

Safeguarding yourself

Safer Working Practice Guidance for staff

This page is an attempt to offer guidance that both protects children from harm and protects staff from taking actions which could put them in a difficult situation professionally and possibly lead to allegations being made against them. It also attempts to clarify which behaviours would be regarded as 'unsuitable' by staff working at The Earls High School, bearing in mind the professional code of conduct for staff working in schools which is detailed on the next two pages.

This document takes into account guidance produced by 'Allegations Management Advisers' (DCSF) and guidance from Professional Associations. This is a working document and will be added to and modified over time.

Electronic communication and social networking sites

The following activities are deemed to be unprofessional and will lead to disciplinary action:

1. Giving students enrolled at the school personal phone numbers (mobile or otherwise). Obtaining phone numbers from students other than from the school database for the purposes of official communications. In situations such as trips, the school mobile or texting system may be used.
2. Email communications for all work purposes should be through the school email system. Email communication with students using personal email addresses would be deemed 'unsuitable'. In such communications both parties should use the school system.
3. Social networking sites (such as facebook, twitter, instagram and similar) - From a safeguarding perspective it is deemed 'unsuitable' to have students currently enrolled at the school as 'friends'. Caution should be exercised when considering the possible implications of having ex-students especially those who have siblings at the school as 'friends'. Being friends with ex-students who are still in compulsory education would not be considered appropriate. Staff should also be aware that these sites are in the public domain when posting comments or photographs.

Social contact.

There should be no planned social contact between staff and students. Properly supervised trips in holidays, weekends or evenings with parental consent are not affected by this guidance.

One to one meetings

Staff should only see students one to one in a room where they are visible through a window or open door.

Supervision of students

Staff would not be expected to leave students unsupervised e.g. staff should not leave a class that they are teaching or supervising. In an emergency situation a cover supervisor can be requested, or a suitably qualified member of support staff could be asked to supervise for a few minutes.

It would be considered inappropriate for a member of staff to be supervising students whilst under the influence of any alcohol or other non-medicinal drugs

Lone Working

When working either:

- a) on own or
- b) with students (see guidance on 'one to one' meetings above)

Inform either a member of SLT or the Site Manager of your activity and your expected leaving time in order that your safe exit of the building can be confirmed.

PROFESSIONAL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF WORKING AT THE EARLS HIGH SCHOOL

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 All employees should be aware of the standards of conduct expected of them by their employer. Although it is impossible to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all eventualities, the Code sets out the principal areas where concerns are likely to arise and staff awareness is necessary. The Code applies to all staff working in schools although particular reference is made to teaching staff.
- 1.2 Staff must comply with requirements placed on them by their contract of employment, conditions of service, schools' Articles of Government and relevant policies of Dudley Council. The Code is supplementary to documents detailing terms and conditions of employment, including statutory provisions, issued at the time of appointment.
- 1.3 Failure to observe the provisions of the Code may be relevant in considering action under disciplinary procedures. Should this occur, full consideration will be given to all the relevant facts and circumstances of the case in accordance with the principles of natural justice and following agreed procedures.
- 1.4 The Earls High School has a high reputation for the quality of their work and the professionalism of their staff. This Code will serve to confirm the current good practice of staff working in The Earls. Should staff have any doubts about the issues raised they should consult their Headteacher.

2. CONDUCT IN RELATION TO STAFF

- 2.1 All employees should preserve confidentiality that applies to their fellow colleagues as well as students. They should not reveal confidential information about colleagues unless it has prior agreement and should always behave in a manner which preserves the dignity of and respect for their colleagues. This is especially important if staff have children at the school.
- 2.2 All members of staff should be free from any sort of abuse from staff or students. Any derogatory comment (including on social media and the school email system) about fellow members of staff is deemed inappropriate.

3. CONDUCT IN RELATION TO PUPILS

- 3.1 The law recognises that staff act in loco parentis in respect of pupils in their charge and must act in the role of reasonably prudent parent in the school context. Through their actions staff must act in accordance with this duty of care to ensure at all times that the safety and welfare of pupils is accorded the highest priority. In this and other ways staff should always maintain standards of conduct which sustain their professional standing and that of the school.
- 3.2 Interaction with pupils should always be appropriate to their age and gender. Staff should not touch pupils, however casually, in ways or on parts of the body that might be considered indecent, unnecessary or familiar or use inappropriate language. Particular care may be necessary when supervising pupils in out of school activities. Further advice on the practical arrangements applying in this area is available in the Authority's booklet "Guidance for School Visits and Journeys".
- 3.3 Teaching materials should be appropriate to the age and gender of pupils. Particular care should be taken that sex or health education materials are appropriate and consistent with the school's and LA's policies.
- 3.4 When holding meetings with pupils on sensitive issues, staff should exercise proper professional judgment over the arrangements for the meeting. They should safeguard their own position by, for instance, considering the need for a second adult to be present.
- 3.5 Corporal punishment defined as any intentional application of force as punishment is illegal and may render a member of staff liable to criminal action as well as action under the school's disciplinary procedures. Corporal punishment includes any form of physical chastisement.
- 3.6 Physical intervention will not constitute corporal punishment where its purpose is to avert an immediate danger of injury to, or an immediate danger to the property of, any person including a pupil. In such circumstances, the element of restraint should be the minimum necessary to prevent injury or remove the risk of harm.
- 3.7 Where physical contact is necessary (eg in teaching PE or Music), that contact should be the minimum necessary for the purpose and comply with accepted good practice. Particular care should be taken in helping pupils with physical or other disabilities (eg in lifting). Further guidance is available in Codes of Practice produced by the professional associations representing staff in these subject areas.

- 3.8 Each school should have and follow a policy on first aid and have at least one member of staff appropriately trained in its application.
- 3.9 Following any incident where a member of staff has reason to believe that their actions may be open to misinterpretation, the Headteacher should be immediately notified and a written report submitted as soon as possible following the incident. Heads should contact a senior officer of the LA.
- 3.10 Guidance on procedures regarding suspected or alleged child abuse is available in all schools. In every school, either the Head Teacher or another teacher will have designated responsibility for child protection. In the event that a member of staff suspects or receives allegations that a child is the subject of abuse, a report should immediately be made in strict confidence to the designated teacher who will immediately inform the Council's Child Protection Team.
- 3.11 Agreed guidelines on procedures where staff are accused of physical or sexual abuse of pupils are contained in the document 'Teachers Facing an Allegation of Physical/Sexual Abuse: Guidelines on Practice and Procedure', which is available in all schools.

4. CONDUCT IN RELATION TO THE SCHOOL

- 4.1 Staff should make sure that they do not disclose confidential information to anyone who has no right to receive it and do not say or write anything that would constitute a breach of confidence. Confidential information relating to employment or the school should only be communicated on a need to know basis or with the specific permission of the Headteacher.
- 4.2 Use of materials and equipment provided by the school should not be used for purposes unconnected with employment. Staff should always use public funds to the best advantage of the school and community and adhere to high standards of probity in their use.
- 4.3 Staff should comply with the Council's and school's standing orders details of which are contained in the LA's/MAT Scheme of Delegation. These standing orders cover the declaration to the Headteacher of any indirect or direct financial interest in any contract or other matter involving the Council or the school. This is particularly relevant in cases of tendering or in the selling of surplus equipment or property. Heads should disclose such interest to the Chair of Governors or in case of doubt to a senior officer of the LA/MAT.
- 4.4 Staff should not solicit or accept any gift, loan, fee, hospitality or other reward which influences the way in which they carry out their duties. They should not influence or be influenced unfairly in the way they carry out their duties by ties of kinship or friendship, or by some other association or loyalty.
- 4.5 Care should be taken to avoid any conflict of interest between activities outside the school and professional responsibilities. Staff should not undertake work or engage in activities in their own time through which they seek to exercise unfair advantage by virtue of their position. In no case should outside activities bring the school into disrepute.
- 4.6 Staff should not, without authority, undertake activities unconnected with their professional role during working hours. Policies relating to Leave of Absence are available in the school and should be followed.
- 4.7 Staff in full-time employment should inform their Headteacher where they are undertaking paid work which may impinge on their normal duties, including activities such as lectures, private tuition, publications, press articles or radio/TV appearances. Where work is undertaken in the employee's own time any fees paid may be retained by the employee. However, where the event, or preparation for it, takes place in working time and/or involves the use of school resources, it is necessary to seek approval to use such resources and agree the proportion of any fee to be paid to the school for such use.
- 4.8 The payment of fees to teachers acting as examiners is covered by the specific provisions

of the Burgundy Book and the regulations of Examining Bodies.

- 4.9 In addition to financial interests, staff should exercise professional judgment in disclosing to the Headteacher or their line manager, non-financial interests which may conflict with the interests of the school. Such disclosure will depend upon circumstances (eg in making appointments) and may include personal acquaintances, membership of voluntary or other organisations or any official position or public appointment.