



**CODE OF  
CONDUCT FOR  
STAFF  
POLICY AND  
PROCEDURES**

**2018/19**

## CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF POLICY

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### **Responsibility**

**SMT member:      Principal**

### **Aim**

*The Code of Conduct for Staff Policy* aims to provide guidelines for the conduct expected from College staff.

Hereford Sixth Form College seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment where the welfare and health and safety of students and staff is paramount.

Staff should seek to act professionally at all times but we recognise that at times tensions and misunderstandings may occur in the context of interaction between staff and students.

This guidance aims to help staff not only in the safeguarding of students but also with regards to reducing the risk of conduct which could be mistakenly interpreted as improper.

### **Professional behaviour**

Staff must place their work for the College as a priority and must not enter into any other employment without the express permission of the Principal.

Whilst minor gifts or hospitality may be considered as part of the courtesies of working life staff must be cautious about all gifts and hospitality and if you have any doubt about the appropriateness of acceptance you must consult the Principal or Deputy Principal.

Staff should not make statements to the media regarding any aspect of College work without seeking the express authority of the Principal or Deputy Principal.

Staff must always act with integrity and must never act in a dishonest or fraudulent manner.

Declarations should be made of interest (direct or indirect) in contracts, in staff appointments and in the assessment of students.

Other than where reasonable, necessary and lawful for the proper performance of duties staff must not assault another person at or in connection with your work.

## **Relationships and behaviour**

Staff must treat other employees and College users with courtesy and respect.

Staff must not allow themselves to be influenced significantly in the way they carry out their duties by ties of family or friendship or by some other association nor should they expect others to behave in such a way towards them.

Where new members of staff have existing personal or business relationships with students, their parents or staff of the College, staff are advised to be mindful of the need to separate their working and personal lives. Staff must ensure they maintain professionalism and confidentiality at all times. The member of staff should advise their line manager of any relationships they think may cause a conflict of interest or of any concerns that may arise.

Staff should at all times conduct their relationships with students or other staff on a professional basis. Breach of the professional nature of the relationship may be treated as a serious disciplinary offence.

As well as conducting their own relationships with students on a professional basis, staff should not discuss with students the abilities or remuneration of other members of staff, nor should they encourage students in any form of behaviour which would contravene College policy.

All staff have a duty of care to keep students safe and are accountable for the way in which they use their authority and trust. This duty can be best exercised through the development of caring but professional relationships.

Staff should:

- Treat all students with respect and dignity
- Always remember that the welfare of the student is paramount.
- Not discriminate against employees or College users on the grounds of their age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation; this includes sexual or racial harassment and any form of bullying.
- Not swear or use offensive or discriminatory language.
- Never make sexual remarks to a students or discuss their own personal sexual relationships.
- End a discussion with a student or member of staff if it becomes embarrassing or uncomfortable.
- Work in an open and transparent environment and encourage open communication.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Never allow allegations made by a student to go unrecorded or not acted upon by gaining advice from the safeguarding team.
- Not do things of a personal nature that the student can do for themselves.
- When communicating with students staff should only use College mobiles (which can be accessed through the Estates Manager) or

College devices when contacting students i.e. not their personal numbers. College email or official College internet sites may also be used as a means of contacting students.

- Staff should not keep images of students on any personal equipment.
- When setting up a Facebook (or other) page for study purposes staff must agree this with their line manager. Staff must liaise with the College's Esafety Coordinator to set the page up and must ensure that these social media pages are managed appropriately with material which is specifically of relevance to the subject area upon which it is focused. For more information or if you have queries please contact the Esafety Coordinator.

### **Social contact with students**

Staff should never make contact with a student outside of the College for the purpose of friendship. This is particularly important when there is a possibility of the student becoming infatuated with a member of staff. It is recognised that at times there may be occasions when reasonable or accidental contact may be unavoidable. In such circumstances staff should be mindful at all times of their professional relationship with students.

Providing lifts to students as part of a private arrangement is not acceptable without the prior permission of your line manager. Giving lifts should never be a regular occurrence with any student other than family members or their close friends whilst they are present at College.

Staff should refrain from lending money to a student. Students who are in need of money for food or travel should be directed to the Student Support Advisors team which are located in the Pavilion Foyer where an emergency loan can be made.

Staff should also:

- Not accept gifts that may be construed as bribes (end of term gifts are fine).
- Never give out personal contact details, mobile phone numbers or personal email, face book addresses or other social media addresses.
- Never accept friendship or access requests from students on any social media sites.
- Report any suspected infatuation to your line manager.
- Report any situation which you feel may compromise your professional standing to your line manager.
- Not make contact with former students for at least 3 years after they have left the College to protect themselves from any possible allegations of inappropriate relationships.

## **Working one to one with students**

Staff should be aware of the potential risks which may arise when working with students alone.

It is fully recognised that occasions will arise where confidential meetings or interviews must take place between a member of staff and a student:

- If possible leave the door open ajar or use a room with a window in the door.
- Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another member of staff knows that the meeting is taking place.
- Never meet a student away from the College unless express permission and reasons are discussed with your line manager.
- Avoid travelling in a car with one student. Relevant business car insurance is required if travelling with students in a car.

## **Sexual contact**

It is a criminal offence for a person in a position of trust to engage in any sexual activity with a young person under 18 and whom they have a relationship of trust irrespective of the age of consent, even if the basis of their relationship is consensual. Any such behaviour will be treated seriously and must be reported immediately.

## **Physical contact**

It is not necessary to have physical contact with any student, outside your job description even when they are distressed and this should be avoided at all times.

If you have to deal with a challenging student:

- Try to defuse the situation before it escalates.
- Never compromise your own safety.
- If you have to use reasonable physical restraint to prevent a student harming themselves or another report this immediately to your line manager.
- Contact reception in the case of a fight breaking out.

## **Educational visits and college activities**

Staff should take care in less formal situations and remember that they are still in a position of trust and authority whilst managing or taking part in educational visits or other college activities.

The College has a strict 'no alcohol/drugs' policy on all College educational trips. Any member of staff reported to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol whilst on a College trip will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with

the Colleges' Disciplinary Procedures which set out the procedures for dealing with staff misconduct and gross misconduct.

## **Confidentiality**

Since much of the College's work is of a confidential nature you must not disclose any information to anyone who the College may consider has no right to receive it.

Staff should never share information about students in a casual manner or allow student access to information on staff computers or in staff rooms.

Staff should:

- Never give out their personal details or another students personal details to other students.
- Log off or lock their computer whenever leaving it unattended.
- Not allow a student to use your computer unless you have first logged off.
- Use initials or the student number in the subject line of emails to colleagues, not name.
- Only use your college email address when contacting students and not your personal email address.

## **Reporting child protection and safeguarding concerns**

All staff, whether paid or voluntary, have a duty to keep young people safe and to protect them from sexual, physical and emotional harm. Children have a right to be safe and to be treated with respect and dignity. It follows that staff are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and well being of students.

All staff should have a sound understanding of the College's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures and Adults at risk Policy and Procedures. Staff must follow these procedures in order to act upon any safeguarding or child protection concerns which they may have with regards to a student. All members of staff must report any disclosures of abuse made by a student or other safeguarding concerns to the students Director of Studies or the Designated Senior Lead(s) for safeguarding immediately.

## **Whistle blowing**

Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern with regards to the behaviour of a colleague to the attention of the Principal. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

Staff should report any behaviour by colleagues that raises concern

regardless of source through following the guidance set out in the College's Whistle Blowing Policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures which can be accessed on the staff area of the VLE.

The NSPCC whistle blowing helpline is also available for staff to discuss any safeguarding or child protection concerns which they feel are not being addressed by the College internally. Staff can call 08000280285 or email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

### **Overall conduct**

Staff must comply with all reasonable requirements or instructions given to you by your superiors and carry out your duties with care and diligence.

Failure to maintain satisfactory standards of conduct will lead to disciplinary action in accordance with the College's *Disciplinary Procedures* which set out the College's due processes for dealing with misconduct or gross misconduct having regard to all the circumstances of each individual case.

The committing of any act, including a criminal offence, which is incompatible with a staff member's status as an employee of the College, even when not at work, or unconnected with work, is not acceptable and will be dealt with in accordance with the College's *Disciplinary Procedures*.

To clarify, following an employee's initial employment checks upon commencing employment with the College; they are required to disclose to the Principal immediately if they have been convicted or cautioned of any new offences during the period of employment. Additionally they must inform the college of any pending investigation or action from the police or any court that might reasonably be agreed as impacting upon their suitability to undertake their role. Failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action which may place their employment with the College at risk.

Staff must not be on the College premises if they are under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or other substances.

Smoking is not permitted throughout the College buildings and external campus.

### **Attendance**

All staff must ensure that they arrive for duty on time and do not finish or leave until the authorised time.

Employees wishing to leave College during the working day may do so providing that they have informed the Office.

Except for absence for sickness, staff should only be absent from work when that absence is authorised by either the Principal or Deputy Principal on the College Notification of Absence pro-forma.

When employees are to be absent because of sickness they must telephone the College as early as possible on the first day of absence; teachers must either speak to, or leave a message for, a colleague who can give work to classes. Support staff should leave a message for anyone whose work is likely to be affected by their absence. Employees should estimate the probable length of their absence through sickness and ensure that the College is informed if the estimate turns out to be inaccurate.

### **College policies**

All employees are to be aware of the College's *Health and Safety Policy* especially as it relates to them and their areas of work and are to abide by any Code of Practice within that policy.

### **Personal property**

Employees are responsible for the security of any personal property brought to College.

Employees bringing personal electrical property to College are responsible for its conformity to Health and Safety requirements.

### **College property**

Staff must not misuse or damage College property.

College equipment may be available for personal use with the express permission of the Principal.

Private telephone calls are permitted but must be paid for.

### **Related College policies and procedures:**

- *Health and Safety Policy*
- *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures*
- *Adult at Risk Policy and Procedures*
- *Whistle blowing Policy*
- *College staff disciplinary procedures*
- *eSafety Policy for staff*

*Useful website links (double click on link to access document):*

*Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (October 2015)*