



Sidcot
Live Adventurously

Policy Name: Staff to Student Code of Conduct

Policy Number: 2.2

September 2024

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1. Introduction

1.1 Safeguarding is at the forefront of all of the School's operations. Staff are in a position of trust with students and must be mindful at all times of the nature of this relationship.

1.2 As part of the School's caring ethos, we promote professional, supportive pastoral contact between staff and students in order to create a friendly and safe environment. However, seemingly innocent actions can be misconstrued, and the guidelines contained within this policy should be observed in order to avoid potential misunderstandings which could cause unnecessary upset to students and / or potentially damaging allegations of professional misconduct against a member of staff.

2. Scope

2.1 This is a whole school policy and applies to all staff in regulated activity working within the Junior School (including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)) Senior and Boarding School. It applies to any person in regulated activity working at the School, whether under a contract of employment or contract of services, governors, and volunteers, – although certain paragraphs may be of relevance only to particular areas of staff / student contact. Unless otherwise specified; use of the term staff covers all those to whom this policy applies. There are specific references to boarding, the Junior School and EYFS as appropriate.

2.2 This policy is available on the School's website, and Firefly (the school's intranet and VLE) and all staff are required to confirm that they have read and understood the policy on an annual basis. This policy forms part of the staff induction process. It is available in hard copy form free of charge. It should be read in conjunction with the child protection and safeguarding, digital safety and whistleblowing policies.

3. Aims

The primary aims of this policy are to:

- Safeguard all children in Sidcot's care;
- Provide clear guidelines to staff about acceptable behaviour;
- Ensure that staff understand what to do in the event that they have concerns about the conduct of another staff member.

4. Guidance

4.1 Identification

All staff must wear their identification cards, with the correct lanyard, at all times whilst on campus.

4.2 One to one contact with students

4.2.1 In general staff should aim not to be alone with students. However, where this is not possible, for example, in an instrumental music lesson, individual speech and drama lesson or sports coaching lesson, it is good practice to ensure that others are within earshot. Where possible, a gap or barrier should be maintained between teacher and child at all times. Any physical contact should be the minimum required for care, instruction or restraint.

4.2.2 Meetings between members of staff and individual students should be conducted in either:

- In a suitably public room
- a room with a suitable glass panel – such panels must not be obscured
- a room with the door left open
- a designated public room, - a foyer, the drawing room, the Old Library, the Head's study, the Deputy Heads' studies, Rose Cottage or consulting rooms in the Medical Centre

4.2.3 In the Junior School, there may be occasional instances where a child cannot take part in a main group / class activity. In such circumstances, the child may have to remain with the class teacher or other member of staff. Staff should be mindful of their own safety, and also that of the child. For these reasons, the following should be observed:

- the child may have to remain in the classroom with the teacher – in which case the classroom doors should remain open at all times.
- the child may need to sit with a member of staff at the side of the activity (i.e. in the Junior hall, Sports hall, swimming pool or sports field).
- the child may need to join another group or class.

4.2.4 Boarding Bedrooms

Members of staff visiting students in their bedrooms should inform House staff as they enter the boarding house, and ensure that the door is left open. If greater confidentiality is required, one of the rooms mentioned in the previous paragraph might be more suitable.

4.2.5 Boarding Houses

- House staff should avoid being in changing rooms, showers and lavatories etc. with individual students and should give suitable warning of their approach. It would be advisable to be accompanied by a senior student if it is strictly necessary for them to be present – for example if a student is unwell and needs assistance.
- Members of staff of the opposite sex to the students in the House should exercise caution when entering student areas.
- Non-teaching staff adults, who do not usually work in the boarding house, should only be allowed into boarding houses once their identity and suitability has been determined. Parents entering shared dormitories should only be allowed by invitation of the other students in the dorm and with the Houseparents' permission.
- Students should not be entertained in staff accommodation in normal circumstances.

4.2.6 Cars

It is inadvisable for a member of staff to give a lift in a car to a student alone. Wherever possible and practicable, it is advisable that transport is undertaken other than in private vehicles, with at least one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort. If there are exceptional circumstances that make unaccompanied transportation of students unavoidable, the journey should be made known to a senior member of staff. The student should be sat in the back of the car.

4.2.7 Arrangements for remote learning during school closures

All lessons must take place via Teams, be logged and the same standards that apply to behaviour and dress when students are onsite are required. Specifically lessons must not take place when a student is in their bedroom and should take place where a parent can easily observe the lesson.

5. Physical Contact with Students

5.1 There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with students, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. Staff should, therefore, use their professional judgement at all times. Staff should not have unnecessary physical contact with students and should be alert to the fact that minor forms of friendly physical contact can be misconstrued by students or onlookers. A member of staff should be cautious of any demonstration of affection. It is however, acceptable for a member of staff to comfort an upset EYFS child with a hug.

5.2 Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be recorded as soon as possible, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a member of her team informed and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the student's file. The identity of the DSL and her team is to be found on posters around the School, and in the safeguarding and child protection policy.

6. The Ban on Corporal Punishment and use of Physical Restraint

6.1 The use of corporal punishment and the threat of use of corporal punishment is prohibited.

6.2 Any form of physical restraint or use of reasonable force is only permissible in very limited circumstances. All incidents of the use of physical restraint should be recorded in writing and reported immediately to the DSL. Parents will be informed. Please refer to the physical restraints policy 5.7.

7. Physical Education and other Activities Requiring Physical Contact

7.1 Where physical exercises or procedures need to be demonstrated, extreme caution should be used if the demonstration involves contact with students and, wherever possible, contact should be avoided. It is acknowledged that some staff, for example, those who teach PE and games, or who offer music and drama tuition, will, on occasions, have to initiate physical contact with students in order to support a student so they can perform a task safely, or to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment / instrument or assist them with an exercise. This should be done with the student's agreement.

7.2 Contact under these circumstances should be for the minimum time necessary to complete the activity and take place in an open environment. Staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the student.

8. Behaviour amongst Staff Members

8.1 Staff need to be loyal and supportive of one another, not least to set the right tone for students. For example, staff should avoid being drawn into discussion about other members of staff by students.

8.2 Staff must not share confidential information about students, unless it is strictly necessary. It should be on a "need to know" basis. Confidential information should be discussed in a room where it will not be overheard by other staff members.

9. Staff Interaction with Students

9.1 Students should always be treated with respect. They should not be ridiculed, nor shown favouritism. Sarcastic comments should be avoided.

9.2 Sexual suggestiveness to a student, even without malicious intent, is completely inappropriate.

9.3 If a member of staff believes that they have overstepped the mark, the incident and circumstances should be recorded as soon as possible, the DSL informed and, if appropriate, a copy of the record placed on the student's file.

9.4 All staff, governors and volunteers should be aware that, under the terms of the Sexual Offences Act (2003), they are strictly forbidden from entering into an intimate relationship, with any student at this school, even those over the age of 18. Furthermore, all sexual non-contact activity including; causing children to engage in or watch or produce pornographic material, sending of explicit sexual images, emails and texts is also prohibited. The legal age of consent is irrelevant – this offence would arise as a result of the abuse of a position of trust. This means that the consent of the student would be irrelevant in determining whether an offence has been committed.

9.5 Staff may only communicate with students via school email addresses for both the staff member and student or via TEAMS. Boarding staff may communicate with boarders using the WhatsApp group set up at the start of every academic year.

10. Inappropriate Advances

10.1 It is possible that a student could make an inappropriate advance to a member of staff either intentionally or inadvertently. If this were to happen the staff member must:

10.1.1 inform the student gently, but firmly that such action is unacceptable;

10.1.2 record the incident using CPOMS or make a note of incident on paper;

10.1.3 tell the DSL who will consult with the staff member over what further action, if any, needs to be taken.

11. Internet / Social Networking Sites / Mobile Phones

11.1 Please refer to Appendix 1 regarding the staff / student social media policy.

11.2 In the Junior School, children are asked not to bring in mobile phones from home. We recognise that, at times, it may be necessary for a child to make contact with his or her parents (e.g. forgotten PE kit). School staff will do all they can to support and assist the child in such circumstances to avoid upset and distress. All children will be asked to visit the School Office and make calls from the main school line in the presence of a member of staff. Under no circumstances should staff offer use of their own personal mobile phones to children, take images of the children using their own devices or phones or make private calls from the classroom phones. Staff should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.

11.3. All staff are required to adhere to the Digital Safety Policy, Mobile Phone Policy and Acceptable Use Policy regarding digital images to ensure that any images taken of students are appropriate, only taken on school equipment, on Teams or with the appropriate consent and stored and managed safely.

11.4 Staff must ensure that a sufficient number of trip excursion phones are taken on school trips and outings. Communication with students via mobile phone must only take place using trip phones. If students' numbers have been stored on a trip mobile phone for the purposes of a school trip, these must be deleted as soon as the excursion has finished.

11.5 Boarding staff must only communicate with students via the Boarding house mobile phones.

12. Early Years

12.1 Toileting (general) – Children visit the toilet independently having first asked. Staff monitor the length of time the children are out of the room and check on the child after 5 minutes. A member of staff supervises the area where children are invited to use the toilets prior to starting on a particular activity / mealtime. The toilet facilities for the Pre-School are located within the Pre-School room.

12.2 Toileting (accidents) – If a child has an accident and requires a change of clothes, staff are advised to use the toilet facilities in the Pre-School room to provide privacy for the child. The toilet door remains open with the child in the toilet, and the member of staff in the doorway. There must always be a second member of staff in the room whilst changing takes place. If the child is soiled and needs adult support to clean themselves up; staff are advised to limit physical contact but support the child with the process. Parents will be advised that a staff member has assisted in this process.

12.3 Changing for activities – When children are changing, two members of staff are always present. In the unlikely event of a member of staff being called away, one member of staff can supervise the children (within ratio) providing the door remains open.

12.4 – Digital images and mobile phones – please refer to paragraph 11 above and appendix 1.

13. Concerns about Staff Members

13.1 All staff should be aware that a person intent on sexual abuse of children will groom children and the adults around them to ensure that they can carry out their abusive behaviour and to ensure that they do not raise anybody's suspicion or that they make other people scared to challenge them.

13.2 Staff should be aware of the procedures for making allegations against staff, and the whistleblowing policy (which forms part of the child protection policy). All staff must be conversant with the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.

14. Confidentiality

14.1 Staff members should never give absolute guarantees of confidentiality to students or adults wishing to tell them about something serious. They should guarantee only that they will pass on information to the minimum number of people who must be told in order to ensure that the proper action is taken to resolve the problem, and that they will not tell anyone who does not have a clear need to know. They will also take whatever steps they can to protect the informing student or adult from any retaliation or unnecessary stress that might be feared after information has been shared. The procedure outlined in the child protection policy (2.1) will be followed when a child makes an allegation that they or another child has suffered or is at risk of suffering significant harm.

15. Responsibility for this Policy and Review

This policy is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and will be reviewed annually at the Governing Body's Annual Safeguarding Review. Should amendments to the policy be required at an earlier date in the light of changes to legislation, guardian, practice or a relevant incident, these will be adopted by the Governor with responsibility for safeguarding and the Chair of Governors.

16. References and related policies

- The Handbook for the Inspection of Schools – Commentary on the Regulatory Requirements September 2023.
- National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2022
- The Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2014
- The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework 2023
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2022
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023
- The Sexual Offences Act 2003

2.1 Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

2.4 Safe Touch/Intimate Care

5.1, 5.1a, 5.1b, 5.1c Behaviour policy and procedures

5.7 Physical restraint

9.9 Whistleblowing

12.1, 12.3 Digital Safety and Acceptable Use Policies.

Mobile phone policy

17. Document Change History – since date of initial adoption on 9 October 2015.

| Date of change | Detail significant changes and any new legislation / guidance taken into account |
|--|--|
| 12.03.2016 | Para 7, confirmation of ban of corporal punishment and 13.6 cross reference to digital images policy. |
| 05.09.2016 | Policy reformatted, addition of paragraph requiring staff to wear identification badges (4.1). clarification that, staff should not be a social media 'friend' with any former students who have left within three years or until that student is over 21, and clarification of toileting arrangements in nursery room. Changes approved by Chair of Governors and Governor with responsibility for safeguarding. |
| 08/10/2016 Annual Safeguarding Review | – Revised policy reviewed and adopted by the Board. |
| 02/02/2017 | Paragraph 11 – updated and most content moved to Appendix 1 to reflect updated digital security policy and to afford greater clarity. |

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| 06/05/2017 | Para 2.2 (one to one contact with students) moved from scope to para 4.21. |
| 09/06/2017 | Clarification at paragraph 2 that this policy only applies to those in regulated activity. |
| 07/10/2017 | References updated. Reviewed and adopted by Board. |
| 01/09/2018 | Reviewed in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018 and Working Together to Safeguard Children. |
| 06/10/2018 | Reviewed and adopted by Board at Annual Safeguarding Review |
| 05/10/2019 | Reviewed and adopted by Board at Annual Safeguarding Review |
| 10/10/2020 | Reviewed and adopted by Board at Annual Safeguarding Review Cross reference to Covid guidance in Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy Requirement that staff only communicate with students on excursions via trip phones rather than personal mobile phones Further guidance re use of mobile phones in EYFS |
| 23/09/2021 | 4.2.5 Removed the sentences around entertaining in houses and depart time from the house to make it clear that students should not be entertained in staff houses. |
| 01/10/2022 | Change of name of policy to Staff to Student Code of Conduct as clarification of the purpose of the policy 4.2.6 Cars – Included student to sit in the back of the car 4.2.7 Removed reference to Covid 19 11.5 Mobile Phones – included a paragraph about Boarding staff using boarding phones to contact boarders Approved by Board October 2022 |
| 01/09/2023 | Reviewed, minor changes; removed reference to Studies and changed Nurse to read Pre School |
| 10/10/2023 | Reviewed and adopted by Board at Annual Safeguarding Review |
| 24/05/2024 | Reviewed. Added appendix 2 for staff who are also parents |

Appendix 1 Staff to Student Code of Conduct

Social Media Guidance

1 Professional Principles for Staff

BE PROFESSIONAL, RESPONSIBLE AND RESPECTFUL

This appendix should be read in conjunction with the Digital Safety policy 12.1.

The School recognises the growth in popularity of social networking sites as a communication medium (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat). The accessibility of personal details on these sites presents a potential risk to employees, students and to the School.

The School therefore prohibits staff from:

- a) sharing their personal social network site with any student
- b) bringing disrepute to the School with content of social media
- c) conducting themselves in a way that is detrimental to the School
- d) allowing their interaction on such websites to damage working relationships between colleagues, students or impact on people who may be parents or have other connections with the School
- e) being a 'friend' to any student of the School, on a personal social networking site (e.g. Facebook). Staff should also be careful of being a 'friend' to former students, who may still be in contact with current students. For clarity, staff should not be a 'friend' with any former student until that student is over 21 subject to the exceptions below.
- f) staff members must not contact students from their former schools by means of personal social media

Item (e) above is subject to the following exceptions:

- i. a member of staff who is also a former student, may retain their social networking activity, including 'friends'.
- ii. a staff member may be a "friend" to a student if they are a family member.

However, as a member of staff they are nevertheless required to follow the School's Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Policy, and be mindful of the position of trust into which they have moved. They must also be mindful of the potential for the information on their website to be viewed by other students.

2 Personal Usage of Social Media

Staff and Students may identify themselves as employees or students of Sidcot School in their personal web space. However, care must be taken to ensure this is appropriate. This is to prevent information on these sites from being linked with the School and to safeguard their privacy, particularly those involved in providing sensitive frontline services.

Sidcot School does not expect Staff and Students to discontinue contact with friends and family members via personal social media once they join the School, however, any information they obtain as a result of being a part of the school community must not be used for personal gain nor be passed on to others who may use it in such a way.

Staff or students must not have any contact with students or staff family members through personal social media if that contact is likely to constitute a contravention of the rules set out elsewhere in other policies (for example the staff / student code), improper behaviour under the school's behaviour policies, a conflict of interest or call into question their objectivity.

If staff wish to communicate with students through social media sites or to enable students to keep in touch with one another, they can only do so with the approval of the School and through official school sites created according to the School requirements.

Staff, governors and volunteer members must decline 'friend requests' from students they receive in their personal social media accounts, subject to the exceptions above. Instead, if they receive such requests from students (who are not family members), they must discuss these in general terms in class and signpost students to become 'friends' of the official school site.

Caution is advised when inviting work colleagues to be 'friends' in personal social networking sites. Social networking sites blur the line between work and personal lives and it may be difficult to maintain professional relationships or it might be just too embarrassing if too much personal information is known in the work place.

As part of their employment or education, staff and students have access to information, including personal information about students and their family members, colleagues and other parties and school corporate information, which must not be discussed on their personal web space.

Photographs, videos or any other types of image of students and their families or images depicting people wearing school uniforms or clothing with school images or identifying school premises must not be published on personal web-space.

School email addresses and other official contact details must not be used for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.

Staff and Students must not edit open access online encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia in a personal capacity whilst using the school system. This is because the source of the correction will be recorded as the employer's IP address and the intervention will, therefore, appear as if it comes from and is endorsed by the School.

Sidcot School team logos or brands must not be used or published on personal web space.

Sidcot School only permits limited personal use of social media while at work. Access to social media sites for personal reasons is not allowed during lesson time for academic staff. Staff members are expected to devote their contracted hours of work to their professional duties and, in practice, personal use of the internet should not be on the school's time. Use at lunch times and other breaks is permitted.

Staff and Students are strongly advised to ensure that they set the privacy levels of their personal sites as strictly as they can and to opt out of public listings on social networking sites to protect their own privacy. It is not safe to reveal home addresses, telephone numbers and other personal information. It is a good idea to use a separate email address just for social networking so that no other contact details are given away.

3 Using Social Media on behalf of Sidcot School

Staff can only use official school sites for communicating with students or to enable students to communicate with one another.

There must be a strong pedagogical or business reason for creating official school sites to communicate with students or others. Staff must not create sites for trivial reasons which could expose the School to unwelcome publicity or cause reputational damage.

Official school sites must be created only according to the requirements specified in the Digital Safety 12.1 Appendix 2. Sites created must not breach the terms and conditions of social media service providers, particularly with regard to minimum age requirements.

Staff members, governors and volunteers must at all times act in the best interests of children and young people when creating, participating in or contributing content to social media sites.

Appendix 2 [Policy 2.2: Staff to Student Code of Conduct](#))

Staff Conduct Guidelines for When Staff Children are Students of Sidcot School

This document is designed to support all members of staff, parents and students in navigating the reality that many of our students are children of staff members. It should be seen as a constructive, helpful set of guidance for best practice conduct. If you are unsure about any items listed below, please contact the DSL for advice.

Contacting staff, or staff parents

Staff should be mindful of the fact that parents do not have access to this child's teachers in a way that a member of staff does. Therefore, communication about a child should follow the channels available to other parents, for example, emailing the tutor and arranging a meeting (not via TEAMS, or in person).

Staff parents should be respectful of colleagues' diaries and not expect an immediate response to a concern or query because they are a colleague. It may be that time is required to properly research an issue before responding.

Equally, staff members should treat colleagues as any other parent - for example, by making comments about their child's performance in the School setting, but rather should follow the usual procedures should it be necessary to request a feedback meeting. Where possible, both parents (as applicable) should be involved in communications and personal, rather than School, email addresses should be used (if listed on SIMS).

Parent/student contacts

It is recognised that staff who are parents will have bona fide social contact with parents and students out of School. At all times, staff should remember that they are representing the School and behave appropriately, in a professional and courteous way. Students and Staff should always be treated with respect. They should not be ridiculed, nor shown favouritism. Staff should not share specialist information that they have as a member of the School staff with other parents, unless it is publicly available.

Staff should be careful when giving their personal contact details out to parents, as these can be used inappropriately by other parents including telephone calls at unsocial hours about School-related matters.

Staff should be mindful of the content of their interaction in PTA-led WhatsApp groups, or any social media interaction with other parents. Best practice, where possible, is for a partner or child's other parent to be the representative on online groups in order to receive or share any necessary information.

If a member of staff has any contact with students outside of School (e.g. they belong to the same sports club, give regular or occasional car lifts, or attend birthday parties or playdates), the DSL should be informed via the form (Can be found on Firefly). Staff should adhere to normal safeguarding rules and not engage with students on anything other than School platforms (i.e. email and/or TEAMS). Similarly, staff have a duty of care to report any safeguarding concerns based on interaction with parents/staff outside of School to the DSL.

Photos/Videos

Staff are allowed to take photographs of their child at School events if the event is open to parents, e.g. sports matches. If additional students are present in the photograph, as long as it

is clear that the staff child was the subject of the photograph, then this may be held on the staff member's personal device. Photographs should not be taken at events not open to parents.

Internal Data

In order to protect the confidentiality of the students, members of staff will not have access to the CPOMS entries for their children. Staff should be mindful of personal data laws and not use their professional access to data systems to check information on their child. Should they see private data about their child, they should not act upon it (for example, by emailing a colleague for more information).