

# St George's Catholic School

## Code of Conduct for Staff 2022 - 2023

St George's Catholic School has certain high expectations of every adult who works in the school.

The public is entitled to have trust and confidence in the integrity of St George's Catholic School, its staff, governors and volunteers. The conduct of all must therefore be of the highest standard.

This Code of Conduct has been prepared to guide employees on issues of conduct by providing a framework of guidelines.

If in doubt about any aspect of the Code, seek advice from the Headteacher.

### 1. Basic principles

- The welfare of the child always comes first.
- Staff are responsible for their own behaviour and should avoid any conduct, which would lead a reasonable person to question their motivation.
- Staff should work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way.
- Staff should be aware that breaches of the law, professional guidelines and this code of conduct could result in criminal and/or disciplinary action being taken against them.

### 2. Duty of Care

- All adults have a duty to keep children 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 staff and pupils and behaviour that shows integrity, maturity and good judgement.
- All staff have a duty to report any concerns about a pupil to the school's Designated Person for Child Protection.

### 3. Working with pupils

- All pupils have a right to be treated with respect and dignity.
- High standards of behaviour will be expected and promoted at all times in lessons and throughout every aspect of the school's life.
- Staff are expected to work with all pupils and never attempt to refuse to do so.
- Staff must not use any form of degrading treatment to punish or undermine a pupil. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards pupils is not acceptable in any situation.
- Staff should be careful not to be alone with pupils. They should leave a door open or ask for someone to sit in if concerned about talking to a pupil.

### 4. Working with other staff

- Effective schools are those where adults work co-operatively together.
- Discrimination by any member of staff will not be tolerated, particularly on the grounds of race, gender, religious belief, sexuality, disability, age or personal circumstances.
- Staff are expected to work together, showing respect, courtesy and helpfulness whatever their position in the school. This includes:
  - Speaking politely to one another
  - Being approachable, friendly and welcoming to other adults in school including all staff members, volunteers and visitors
  - Being flexible and understanding of unexpected changes within the school day
  - Communicating clearly and honestly
  - Addressing concerns openly and honestly with the person to whom the concern is addressed without publicly criticising anyone
  - Never acting in a way that publicly undermines a colleague
  - Taking responsibility for actions and being prepared to apologise when mistakes are made and undertaking to learn from those errors
  - Not deliberately discriminating or ostracising certain members of staff or volunteers
  - Avoiding the establishment of 'cliques' within the school body

- Supporting the professional development of all colleagues

## 5. Working with Senior Staff

- It is important to have a good working relationship with senior staff. In turn, senior staff should treat all staff and volunteers reasonably and fairly and with courtesy and respect, at all times.
- Staff should carry out all reasonable and lawful requests made by senior staff to the best of their ability.

## 6. Working Safely

- The governors, in conjunction with the Local Authority, will do everything they can to meet any statutory obligations and to ensure that the school is a safe and healthy working environment.
- Staff are expected to:
  - follow the school's and LA's health and safety policies
  - take reasonable and practical steps to ensure the health and safety of their self, the pupils and adults who they work with
  - ensure that safety equipment is not misused or damaged
  - wear clothes, which do not put health and safety at risk and to wear any safety clothing and equipment provided
  - report promptly any accidents or near misses
  - attend any medical examinations required by governors or the Local Authority
  - comply with hygiene requirements
  - tell the Headteacher if they are taking any medication which would harm their ability to do their work and in particular, never to use machinery if they have taken any medication or drugs that may affect their ability to do so safely
  - co-operate in all activities, including fire drills and training organised to promote safety

## 7. Contractual Working Hours

- Staff should work the number of hours set out in their contract of employment and are expected to be punctual arriving within a suitable timeframe in order to be ready for the start of the contracted hours. It is not acceptable to arrive at that exact moment that the contractual hours begin.
- Staff should not leave the school site during their contractual hours without the Headteacher's prior consent.
- If unable to work because of sickness staff must contact the school directly on the first day of sickness by 7.30am. Staff will need to give an explanation for absence including nature of sickness.
- On return to work staff should complete a statement of fitness for work form with their line manager and notify the Headteacher of their return to work. For absences of 5 working days or more a Doctor's certificate is required
- If absent on a day the school breaks up for a holiday then staff should contact the school office by phone or email with notification of the day they are fit for work – even if this is a holiday.
- Time off for medical appointments must be agreed in advance with the Headteacher and is at the Headteacher's discretion. Routine medical appointments must take place out of school hours
- Time off for other absences is at the Headteacher's discretion and must be agreed in advance
- All staff are required to take their holidays during the school holiday breaks. Holiday leave during term time will only be agreed in the most exceptional circumstances and is always at the discretion of the Headteacher and governors.
- If proper procedures are not followed any absence could be considered to be unauthorised and pay may be withheld.

## 8. Smoking/Alcohol/Drugs

- Staff must not be under the influence of alcohol, use illicit drugs or other illegal substances while at work.
- Staff are not permitted to smoke anywhere on the school site. Staff are expected to be role models to children so any smoking should be done away from the school site and completely out of the sight of children
- Alcohol may not be consumed during working hours or when accompanying pupils on any school trip or activity
- If taking medication staff must seek the advice of their doctor to ensure that the medication will not impede their ability to do the job.

## 9. Dress and Appearance

- Staff should dress in ways which are appropriate to their role. The dress code is smart rather than casual. A level of formality and smartness is appropriate and clothing should promote a positive and professional image; adults in school are role models for the pupils and therefore they have a responsibility to model appropriate dress and appearance.
- This is not a policy meant to detail every eventuality, it is up to individual staff to decide whether their appearance is appropriate guided by the principles above. However, denim, flip flops, football team clothing and revealing clothes, such as short skirts or low cut tops, should be avoided.
- Due to the impressionable nature of young children, the governors would appreciate that tattoos and other body art are covered up whilst at school. Facial piercings are permitted only at the discretion of Governance and Senior Leadership. If permitted, they must be discrete or covered. Extreme haircuts are not permitted. For health and safety reasons jewellery should be kept to a minimum.
- All staff must wear their ID badge at all times and it must be clearly visible.
- St George's Catholic School is committed to promote diversity and will therefore respect individual preference in terms of customs, culture, religion and tradition.

## 10. Data protection

- Staff should not disclose any information about pupils, staff colleagues or governors to members of the public or to parents and carers.
- Only approved staff and governors should communicate to the media about the school.
- All personal data must be kept secure. The storage of personal data on an external hard drive or memory stick is insecure and should be only used if the device is password protected and encrypted. Staff should use the school's secure network which is the safest way to store data.
- It is the responsibility of staff to have read and understood the School Data Protection Policy

## 11. Social networking websites

- Social networking e.g. Facebook, Twitter and texting are a way of life for many adults. Staff should be aware of the potential risk to their professional reputation and that comments made on a social network site which relate to the school, pupils, staff or governors could lead to disciplinary action.
- Staff should not use school equipment, including laptops or iPads or the school internet connection to access or update personal social websites
- Staff should not have any pupils as "friends" on social media sites
- It is strongly recommended that staff do not have parents or ex-pupils as "friends" on social media.
- Staff should not post anything on any website, social or otherwise, or text about the school community including incidents.
- It is expected that staff uphold professionalism and dignity on a public website, which would include the use of language, including profile name and content including photos. They should think of this in respect of being a role model. Staff should not use inappropriate comments in relation to gender, race, disability, age, religion or sexual orientation.
- Images of pupils taken during school time or on educational visits must never be posted.
- Images of work colleagues or governors should not be posted without their permission and comments must not be posted about staff or governance of any of the school community.

## 12. Technology

- Staff must adhere to the school's E-Safety Policy and sign the Acceptable Use Policy each year.
- Only school equipment should be used to take photos of pupils. At the first possible instance photos should be uploaded to the secure staff shared drive and images erased from the portable device.
- A school PC, laptop or iPad should only be used for school work and not for personal use. Staff should ensure that they have absolute control over a school iPad allocated for their use and that it is not used by anyone else including friends and family.
- Staff should restrict internet access to work related sites on school equipment.
- A school email account should be used for all work related communication. It must not be used to circulate personal email.
- Only the network manager or IT technician should install software onto school equipment

## 13. Mobile phones

- The use of personal mobile phones by staff is only permitted at break times and then in areas to which children do not normally have access – staff room etc.

- Mobile phones should never be used while teaching or supervising children either to make/receive calls or send/receive text messages.
- Personal mobile phones must never be used to take photographs of pupils or of school documents,

#### **14. Whistleblowing**

- Staff must report any behaviour by colleagues that raises concerns. The school's Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy is available..

#### **15. Gifts**

- There are occasions when children or parents wish to pass on small tokens of appreciation to staff, e.g. at the end of the school year and this is acceptable.
- It is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value. If the value of an individual gift is greater than £50 then advice must be sought from the Headteacher before it is accepted
- All gifts from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to the school business manager
- Personal gifts from individual members of staff to individual pupils are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted.

#### **16. Extremism**

- All staff have a duty to report to the Headteacher any concerns about children who might be at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas which could be used to legitimise terrorism.

#### **17. Informing the school of any change in circumstances**

- All staff are responsible for informing the Headteacher if there is any change in their circumstances which may be seen as having an impact on their suitability to work with children. This may include for example, a criminal conviction, a police caution or any change to the information declared on the Staff Disclosure form (including information about other household members).

#### **18. Other Employment**

- If staff have another job it must not conflict with the school's interest or bring the school into disrepute.
- Employees' working commitments to another employer must not interfere with their work for the school; they must be able to work for the school at their contracted times, rested and refreshed.

#### **19. Use of cars**

- Staff should only give lifts to pupils following agreement from the Headteacher. If this was to be agreed, the correct insurance must be in place and at least one other adult must be in the car.
- Staff are encouraged to share lifts when travelling to courses. When on school business a member of staff should only give another member of staff a lift if it has been cleared with their line manager and all necessary insurance cover has been checked.

#### **20. Financial regulations**

- The school has adopted the LA's Financial Regulations. All staff with financial responsibility should comply with the powers delegated by the governors.
- Staff must only submit claims for reimbursement of legitimate expenditure
- School equipment should not be used for personal use unless authorised by the Headteacher. This includes photocopy facilities and telephones.
- Staff should consider carefully whether they need to declare their relationship with any individual where this might cause a conflict with school activities e.g. a relationship with another staff member or a contractor who provides services to the school.

#### **Further Information**

- This Code of Conduct cannot cover every eventuality. It does not replace the general requirements of the law, common sense and good conduct.
- If employees are uncertain about what to do in a particular situation or require further information or guidance on the appropriate course of action to take they must contact the Headteacher, or in his absence, the Assistant Headteacher for advice before they take any action.

## Remember

- If no specific advice, policies or guidelines for a specific situation exist, or if you are unsure consult the Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher
- If you need to take a particular course of action in an unplanned circumstance, which may vary from policies or which does not allow time for advice to be sought, record these actions with the Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher as soon as possible after the event.
- If at any time you are concerned that an action or comment by yourself may be misinterpreted, or that a child behaves or makes a comment in a way that causes you concern, log this immediately with the appropriate senior member of staff.

## Staff

Every year staff must individually sign the form held by the School Business Manager confirming that:

- They have read and understood the Code of Conduct for staff working at St George's Catholic School
- They agree to abide by its contents
- They understand that any breach of this Code of Conduct will be the subject of disciplinary action which could result in dismissal.

This will normally take place at the start of each academic year and all staff will be required to have signed to confirm that they have read it by the October half-term.