

Dunottar School

# Staff Code of Conduct

## Policy Statement

Dunottar School has written the following Staff Code of Conduct Policy in order to ensure that all members of staff who come into contact with children and young people promote their welfare and safety. This Policy complies with the DfE publication Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) and has regard to the DfE guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023).

This code of conduct should be read in conjunction with:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- EVAOS Policy
- Staff Acceptable Use of Technology Agreement
- IT Policy
- Mobile devices policy
- Social Media policy
- Physical Restraint Policy

The purpose of this code of conduct is to:

- Communicate and reinforce the professional responsibilities of all members of staff
- Define the appropriate relations regarding communication between staff, pupil and parent, with particular reference to technology and social media
- Clearly set out the expectations of standards of behaviour within school and when representing the school
- To give guidelines to members of staff to ensure safe practices minimise the risk of suggestions of improper conduct or false allegations against a member of staff and therefore providing a level of protection to allow staff to competently fulfil their professional role.

The Code of Conduct applies to all staff working at Dunottar School paid or voluntary, whatever their role or position within the school. Staff include employees, governors, trainee students, work experience/ placement, volunteers and agency workers.

The Policy document complies with The Teachers' Standards Guidance for school leaders, school staff and governing bodies July 2011 (introduction updated June 2013, terminology updated 2021). Since April 2012, the National College for Teaching and Leadership has been using The Teachers' Standards (Part Two: Personal and professional conduct) when hearing cases of serious misconduct.

Teachers make the education of their pupils their first concern, and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. Teachers act with honesty and integrity; have strong subject knowledge, keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up-to-date and are self-critical; forge positive professional relationships; and work with parents in the best interests of their pupils.

## Teaching Standards

A teacher must:

1. Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils
  - establish a safe and stimulating environment for pupils, rooted in mutual respect
  - set goals that stretch and challenge pupils of all backgrounds, abilities and dispositions
  - demonstrate consistently the positive attitudes, values and behaviour which are expected of pupils.
2. Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils
  - be accountable for pupils' attainment, progress and outcomes
  - be aware of pupils' capabilities and their prior knowledge, and plan teaching to build on these
  - guide pupils to reflect on the progress they have made and their emerging needs
  - demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn and how this impacts on teaching
  - encourage pupils to take a responsible and conscientious attitude to their own work and study.
3. Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge
  - have a secure knowledge of the relevant subject(s) and curriculum areas, foster and maintain pupils' interest in the subject, and address misunderstandings
  - demonstrate a critical understanding of developments in the subject and curriculum areas, and promote the value of scholarship
  - demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of standard English, whatever the teacher's specialist subject
  - if teaching early mathematics, demonstrate a clear understanding of appropriate teaching strategies.
4. Plan and teach well-structured lessons
  - impart knowledge and develop understanding through effective use of lesson time
  - promote a love of learning and children's intellectual curiosity
  - set homework and plan other out-of-class activities to consolidate and extend the knowledge and understanding pupils have acquired
  - reflect systematically on the effectiveness of lessons and approaches to teaching
  - contribute to the design and provision of an engaging curriculum within the relevant subject area(s).

5. Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils

- know when and how to differentiate appropriately, using approaches which enable pupils to be taught effectively
- have a secure understanding of how a range of factors can inhibit pupils' ability to learn, and how best to overcome these
- demonstrate an awareness of the physical, social and intellectual development of children, and know how to adapt teaching to support pupils' education at different stages of development
- have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs; those of high ability; those with English as an additional language; those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them.

6. Make accurate and productive use of assessment

- know and understand how to assess the relevant subject and curriculum areas, including statutory assessment requirements
- make use of formative and summative assessment to secure pupils' progress
- use relevant data to monitor progress, set targets, and plan subsequent lessons
- give pupils regular feedback, both orally and through accurate marking, and encourage pupils to respond to the feedback.

7. Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment

- have clear rules and routines for behaviour in classrooms, and take responsibility for promoting good and courteous behaviour both in classrooms and around the school, in accordance with the school's behaviour policy
- have high expectations of behaviour, and establish a framework for discipline with a range of strategies, using praise, sanctions and rewards consistently and fairly
- manage classes effectively, using approaches which are appropriate to pupils' needs in order to involve and motivate them
- maintain good relationships with pupils, exercise appropriate authority, and act decisively when necessary.

8. Fulfil wider professional responsibilities

- make a positive contribution to the wider life and ethos of the school (including running / supporting co-curricular clubs, during lunch, after school and at weekends)\*
- develop effective professional relationships with colleagues, knowing how and when to draw on advice and specialist support
- deploy support staff effectively
- take responsibility for improving teaching through appropriate professional development, responding to advice and feedback from colleagues
- communicate effectively with parents with regard to pupils' achievements and wellbeing.

Further details on Dunottar School's expectations and practice can be found in the Teaching & Learning Policy, SEND Policy, Admissions Policy, Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy, Equal opportunities Policy, Behaviour & Discipline Policy, Curriculum Policy and Aims and Ethos Statement.

\*The section in brackets is an expectation relating specifically to Dunottar School.

### **Personal and Professional Conduct**

All staff are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct throughout a career.

Staff should uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:

- treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
- having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
- not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs (DfE: Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales 2024)
- ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

'Statutory frameworks' includes all legal requirements, including but not limited to the requirement to promote equal opportunities and to provide reasonable adjustments for those with disabilities, as provided for in the Equality Act 2010. The term also covers the professional duties of teachers as set out in the statutory School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document.

## **The role of all Dunottar School staff in Child Protection (Safeguarding)**

To meet and maintain our safeguarding responsibilities towards our students, all members of staff and those who come into contact with our students are expected to adhere to the following good practice, which includes:

- treating all Dunottar School students with respect.
- setting a good example by conducting themselves appropriately.
- involving Dunottar School students in decisions that affect them.
- encouraging positive and safe behaviour among students.
- being a good listener.
- making themselves familiar with the school's Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy and procedures and other documents relating to wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, and confidentiality.
- knowing the name of the DSL and deputy DSLs at the school and their role.
- reporting any concerns immediately to either the DSL or the deputy DSLs.
- consulting with the designated persons if in any doubt as to how to proceed.
- raising concerns about poor or unsafe practices with the DSL or deputy DSL and that such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively.
- understand that they may make a referral to external agencies themselves if they deem it necessary and the DSL disagrees.
- have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep safe children who are looked after by the local authority.
- read, understand and sign the United Learning Guidance for Staff-Student Relationships which provides guidance to staff to ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place students or themselves at risk of harm or allegations.
- read, sign to say they have understood the school's child protection policy, alongside Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2024).
- being alert to changes in students' behaviour and recognise that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse.
- asking the student's permission before doing anything for them of a physical nature, such as assisting with dressing, physical support during PE or administering first aid.
- maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between students and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language.
- being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some students lead to an increased risk of abuse.
- understanding that inappropriate behaviour towards students is unacceptable and that their conduct towards students must be beyond reproach. o Such behaviours could include but are not limited to:
  - Being over friendly with children
  - Having favourites
  - Taking photographs of children on their personal mobile phones
  - Using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating, or offensive language

Note: under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity

between a member of the school staff and a student under 18 may be a criminal offence, even if that student is over the age of consent.

#### DRESS AND APPEARANCE

- Dunottar School recognise that dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, all staff must dress in a manner that is appropriate to a professional role and that promotes a professional image.
- Staff should dress in a manner that is not offensive, revealing or sexually provocative and in a manner that is absent from political or contentious slogans.
- Staff should dress safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake.
- Tattoos and body art should be covered while staff are in school. Discreet piercings are acceptable.

#### SMOKING, ALCOHOL, E-CIGARETTES AND OTHER SUBSTANCES

- Dunottar School is a non-smoking site. Staff must not smoke or use e-cigarettes on school premises or outside school gates. Any member of staff wishing to smoke or use an e-cigarette must leave the school grounds.
- Staff must not smoke or use an e-cigarette whilst working with or supervising pupils offsite.
- Staff must not consume illicit drugs or other illegal substances on or near school premises.
- Alcohol may be consumed at school events e.g. a glass of wine at productions, champagne at leaving events and end of term. Alcohol at school events must be consumed in moderation and staff should remain professional in their conduct at all times.

#### GIFTS/HOSPITALITY

- Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift/offer of hospitality that might be construed as a bribe by others or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. However, there may be occasions where pupils/students or parents wish to give a small token of appreciation to staff, for example at religious festivities or at the end of the year.
- It is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or to suggest to pupils that gifts are appropriate or desired. Cash must not be accepted as a gift. If you are unsure whether to accept a gift you should consult Sharon Fribbance.
- All such gifts with a value of over £20 and all offers of hospitality should be reported to the Finance Manager and will be recorded in the school's gifts register which is held in the Finance Office.
- Personal gifts must not be given by staff to pupils.

- **Business and Related Interests:** To avoid any misunderstandings that might arise, all staff are required to declare any financial or related interests they have in companies or individuals from whom Dunottar School may purchase goods or services. The disclosure should also include business interests of relatives, such as a parent or spouse where influence could be exerted over a member of staff by that person. All such declarations should be reported annually to the Finance Manager.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

- Members of staff may have access to confidential information about pupils, their parents/carers or their siblings. Staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil on a need-to-know basis.
- Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil or their family for their own, or others' advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other organisations). Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the pupil.
- All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a pupil is bullied by another pupil, this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate school procedure. It must not be discussed outside the school, including with the pupil, parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the school except by a senior member of staff with the appropriate authority to deal with the matter.
- Staff have a statutory obligation to share with Dunottar School's Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads any information which gives rise to concern about the welfare or safety of a pupil/student or that might suggest a pupil is in need or at risk of significant harm. Staff should pass on information without delay in accordance with Dunottar School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and procedures and this should be recorded.
- Staff should refer to the Department of Education's document Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for further guidance on information sharing. If you are in any doubt about whether to share, you should seek guidance from a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to SLT and only approved staff and Governors should communicate to the media about the school.

## PARENTS AS EMPLOYEES

- It is acknowledged that some staff also have children who attend the school. It is recognised that in these cases the staff fulfil a dual role of parent and employee.
- Parents as employees should ensure that they uphold boundaries between the two roles and that their behaviour does not constitute a conflict of interest. For example, they must maintain the same level of confidentiality despite social expectations. Parent-staff should discuss any inter-role conflict with their line manager.



- Personal relationships may arise if your own children are friends with those in school, or when you have personal relationships with parents of children outside of school. Please use your professional judgement and pass on any concerns.

#### WHISTLEBLOWING

- Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, without fear of repercussions.
- All staff have a duty to report any behaviour by a colleague which raises concern. Staff should refer to the United Learning Whistleblowing (Raising Concerns) Policy.

#### COMPLIANCE

- All staff must complete the electronic Microsoft form sent from Human Resources to confirm they have read, understood and agree to comply with this policy.