for gross misconduct.

Smoking (including using vaporisers) is not permitted on the grounds of the school or directly outside the front or rear entrance to the school. Any breach of these rules may result in disciplinary action. If adults become aware that students are socialising in the same venue, staff are encouraged to consider changing their plans. There may be times when this is difficult, for example at a restaurant, and in these circumstances staff are strongly advised to exert caution and behave in a professional manner at all times.

### **9. NEGLECT OF DUTY**

You are required to comply with all obligations in accordance with a statute or your contract of employment, including observing standards and requirements for student examinations and testing.

You must not be negligent or wilfully produce inadequate standards of work and must maintain the accepted standards of the profession.

You must always comply with the school's financial regulations. You must not defraud the school in any way.

### **10. MISUSE/FALSIFICATION OF INFORMATION**

You must not supply false or inaccurate information in support of an application for a post with the school and you must disclose any known relationship with any Governors, or member of staff at the school.

You are required not to make false and/or misleading statements, whether orally or in writing, in respect of school business.

You must not disclose school business to the press or media unless authorised to do so.

You must report any matter where you are required to do so.

You must not destroy, remove or wilfully damage any document that is still required by the school.

Adverse criticism of colleagues (including comments about the conduct, competence or efficiency of other teachers) in the presence of third parties, including students, is unacceptable except in the context of agreed procedures.

## **11.COMPUTERS, SOFTWARE, INTERNET USE AND E-MAILS**

Under no circumstances should adults within the school access inappropriate images. Deliberately accessing pornography on school equipment will be treated as serious misconduct and may be a criminal offence. Accessing indecent images of children on the internet, and making, storing or disseminating such material, is illegal and is likely to lead to criminal prosecution and may result in barring from work with children and young people.

## **12.USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social networking sites and blogging are extremely popular, allowing users to interact with each other, by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests. Social media can include any website where comments and or information can be shared and are considered to be in the public domain for example photo sharing, blogs as well as the more well-known social networking sites such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

Staff must not post material which damages the reputation of the school or which causes concern about their suitability to work with children and young people. Those who post material which could be considered as inappropriate or who click the button to signify their agreement with such material posted by others, could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations of misconduct.

Staff should only use social media in their capacity as an employee of the school, where this is an appropriate communication tool which must be specifically endorsed by the Headteacher.

If staff are not using social media to support them directly in their employed position, they should always access this in their own personal time.

In any circumstance:

- Be accurate, fair, thorough and transparent
- Be mindful that what you publish may be public for a long time
- Respect copyright and data protection laws as well as maintaining confidential information

- Do not publish or report information or conversations that are accessed through your employment at the trust without explicit permission. 'Conversations' may be oral or e-mail exchanges
- Do not use swear words or use derogatory language
- It is unacceptable to use social media in a manner that would generally be accepted as a hostile attempt to hurt, upset or embarrass another person, or groups of people, associated with the school
- Never refer to stakeholders, suppliers or staff in a way that they can identify individuals.
- Never represent or reproduce the school logo without authorisation.
- Do not publish images relating to users of the school unless consent has been given in writing.
- Be aware of safeguarding issues and materials which may adversely impact on children and vulnerable adults. Challenge and report inappropriate use of media.

In addition, in your personal use of social media:

- Ensure that your online activities or expressed opinions do not interfere with or conflict with your job or your colleagues (for example many roles within schools are viewed as role models, views expressed should not conflict with this)
- If you are identifiable as a school employee on social networks, ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you should present yourself with colleagues
- Do not download or copy school materials without permission
- If you publish content to a website not owned by the school, and it has something to do with work that you do as an employee (e.g. evident from your profile), use a disclaimer such as: 'The views expressed here are my own and do not necessarily represent the views of my employer'
- Maintain boundaries between your personal and professional lives, including customising your privacy settings and avoiding inappropriate personal information becoming visible to members of the group (please note that information can be passed on by individuals that have been allowed access and any inappropriate views or content will be viewed as contravening the Code of Conduct).

Staff and volunteers must not give their personal details such as home/mobile phone number; home address or home e-mail address to students, unless the need to do so is agreed with the Senior Leadership Team.

### **13. USE OF IMAGES**

You must not upload onto any internet site any workplace images or videos of yourself or others, without the permission of the Headteacher, for such things like publicity material. This is applicable professionally (in school) and personally (i.e. staff outings). You must not take any photographs or videos of students using your own personal

electronic devices, nor should you take images or videos home. The only exception to taking images or videos home is for curriculum approved courses. Photos and videos should be taken only in accordance with the GDPR guidelines.

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 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 school or on the school's equipment, an immediate referral will be made to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Senior Deputy Headteacher, Headteacher, Local Authority Designated Officer and/or the Police.

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

Personal property of a sexually explicit nature such as books, magazines, videos or digital media must not be brought onto or stored on the school premises.

## **14. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION**

Members of staff may have access to confidential information about students in order to undertake their responsibilities. In some circumstances the information may be highly sensitive. Confidential or personal information about a student or her/his family must never be disclosed to anyone and only shared with legally permissible staff and/or organisations and be in the interests of the child.

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

Information about students, parents or colleagues should only be disclosed to telephone enquiries in exceptional circumstances, and only by a Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where possible, requests for information should be made in writing. In exceptional circumstances where it is necessary to share information over the telephone, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should take the caller's number and call them back to confirm their identity before disclosing information.

The storing and processing of personal information about students and staff is governed by the Data Protection Act 1998, which was replaced by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) on 25 May 2018. When handling such information, all staff must comply with the Data Protection Regulations in force at that time.

Confidential information about students must be held securely. Confidential information about students must not be held off the school site other than on security protected school equipment.

Staff should never use confidential or personal information for their own, or other's advantage.

Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate or embarrass a child.

Confidential information should never be used casually in conversations or shared with any person other than on a need-to-know basis.

If a member of staff is in any doubt about the storage or sharing of information s/he should seek guidance from a senior member of staff. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the senior leadership team.

## **15. SHARING CONCERNS AND RECORDING INCIDENTS**

All staff, volunteers and Governors must be aware of the school's child protection procedures. Staff, volunteers and Governors must be vigilant and share concerns and report incidents.

Staff concerned about a child must record their concerns using *Class Charts* and send them immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in line with the school Child Protection policy.

Staff should recognise their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant external agencies and that to not do so may result in charges of serious neglect on their part where the welfare of children may be at risk.

If a teacher (anyone engaging in teaching work) in the course of their work discovers that an act of female genital mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher has a legal duty to report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately and then the Police.

## **16. WHISTLEBLOWING**

Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns about school arrangements, made in good faith and in the public interest, without fear of repercussion.

All staff are responsible for reporting any concerns about poor or unsafe practice, including in relation to safeguarding and child protection. Concerns should be raised in line with the LA *Whistleblowing policy*.

The following 'Red Flag Behaviours' give indications of the kinds of situations which should be shared with a senior member of staff.

An adult who:

- Allows a student/young person to be treated badly; pretends not to know it is happening.

- Gossips/shares information inappropriately.
- Demonstrates inappropriate discriminatory behaviour and/or uses inappropriate language.
- Dresses in a way which is inappropriate for the job role.
- Does not treat students fairly - demonstrates favouritism.
- Demonstrates a lack of understanding about personal and professional boundaries.
- Uses his/her position of trust to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine.
- Appears to have an inappropriate social relationship with a student or students.

Concerns raised under this policy are distinct from concerns or allegations made about an adult's suitability to work with or have access to children.

Where a member of staff feels unable to raise a concern about poor safeguarding practice with the Senior Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher, or where they feel their concern is not being addressed, they can raise their concern externally with the NSPCC. They have a whistle blowing helpline available for adults who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 or e-mail [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

## **17. PERSONAL LETTERS, GIFTS AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION**

Staff should only write letters or send emails to individual students about routine matters of school study or pastoral care, congratulations on recent achievements or other purely professional issues. All letters being sent out on the school letter headed paper must be approved by the Senior Leadership Team via the Headteacher's PA before being sent. All staff should be aware of the less formal style of electronic communication and should ensure that e-mails do not convey an inappropriate or overly familiar tone.

Adults should not give presents to an individual student (as opposed to small gifts to a whole group) outside of the school rewards system. If an adult believes it to be necessary to write a personal note or give a present to an individual student, s/he should discuss the purposes and context with a senior colleague, who should refer to the Headteacher if they require further advice.

Adults need to be aware that the giving of gifts can be misinterpreted by others as a gesture either to bribe or groom a young person.

Staff must take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed by others as a bribe, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. There are occasions when students or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff e.g. at Christmas 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.

## **18. SECURITY AND SEARCH**

The school's prime concern is for the safety, well-being and security of students whilst ensuring the provision of high quality education and support. Where there is just cause for random or specific security checks, the organisation reserves the right to inspect employee's vehicles or belongings before being brought into or taken off its premises.

It is the school's policy to carry out security checks with courtesy and respect for those concerned and without implication of suspicion. This policy is supported by the accompanying procedure, which will be followed.

## **19. PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

All staff and volunteers should demonstrate due respect for each other, their work and all those who attend Perryfields, so that colleagues can work together without fear of victimisation or harassment. Any complaint of harassment will be taken very seriously and investigated by an appropriate senior leader.

Professional respect should be sensitive to different personalities, cultures and religions and should allow space for constructive criticism. If an employee has a concern about another member of staff at the school, they should initially raise it constructively and informally with the person concerned if they feel able.

Where disputes or grievances arise between staff which cannot be dealt with informally, they should be dealt with through the agreed grievance procedure. It is not acceptable for employees to personally abuse or gossip about colleagues behind their backs nor should they criticise each other to students and/or visitors to Perryfields. At all times staff should avoid any suggestion of favouritism or conflict of interest.

Professional working relationships must not be affected by personal relationships between staff. Where difficulties arise each party should be positive about resolving issues to continue to work together.

## **20. POLITICS, RELIGION AND CULTURE**

This school is not affiliated to any particular religion and welcomes students and staff of all religions or none as the case may be. It is also non-party political, multi-cultural and accepts people of all denominations.

Staff and students are requested not to use the school for the purposes of seeking to convert others to their personal, religious or political views. Outside of work staff should ensure that any activity in these areas is not associated with their employment at the school. This also applies to any staff member that represents our school at any time.

All those working at the school should, at all times, show sensitivity and proper respect for differing cultures represented within the school.

## **21. TELEPHONE CALLS**

It is expected that employees, where possible, make use of their own mobile telephone for private calls. If it is found that employees have been abusing the school phone system they may be charged. In exceptional circumstances, the Headteacher may use their discretion to waive the costs, e.g. for emergency or sensitive calls.

## **22. MOBILE PHONES**

If an employee is expecting or needs to make an important urgent phone call whilst at work, they should make their immediate line manager aware of this when coming on shift so that the facilities at the school can be used as described above. Managers should use their discretion in deciding on a case by case basis what is reasonable but should be consistent in their approach.

## **23. PERSONAL MUSIC PLAYERS**

Personal music players (including mobile phones to play music) must not be used in the school's premises during normal working hours in view of students. Staff listening to such devices will be deemed to be not concentrating on their duties and will normally be subject to the disciplinary procedures.

## **24. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

All staff should conduct their duties remembering to conserve the world's resources and consider the environmental impact of their actions.

The school will make all efforts to maximise recycling opportunities. Where facilities are available to recycle paper, plastic, cans, printer cartridges, etc., staff will use these facilities and encourage students to do likewise.

## **25. PHOTOCOPYING, PRINTING AND POSTAGE**

Before photocopying or printing a document please consider your environmental responsibility; question whether a hard copy is needed and then minimise the number of copies. Bulk photocopying should be passed to the Reprographics Co-ordinator for completion.

The school's photocopying and printing facilities, stationery or postage must not be used for personal reasons unless by agreement with the line manager, Senior Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher. An appropriate charge will be made in such cases.

## **26.FINANCE**

Considerable sums of money are involved in the running of the school and all staff must abide by the financial procedures put in place to control all areas of expenditure and the handling of money.

All financial transactions must be properly authorised by the budget holder or Director of Finance and properly recorded. No member of staff may receive a loan or cash personal cheques without the express approval of the Headteacher.

## **27.HEALTH AND SAFETY**

At all times staff must conduct themselves in such a way that they do not create a potential risk of injury or danger to themselves or anyone else.

Staff must comply with the procedure for reporting an accident. If you are uncertain about what to do, you should seek the advice of your line manager.

Where there are specific health and safety rules made known to you, you must comply with them at all times, including fire regulations.

Staff must maintain general hygiene standards.

Where safety clothing or equipment is necessary to carry out a particular task, staff must use this at all times in carrying out this task.

Staff must only carry out activities which have a potential risk to health if they are competent and authorised to do so. If you are uncertain about whether you are competent and/or authorised to do so, you should seek the advice of your line.

In the event of a fire or any other need to evacuate the building, it is imperative that we keep a record of everyone entering and leaving the building. Therefore, staff must ensure that when they leave the school site during working hours, they sign out at reception and sign back in upon their return.

## **28.EQUALITY ISSUES**

Perryfields has a duty to promote community cohesion and members of that local community, visitors and other employees have a right to be treated with fairness. All employees should ensure that they are aware of the school's policies relating to equality issues and managing diversity and that all such policies are complied with fully, both in letter and spirit.

It is a personal responsibility of all staff, trustees and Governors to take all necessary steps to ensure that they do not discriminate against members of the local community, visitors or other employees on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic and national origins, sex, marital status, domestic circumstances, sexual orientation, disability, maternity or pregnancy, age, class, ethical beliefs, basic skills or trade union activity. All employees

must also do whatever is reasonable and appropriate to promote equality of opportunity in whatever way and whenever they can.

### **29.A FINAL THOUGHT**

It is impossible and inappropriate to cover here all the circumstances in which staff relate to students and where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur. Staff must exercise professional judgement in their dealings with students.

For the vast majority of staff this code of professional conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their practice. If staff have any doubts about the advice contained in this document they should consult their line manager or a member of the senior leadership team.

The Staff Dress Code and Appearance Policy attached to this Code of Conduct applies to all staff and should be read and understood as part of the induction process. Any queries should be addressed to the line manager.

### **30.POLICY OWNERSHIP, MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The responsibility for ensuring that staff of the school understand and adhere to this code of conduct and that this code is periodically reviewed rests with the Headteacher of Perryfields High School.

# **APPENDIX 1 – STAFF DRESS CODE AND APPEARANCE POLICY**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

At Perryfields High School, it is important that staff always project a professional image to students, visitors and to each other.

The Dress Code and Appearance Policy is applicable to all staff, which helps us to establish an ethos and attitude to learning within the school. Staff need to be mindful that although there is a difference in circumstances, students will always compare what staff are wearing with what they are or are not allowed to wear. Staff need to be aware that they are regarded as role models and that consistent standards of professional attire help to set a purposeful and business-like tone.

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However staff and volunteers must ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake. Those who dress or appear in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations of misconduct.

It is recognised that there are many roles to be performed within the school and we hope to have covered most roles with sensible statements of expectation.

A formal dress code creates clarity for both employer and employee as to what standards are expected.

## **2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

- Staff will abide by the school Dress Code and Appearance Policy and will dress appropriately for their particular role.
- Staff will always maintain their clothing in a clean and good state of repair, ensuring that worn or damaged items are replaced.
- Staff who are considered to be in breach of the code will be advised by their line manager. Disagreements about the appropriateness of specific items of clothing or footwear will be referred to the Senior Leadership Team and/or the Headteacher who has the final say in whether dress or appearance is appropriate.
- The school recognises the diversity of cultures, religions and disabilities of its employees and will take a sensitive approach when this affects dress and appearance requirements.
- The school's Dress Code and Appearance Policy is designed to guide managers and employees on the standards of dress and appearance. The Code is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of dress and appearance and staff should use common sense in adhering to the principles underpinning the policy.
- The school will not be discriminatory in respect of the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 for age, disability, gender reassignment, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

### **3. DRESS CODE FOR TEACHING, INCLUSION AND OFFICE STAFF**

A useful benchmark is the standard and type of dress that can be commonly seen worn by staff working in a professional office. Smart suits or separate jacket/trouser/skirt combinations are standard, with trousers being of full length and skirts not being short. Trousers, skirts, shirts, blouses or tops are not see-through, do not expose underwear and limit the amount of bare flesh visible. Men wear shirts with collar and ties done up. Footwear is smart and clean. There is no evidence of summer, leisure or sportswear. Denim, trainers, flip-flops or shorts are not worn. Body piercings (other than discreet piercings) and tattoos are not visible.

**MEN** Male staff must wear trousers, a collared shirt and tie and a jacket if optional.

**WOMEN** Female staff must wear smart office clothing that projects a professional image.

### **4. TEACHING STAFF REQUIRING SPECIAL CLOTHING**

PE staff must be issued with school image outdoor and sports clothing. PE staff must not wear jewellery and have their hair tied back if it is long enough to do so. For classroom teaching or special occasions (see below) PE staff are expected to wear normal teaching attire as outlined above, or if not possible to affect a quick change, tracksuit trousers.

Performing Arts staff are expected to dress as all other staff except in the case of Dance and Physical Theatre where this will be the agreed school image clothing. Outside of the Dance or Drama studios staff are expected to wear smart clothing that projects a professional image, as outlined above.

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 during working hours.

### **5. DRESS CODE FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS**

Teaching staff are expected to dress smartly to reflect the formality of the occasion.

For INSET days, casual wear is fine as long as it is not inappropriate and for training elsewhere such as conferences, staff may dress less formally, but are still expected to appear smart.

### **6. SUPPORT STAFF REQUIRING SPECIAL CLOTHING**

The following staff will be provided with school image clothing:

- ICT
- Facilities and Maintenance Staff
- Catering Staff

For staff handling food, normal food hygiene recommendations concerning protective clothing and jewellery apply and staff will be provided with appropriate protective wear.

Those who work in laboratories and practical rooms should present a smart appearance with appropriate protective clothing when necessary. Technical Coaches will be provided with appropriate protective wear.

Lunchtime supervisors should present a smart, but practical appearance.

## **7. NON-APPROPRIATE ITEMS**

There are some items that are never going to be acceptable when students are on site, except on non-uniform days or during school holidays. When working as a member of staff at Perryfields High School:

- Large / prominent logos
- Shorts
- Denim
- No high heels over 4 inches high. No casual footwear, including flip-flops. Sandals are acceptable if they are smart and have a sling back strap (for Health and Safety purposes)
- Strappy tops
- Cold shoulder or bandeau tops
- No bellies, underwear or cleavage on show please!

**Remember the golden rule:** It is not appropriate for work if it is too:

- Short
- Low
- Tight
- Casual
- Scruffy
- Dirty
- See through

In serious cases, where in the opinion of the Headteacher an employee's appearance is unacceptable, the employee may be required to return home to change. In these circumstances, the employee may not be paid for the duration of his/her absence from work.

Any employee who persistently disregards these rules will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **8. PERSONAL APPEARANCE**

The school wants to maintain high standards in all aspects of personal appearance so that staff maintain the respect of students at all times. It is recognised that for the majority of staff it is not necessary to point out required standards. However, the following text may be deemed necessary in some cases:

### **Body Piercings**

Discreet earrings and nose piercings are acceptable. Any other piercings must be removed from the body when the school is open.

**Tattoos**

The school reserves the right to request that any tattoos are covered up whilst staff are at work.

**Hair**

No unnatural or outlandish colours, e.g. purple, green, blue.