



## **Staff Code of Conduct**

At Wendover Online School we believe in creating a whole school culture that is safe and inclusive. The Staff Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school staff are expected to observe. School staff are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that models the highest possible standards for all the pupils within the school. As a member of a school community, each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside of working hours.

Our aims underpin the school culture: to develop a happy, friendly, secure and well-disciplined atmosphere and to encourage a caring, respectful and trusting relationship between all children and adults. This code of conduct sets out the key principles for the creation and maintenance of a safe school culture. All staff employed under Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Employment have a statutory obligation to adhere to the 'Teachers' Standards 2011' and in relation to this policy, Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards – Personal and Professional Conduct.

Staff failure to adhere to this policy may result in disciplinary action including dismissal.

Objectives of a safe school culture:

- To safeguard pupils and protect staff
- To make explicit expectations of performance and conduct
- To minimise opportunities for abuse
- For all staff to have confidence to report concerns with full confidentiality
- To respond promptly to concerns: we always investigate and address issues
- To exercise appropriate sanctions
- To create and maintain an ethos of mutual respect, openness and fairness

The leadership team at Wendover are responsible for ensuring that this Code of Conduct is effective on a day-to-day basis and will review it at least annually.

We are committed to providing a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that complements the educational provision the children in our care access whilst they are at school in the UK. Our ethos reflects the articles laid out in the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC) which underpin all aspects of the support we offer to the children in our care.

## **Aims and Scope of the Code of Conduct**

The Wendover Staff Code of Conduct will be shared with all employees as part of their induction programme. Thereafter, all employees will be expected to revisit the Code of Conduct on an annual basis, along with other school policies, including Child Protection, Safeguarding and Health and Safety policies. Each year, employees are required to sign to say that they have read and agree to abide by the contents of these policies, the contents of which serve to safeguard children and young people.

Please note that this Code of Conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils. This Code of Conduct is in line with the statutory safeguarding guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and covers acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

## **Underpinning principles**

1. The welfare of the child is paramount
2. Staff should understand their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils
3. Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions
4. Staff should work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way
5. Staff should acknowledge that deliberately invented/malicious allegations by children are extremely rare and that all concerns should be reported and recorded
6. Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from their line manager if they have acted in a way which may give rise to concern.
7. Staff should apply the same professional standards regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and sexual orientation
8. Staff should not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or any substance, including prescribed medication, which may affect their ability to care for children
9. Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in disciplinary action being taken against them, criminal action and/or other proceedings including barring by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) from working in regulated activity, or for acts of serious misconduct prohibition from teaching by the National College of Teaching & Leadership (NCTL).
10. Staff and managers should continually monitor and review practice to ensure this guidance is followed.
11. Staff should be aware of and understand the statutory frameworks in which they must act, their establishment's child protection policy, arrangements for managing allegations against staff, staff behaviour policy, whistleblowing procedure and their Local Safeguarding Children Board LSCB procedures (UK).

12. Teaching staff must also have regard for the Teachers Standards. Part two of the standards are included as an appendix to this document.

### **Setting an example – general obligations**

All staff who work in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils/students. Staff must therefore set an example. They will:

- a. avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.
- b. demonstrate the highest standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils/students to do the same.
- c. Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others.
- d. not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- e. express personal beliefs in a way that will not overly influence pupils and will not exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- f. avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.
- g. ensure that they are dressed appropriately for lessons.
- h. no smoking or drinking of alcohol whilst teaching.
- i. take care to ensure that backgrounds when on video calls are not distracting or inappropriate.

### **Safeguarding Pupils/Students**

- a. Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from harm, this includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, extremism and radicalisation.
- b. The duty to safeguard pupils includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- c. Staff will familiarise themselves with the school's safeguarding policy and procedures, Whistleblowing Policy, Child Protection Policy and the Prevent initiative, and ensure that they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child. Copies of these are available from the school central office.
- d. Staff must not demean or undermine pupils, their parents or carers, or colleagues.
- e. Staff must take the utmost care of pupils/students under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.

### **Pupil/Student Development**

- a. Staff must comply with school policies and procedures that support the wellbeing and development of pupils/students.

- b. Staff must cooperate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of pupils/students.
- c. Staff must follow reasonable instructions that support the development of pupils/students.

### **Staff/pupil relationships**

- a. Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so.
- b. Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of school hours if possible.
- c. Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes social media profiles and personal email addresses. All email exchanges should be copied to [teaching@wendoverschool.com](mailto:teaching@wendoverschool.com) to ensure transparency.
- d. If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, this should be reported to their line manager or the headteacher.

### **Confidentiality**

- a. In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the school, staff, pupils and their parents. This information will never be:
  - i. disclosed to anyone without the relevant authority.
  - ii. used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others.
  - iii. used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for.
- b. All staff may at some point witness actions which need to be confidential for example, where a pupil/student is bullied by another pupil/student (or by a member of staff). Such incidents need to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate school procedure. They must not be discussed outside the school or with colleagues in the school except with a senior member of staff with the appropriate role and authority to deal with the matter.
- c. However, staff have an obligation to share with their manager or the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead, any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a pupil/student. Staff must never promise a pupil/student that they will not act on information that they are told by the pupil/student.

### **Honesty and Integrity**

- a. Staff must maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.

- b. All staff must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or if they request, agree or accept, or receive a bribe from another person. If you believe that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act, you should refer to the Whistleblowing procedure.
- c. Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to the Headteacher or to the Chair of Governors if the Headteacher is the recipient, with the exception of “one off” token gifts (with a value of less than £20/£30) from students or parents. Personal gifts from individual members of staff to students are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted.
- d. Staff will ensure that all information given to the school about their qualifications and professional experience is correct.

### **Conduct Outside Work**

- a. Staff must not engage in conduct outside work that could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the employee’s own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school. Any such conduct could lead to dismissal.
- b. This covers negative comments about the school on social media.
- c. Criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct and are likely to be regarded as unacceptable and could lead to dismissal.
- d. Staff will be expected to disclose other schools or organisations for which they work.
- e. All members of staff must declare any business interests outside of school that may be connected either to the supply of goods/services to the school or be rewarded through association with these schools.
- f. Likewise, staff should not contact parents of students outside the remit of their work and must not encourage or accept additional independent work contracts outside the school.

### **Use of Electronic Technologies and Personal Communication Devices**

- a. Staff must exercise caution when using communication technologies and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute.
- b. Staff must not use social media e.g. Facebook with pupils or former pupils who are still of statutory school age.
- c. Staff must only use their school email account or school learning platform account when communicating electronically with pupils/students and parents. All email communication with students and parents must be copied to [teaching@wendoverschool.com](mailto:teaching@wendoverschool.com).

- d. Staff must not use personal electronic communication devices such as mobile phones or iPads as cameras in school. Any photographs/video footage must be taken using school equipment. Staff must only save images on school cloud-based storage drives.
- e. Staff who are in contact with pupils should not use personal mobile phones in school during their directed/paid hours of employment unless there are exceptional circumstances and they have requested and been given explicit permission to do so by the principal. Outside of these times, mobile phones should only be used when pupils are not present.
- f. Further information is provided in the Responsible Use Policy and Acceptable Use Agreements.

### **Disciplinary Action**

All staff need to recognise that failure to meet these standards of behaviour and conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

### **Detailed Exemplification**

Staff requiring more detailed exemplification in respect of a professional code of conduct should read: [Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings](#) (February 2022); published by the Safer Recruitment Consortium on behalf of the Department for Education.

In addition to other actions, employees who are facing disciplinary charges or are brought to managers' attention for inappropriate conduct, may be provided with and instructed to read and use exemplification in the above document as a model of expected conduct within and outside the workplace.

### **Links with other policies**

This policy links with the Trust and School Policies on:

- Staff Disciplinary procedures.
- Staff Grievance Procedures
- Safeguarding
- Child Protection

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

Wendover Online School's Staff Code of Conduct will be monitored and evaluated at least annually and as required by:

- Reviews of induction procedures for staff
- Reviews of the information included in the Wendover Staff Handbook
- Reviews of feedback from students, parents and carers and staff
- Reviews of records of staff behaviour-related issues

This Staff Code of Conduct will also be reconsidered where concerns about a student's behaviour are raised by members of the Wendover team, by students, by families and/or by schools.

Date of last policy review: August 2024

Date of next review: September 2025

## **Appendix 1: Code Of Conduct Aide Memoire**

When we speak to others we will:

- use a positive statement rather than a negative one so that children can learn what we expect of them in any situation.
- use a calm tone of voice at all times, to explain something to or instruct the children, so that they can follow our words without feeling threatened or uncomfortable.
- avoid using sarcastic words or phrases as these demean children and prevent them from developing high self-esteem.
- speak respectfully to other adults at all times, even if we disagree with them.

As professionals we will:

- avoid workplace gossip and negativity as it breeds resentment and becomes a barrier to effective communication and collaboration. We all have a duty to take active steps to divert conversations away from this if we come across it.
- maintain confidentiality about anything that we see or hear in the school, reporting it as appropriate, through agreed school processes, so that parents and children can trust us, and as a way of showing respect to our fellow professionals.
- work as part of a team, contributing as well as learning from others and helping to build up a strong workforce so that we can provide the best possible learning opportunities for the children.
- work within the school's policies and practices, so that what we do is consistent with what has been agreed between all members of the staff, governors and directors.
- treat everyone with respect.
- dress appropriately, so that we set a good example for the children and to show that we are here to work.
- behave in a positive way despite any personal problems that we may have, especially in front of the children.



## **Appendix 2: From DfE Teachers' Standards (effective from 1 September 2012)**

### Part 2: Personal and professional conduct

A teacher is 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 teacher's career.

Teachers 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
- 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.