



# Staff Code of Conduct

Policy issue date: November 2020

Policy review date: November 2021

## Aims, scope and principles

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect. This Code of Conduct sets out the standards expected and the duty upon staff, volunteers and governors to abide by it.

All staff, the management and volunteers have a duty to keep site users and themselves 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 adults and students. Behaviour by adults also demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgment.

Following this Code of Conduct will help to safeguard staff, the management and volunteers from being maliciously, falsely or mistakenly suspected or accused of professional misconduct in relation to pupils. The Policy incorporates the DfE guidance 2009 and the latest updated guidance from the Safer Recruitment Consortium dated September 2015.

4 Strides Equestrian staff have an influential position in the establishment, and will act as role models for students by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour and underpin 4 Strides Equestrian's RESPECT Charter.

### 4 Strides Equestrian's Respect Charter

**R**ight to feel safe

**E**mpathy for other's feelings

**S**hare thoughts and ideas without judgement

**P**ride in yourself, others and the environment

**E**veryone Included

**C**onsideration for everyone's individual needs

**T**ake time to appreciate others

We expect that all staff will act in accordance with personal and professional behaviours; personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in our staff disciplinary and dismissal policy.

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 4 Strides Equestrian and its students.

## Legislation and guidance

We are required to set out a staff code of conduct under regulation 7 of "The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009" and In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.

## General obligations

Staff set an example to students. They will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language
- Treat pupils and others with dignity and respect
- Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others
- 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
- 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
- Not put the name of 4 Strides Equestrian or another member of staff in disrepute or share personal belief/opinions during a conversation with another member of staff or pupil(s).

## Safeguarding

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, or neglect.

Staff will familiarise themselves with our safeguarding policy and procedures, the Prevent initiative, recognizing signs of child exploitation, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child. All staff must undertake relevant, up to date training to ensure effective execution of their roles and expectations.

## Staff/pupil relationships

Staff will observe proper boundaries with students 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.

If staff members and pupils must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

- This takes place in a public place that others can access
- Others can see in to the room
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

Further information can be found in the [Lone Worker Policy](#) and staff must refer to student's risk assessments where there may be additional risk and requirements for additional staff to be present. Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of hours.

Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and students.

This includes social media profiles.

Students should not have access to personal phone numbers, including any work mobile phone numbers.

While we are aware many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school year, gifts directly from staff to pupils are not acceptable.

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 the establishment manager immediately.

## Communication and social media

Staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils.

Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents via social media, or any other means in order to develop any sort of relationship.

Staff must not make any efforts to find students or parents' social media profiles and must not accept any 'friend requests' on social media. Any requests must be reported to their line manager immediately.

Staff should also not respond to any message via social media from a student or parent.

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at the school.

## Physical contact

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with learners, however, it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role and in relation to the pupil's individual needs and any agreed care plan.

Not all learners feel comfortable about certain types of physical contact; this should be recognized and relevant notes must be made within student's documentation.

Staff should acknowledge that some pupils are more comfortable with touch than others and/or may be more comfortable with touch from some adults than others.

Staff should respond and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and, so far as is possible, use a level of contact and/or form of communication, which is acceptable to the pupil.

Staff should also:

- Be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the pupil, an observer or any person to whom this action is described.
- Never touch a pupil in a way which may be considered indecent.
- Always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny.
- Never indulge in horseplay or fun fights.
- Always allow/encourage pupils, where able, to undertake self-care tasks independently.
- Ensure the way they offer comfort to a distressed students is age appropriate and chest to chest contact is not made.
- Always tell a colleague when and how they offered comfort to a distressed student.
- Establish the preferences of students.
- Consider alternatives, where it is anticipated that a student might misinterpret or be uncomfortable with physical contact.
- Always explain to the student the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take.
- Take extra caution where it is known that a learner has suffered previous abuse or neglect.

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one pupil, in one set of circumstances, may be inappropriate in another, or with a different learner.

It is good practice if all parties clearly understand at the outset, what physical contact is necessary and appropriate in undertaking specific activities. Keeping parents/carers and pupils informed of the extent and nature of any physical contact may also prevent allegations of misconduct or abuse arising.

Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action by them or a colleague could be misinterpreted, or if an action is observed which is possibly abusive the incident and circumstances should be immediately reported to the establishment manager. Where appropriate, the establishment manager should consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

## **Behaviour management**

Corporal punishment and smacking is unlawful in all settings.

Staff should not use any form of degrading or humiliating treatment to punish a learner. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards any student is completely unacceptable.

Where students display difficult or challenging behaviour, adults should follow the establishment's behaviour policy and its sanction procedure using strategies appropriate to the circumstance and situation.

Staff should take extreme care to avoid any practice that could be viewed as unlawful, a breach of the pupil's human rights and/or false imprisonment.

This means that staff should:

- Not use force as a form of punishment.
- Try to defuse situations before they escalate e.g. by distraction.
- Keep parents informed of any sanctions or behaviour management techniques used.
- Be mindful of and sensitive to factors both inside and outside of the school or setting which may impact on a student's behaviour.
- Follow the behaviour policy.
- Behave as a pro-social model.
- Avoid shouting at learners other than as a warning in an emergency/safety situation.
- Refer to national and local policy and guidance regarding Restrictive Physical Intervention

## **The use of control and physical intervention**

A person will not be taken to have used corporal punishment if the action was taken for reasons that include averting an immediate danger of personal injury to, or an immediate danger of death of, any person including the child.

The law and guidance states that adults may *reasonably* intervene to prevent a child from:

- Committing a criminal offence.
- Injuring themselves or others.
- Causing damage to property.

Great care must be exercised in order that adults do not physically intervene in a manner, which could be considered unlawful.

Under no circumstances should physical force be used as a form of punishment. The use of unwarranted or disproportionate physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence.

In all cases where physical intervention has taken place, the incident and subsequent actions should be recorded and reported. The establishment manager should include the students parents during the debriefing.

Similarly, where it can be anticipated that physical intervention is likely to be required, risk assessments must be put in place for this prior to attendance.

## **Sexual conduct**

Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a pupil is unacceptable. It is an offence for a member of staff in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity with a student under 18 years of age and sexual activity with somebody under this age could be a matter for criminal and/or disciplinary procedures.

Students are protected by the same laws as adults in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour. They are additionally protected by specific legal provisions depending on their age and understanding. This includes the prohibition of sexual activity with any persons under the age of 18 by adults, including those adults who are in a position of trust.

This means that staff should:

- Not have any form of sexual contact with a pupil from the Centre or related educational settings.
- Avoid any form of touch or comment, which is, or may be considered to be, indecent.
- Avoid any form of communication with a pupil, which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive, provocative or give rise to speculation e.g. verbal comments, letters, notes, by email or on social media, phone calls, texts, physical contact.
- Not make sexual remarks to or about a pupil.
- Not discuss sexual matters with or in the presence of students, this includes any inappropriate discussion of personal relationships outside of the environment.

## **Home visits**

All work with students and parents will be undertaken in the establishment, negating the need for any home visits.

## **Transporting pupils**

All work with students and parents will be undertaken in the establishment, negating the need for any staff or volunteers to be required or offer to transport students as part of their work. Staff should not offer lifts to pupils unless the need for this has been agreed by the Centre Manager. A designated member of staff should be appointed to plan and provide oversight of all transport arrangements and respond to any concerns that may arise.

If the need arises staff should:

- Agree the purpose for any home visit with the establishment manager.

- A avoid unannounced visits wherever possible.
- Always make detailed records including times of arrival and departure.
- Wherever possible and practicable it is advisable that transport is undertaken with at least one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort.
- It is a legal requirement that all passengers wear seatbelts and the driver should ensure that they do so.
- Staff should ensure that their behaviour is safe and that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements.
- They should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and appropriately insured and that the maximum carrying capacity is not exceeded.

## **First Aid and medication**

All settings should have an adequate number of qualified first-aiders. Parents should be informed when first aid has been administered.

In circumstances where a pupil needs medication regularly, this would usually be recorded in their individual healthcare plan. This provides details of the level and type of support a learner needs to manage effectively their medical condition in school and should include information about the medicine to be administered, the correct dosage and any storage requirements.

Medication of any kind must only be administered with the consent of the parent/carer. Any medication administered must be that of the student and be clearly prescribed with their name labelled on the medication. Where medication is provided a witness must be present to counter sign the administration of the medication.

Staff should only be provided with medication that he been brought in from home with a named label.

## **Photography, videos and other images**

Many educational activities involve recording images. These may be undertaken for displays, publicity, to celebrate achievement and to provide records of evidence of the activity.

Under no circumstances should staff be expected or allowed to use their personal equipment to take images of pupils at or on behalf of the setting.

Specific devices must be available and used to take/record images. Images that are stored should be securely stored and used only by those authorised to do so.

Whilst images are regularly used for very positive purposes adults need to be aware of the potential for these to be taken and/or misused or manipulated for pornographic or 'grooming' purposes.

Particular regard needs to be given when images are taken of young or vulnerable students and whether permission has been given. Staff must not assume that permission has been granted by all parents/carers and the student.

Pupils who have been previously abused in a manner that involved images may feel particularly threatened by the use of photography, filming etc. Staff should remain sensitive to any pupil who appears uncomfortable and should recognise the potential for misinterpretation.

## **Exposure to inappropriate images**

Staff should take extreme care to ensure that learners and young people are not exposed, through any medium, to inappropriate or indecent images.

There are no circumstances that will justify adults: making, downloading, possessing or distributing indecent images or pseudo-images of children (child abuse images). Accessing these images, whether using the settings or personal equipment, on or off the premises, or making, storing or disseminating such material is illegal.

## **Acceptable use of technology**

Staff will not use technology in the establishment to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, using social media, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.

## **Personal living accommodation including on site provision.**

It is not appropriate for 4 Strides staff to be expected or requested to use their private living space for any activity or learning. This includes seeing pupils for e.g. discussion of reports, academic reviews, tutorials, pastoral care or counselling. Managers will ensure that appropriate accommodation for such activities is found elsewhere.

## **Curriculum**

Whilst highly unlikely, it is recognised that the delivery of topics within the curriculum can sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussion about subject matter of a sexually explicit, political or otherwise sensitive nature. Responding to learners questions requires careful judgement and staff should take guidance in these circumstances from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Care should be taken to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the learning outcomes identified by the lesson plan.

## **Sharing concerns and recording incidents**

All staff should be aware of the Centre's safeguarding procedures, including the procedures for dealing with allegations against staff and volunteers. Members of staff should feel able to discuss with their line manager any difficulties or problems that may affect their relationship with or behaviour towards pupils, so that appropriate support can be provided and/or action can be taken.

In the event of an allegation being made, by any person, or incident being witnessed, the relevant information should be immediately reported to the Centre Manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead as appropriate **and** recorded.

In order to safeguard and protect pupils and colleagues, where staff have any concerns about someone who works with children they should immediately report this to the Centre Manager.



## **Confidentiality**

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the establishment, staff, pupils and their parents.

This information will never be:

- Disclosed to anyone without the relevant authority
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

This does not overrule staff's duty to report safeguarding or child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child is at risk of harm.

## **Honesty and integrity**

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, handling money, claiming expenses and using the establishments property and facilities.

Staff will not accept bribes. Gifts must be declared and recorded to your line-manager.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the school about their qualifications and professional experience is correct.

Staff must maintain professional integrity within all areas of their role and should not, in anyway put the name of 4 Strides Equestrian or another member of staff in disrepute or share personal belief's/opinions during a conversation with another member of staff or pupils.

## **Dress code**

Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner. Outfits will not be overly revealing. Clothes will not display any offensive or political slogans.

## **Conduct outside of work**

Staff will not act in a way that would bring 4 Strides Equestrian into disrepute. This covers relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about 4 Strides Equestrian, its partners or stakeholders on social media.

### **Links with other policies**

This policy links with our policies and documentation on:

- Staff Dismissal and Disciplinary Policy, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct.
- Lone Worker Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Data Protection Policy

Approved by

Signed: ..... Name: ..... Date: .....

Director