



Staff Code of Conduct (2019-2020)

Date agreed: December 2019.

Date of next review: July 2020.

Approved by: Elena Vlasenko (School Director)

Purpose

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the expected behaviour standards of all staff at Pushkin's School. Our school seeks to provide a safe and exciting learning environment that ensures the wellbeing and best outcome for every pupil. This policy applies to all staff at Pushkin's School, including teachers, the management team and volunteers.

This Code of Conduct serves to:

- clarify the professional responsibility of all staff connected to Pushkin's School;
- establish the expectations of standards that all staff must maintain when representing the school in any circumstance;
- give clear advice about what might be considered as misconduct, and what constitutes as illegal behaviour; and
- make learning a pleasant and engaging experience for every pupil.

Staff Expectations

All staff are expected to:

- Demonstrate the highest possible standards of personal and professional conduct. Each staff member has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, both during and outside school hours.
- Have regard for the school ethos, values, policies and procedures, and act in accordance with them.
- Have a positive attitude, manner and appearance and work efficiently and safely.
- Treat pupils, parents and each other with dignity and respect.
- Ensure that the safety and welfare of pupils is the highest priority. Detailed information on this can be found on the school's Safeguarding Policy and Health and Safety Policy, which all staff are expected to read and adhere to.
- Be vigilant during school hours, always knowing where the pupils under their care are located and ensuring that visitors are always supervised and have been signed in/out correctly.
- Work and be seen working in an open and transparent way. Classroom doors must be open during lessons, preferably in view of other staff members.
- Make every effort to be punctual. If a member of staff is going to be late or is ill, they must report the absence as soon as possible to the School Director or School Manager. Planned absences are acceptable, but they must be authorised by the School Director.

- Dress appropriately for a school environment to present a professional image. Although there is no formal dress code, it must not be provocative or cause offence.
- Not use or be in possession of alcohol, cigarettes, e-cigarettes or illegal substances on the school premises.
- Ensure that the layout and contents of the classroom is the same after the last lesson as it was prior to the start of the school day.
- Continuously monitor and review their practice to ensure that they follow the guidance found in this code.

Equality of Opportunity for Every Pupil

Pushkin's School seeks to promote inclusivity and values diversity. The same professional standards should always be applied regardless of culture, disability, gender, age, language, race, ethnic background, religious belief, socio-economic status or sexual identity.

All pupils have a right to be treated with respect and dignity, and the use of language must always be appropriate. When speaking to pupils, staff must never use sarcastic, demeaning, insensitive or aggressive comments. Staff must also never use any form of degrading treatment to punish or undermine a pupil. Language that is discriminatory, offensive or derogatory must be avoided. Additionally, words or expressions of sexual content, innuendo or extreme political ideas are prohibited. The school will act against inappropriate language or behaviour that shows a lack of respect for others or which leads pupils to feel threatened.

Staff need to act as good role models and they have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the pupils' welfare and best interests. On rare occasions, there may be a time where staff must make a judgement in the best interest of pupils which contravenes this guidance or for which no guidance exists. Such judgements should be recorded and shared with the School Director at the earliest possible time. Staff should always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably.

Good Practice

Staff must be prepared to provide support and comfort to children when they feel stressed at school. The boundaries of what support is acceptable without being over-intimate need to be clear, and the following guidance is offered to staff:

- Physical contact with pupils

Staff must use common sense when with the children in their care and should make sure that any physical contact is appropriate to the situation. Professional judgement should always be used. Staff should never have any physical contact with a pupil that could be misinterpreted. Examples of appropriate physical contact include comforting a child who is upset, unwell, or injured. It is advised that any physical contact should be done in view of other members of staff.

- Physical restraint

Any form of physical restraint is only permissible when a child is in imminent danger of inflicting an injury to themselves or to others, as a last resort when all efforts to diffuse the situation have failed. These events must be recorded in writing, signed by a witness, and explained to the School Director immediately. It should also be known that corporal punishment, or threats of corporal punishment, are strictly prohibited. In an Early Years Foundation Stage setting, parents must be informed of any physical restraint on their child on the same day it occurred.

- Intimate care

All children have a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of an intimate nature is required (such as when removing wet/soiled clothing). Children should be encouraged to act independently and to undertake as much of their personal care as is practicable. When assistance is required, staff should make sure that a colleague is present and is aware of the task to be undertaken. Staff must always know where to find spare clothing and cleaning equipment (gloves, tissues, etc.) should any intimate care situation arise. Parents must also be informed of these situations on the same day when they come to pick up their child.

Professional Relationships with Other Members of Staff, Parents, Volunteers and Visitors

All staff should be polite, helpful and professional towards each other. They should always seek to be considerate and courteous to everyone in the school community, even on occasions where there may be differences of opinion. All members of staff are expected to:

- adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of all those with whom and for whom they work;
- be approachable, friendly and welcoming to adults in the school community;
- communicate clearly and honestly;
- address concerns openly and honestly, without publicly criticising anyone;
- never publicly undermine a colleague;
- take responsibility for their actions and apologise when mistakes are made; and
- not deliberately discriminate or ostracise certain members of staff.

Confidentiality and Information Disclosure

Staff may have access to confidential or personal information about pupils or colleagues in the process of undertaking their responsibilities. Staff must have awareness and high regard for all confidential and sensitive information that they might know. They must always be mindful of this information, especially during formal and informal discussions with parents, other staff members, children and the wider school community. Confidential information must not be disclosed to any person not authorised to receive it and should only be shared on a 'need to know' basis. Discussing confidential information with partners, friends and relatives is not permitted. This includes any information that could intimidate, embarrass or humiliate a pupil.

There could be rare circumstances in which a member of staff will be expected to share information about a pupil (e.g. when abuse is alleged or suspected). In such cases, staff have a duty to pass on this information to the designated Child Protection Leads at the earliest possible time. Contact information for the Child Protection Leads can be found on the school's Safeguarding Policy. If in doubt whether to share the information or keep it confidential, staff should contact the School Director for guidance.

Staff members should never give absolute guarantees of confidentiality to pupils or adults wishing to tell them something serious. They should only guarantee that they will pass on the information to the minimum number of people who must be told in order to ensure that the proper action is taken, and that they would not tell anyone else who does not need to know. Staff must also do what they can to protect the informing pupil or adult from any retaliation or unnecessary stress that might be feared after a disclosure has been made.

Confidential information must be stored securely when on school premises. Electronic confidential information off the school site will be stored securely on a password-protected and encrypted memory stick. Only the Child Protection Leads have access to this confidential information.

Use of Social Media

Staff must not use social networking sites to post material which damages the reputation of the school or which causes concern about their suitability to work with children. They must not develop or maintain online relationships with parents or pupils through social media, to protect themselves from risk of allegations in relation to inappropriate relationships. Contact with pupils by social media, phone or text is strictly prohibited. Those who post material which could be considered as inappropriate could face allegations of misconduct or disciplinary action.

All members of staff are editors on the school's Facebook page. They are welcome to post appropriate information that is relevant to the school community (e.g. information about school events, activities, updates and pupil progress). Pictures of pupils can only be posted if their parents have given consent to do so. Parental permission to use pictures of their children is given in writing on the Pupil Application Form, and staff must ask the School Director to know who gave consent and who did not. Staff can only take pictures of pupils on their phone/camera if they are planning to post them to the school's Facebook page. Once posted, or not used, these pictures must be deleted from the phone/camera immediately. Pupils names or any other personal information must not be used. Staff must not post their personal details such as their phone number and personal email address.

Conduct Outside Work

Pushkin's School does not concern itself with the private lives of its staff unless they affect its effective operation or its reputation. Staff must not engage in conduct outside of work which could damage their own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community. Any member of staff accused of a criminal offence is expected to inform the School Director at the earliest opportunity. Unlawful or antisocial conduct that involves violence or possession/use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct can lead to dismissal.

Any outside work or activity which may conflict with the interests of the school must always be agreed in advance with the School Director. Staff should not arrange the private tuition of any of the school's pupils, both during term time and holiday time, without the approval of the School Director. Staff should not arrange to meet pupils, individually or in groups, outside school hours. Any form of private tuition must be arranged by Pushkin's School. If a member of staff who has received parental permission wishes to privately tutor a pupil, they must first contact the School Director who will provide guidance and further details about this process.

Additional Information

Pushkin's School recognises that it has a duty of care towards its employees to provide a safe working environment for all staff members. This guidance intends to ensure that staff maintain the safest possible working practice, thereby safeguarding all pupils in their care as well as safeguarding themselves against accusations of improper or unprofessional conduct. Staff should be aware that failure to comply with this Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

This Code of Conduct cannot cover every situation that might arise. It does not replace the general requirements of the law, common sense and best conduct. If staff are uncertain about what to do in a particular situation or require further information or guidance on the appropriate course of action, they must seek advice from the School Director or the School Manager before taking any action.

Teachers must also understand and act within the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities. Guidance on these wider responsibilities is found in the Teachers' Standards 2011 (DfE). Staff teaching children aged 5 or younger must also comply with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2017 (DfE).