

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

Lead: HR Officer – in consultation with the SLT
Issued: Jun 2007
Reviewed: September 2025
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Policy Statement

Westonbirt Schools seek to provide a safe and supportive environment, which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for pupils in their care. This policy should clarify what is expected in terms of professional behaviour; it gives clear advice about what constitutes illegal behaviour and what might be considered as misconduct. It also describes safe practice, and which behaviours should be avoided. All members of staff (as defined below) must read this policy before commencing work and must be committed to promoting the safety, welfare and interests of our children. The member of staff is always accountable for their own actions and must take these responsibilities seriously. If a member of staff does not follow this code of conduct this may lead to disciplinary procedures.

There may be times when professional judgements are made in situations not covered by this document, or which directly contravene the guidance given by their employer. It is expected that in these circumstances staff will always advise their senior colleagues of their justification for any such action already taken or proposed.

Purpose and application

Purpose: Relationships with fellow staff, employees, directors, contractors, visitors, volunteers, pupils and their parents or guardians should always be professional and mutually respectful. This Code has been formulated to maintain this balance and to set out clear guidance on the standards of behaviour expected from all Staff at the School. The principles underlying the Code aim to encourage Staff to achieve the highest possible standards of conduct and minimise the risk of inappropriate conduct occurring.

This Code of Conduct is not an exhaustive list of acceptable and unacceptable standards of behaviour. Staff have an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation, both inside and outside working hours and whether they are inside or outside the work setting. This Code of Conduct therefore applies equally when Staff are conducting lessons in person or online, or when it is necessary for them to work offsite or from home.

The School understands the need for a whole school child-centred approach to safeguarding: all systems, processes and policies are designed and operate with the best interests of our pupils at their heart.

This Code has regard to the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the following (collectively referred to in this Code as the Guidance):

- a. Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) which refers to the non-statutory advice for practitioners: What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (March 2015).
- b. Relationship and Sex Education: Statutory guidance relating to Sex and Relationship Education (2021).
- c. Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (August 2018).
- d. Working Together to safeguard children (July 2018) (**WT**):
- e. WT refers to the non-statutory advice: Information sharing (March 2015).
- f. Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales (2021) (**Prevent**). Prevent is supplemented by non-statutory advice and a briefing note:
- g. The Prevent Duty: Departmental advice for schools and childminders (2015).
- h. The use of social media for online radicalisation (July 2015).
- i. Guidance on female genital mutilation, to include:
- j. Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation (July 2020).

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- k. Home Office statutory guidance Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation: procedural information (January 2020).
- l. Guidance published by the Department for Health which provides useful information and support for health professionals which will be taken into account by the School's medical staff.
- m. Teachers' Standards (December 2021):
 - i. Part 1 and Part 2 of the standards apply equally.
- n. National Minimum Standards for Boarding (September 2022).

Therefore, the purpose of the Code is to:

- 1. confirm and reinforce the professional responsibilities of all Staff
- 2. clarify the School's rules and requirements in relation to Staff/ pupil relationships and communication including the use of social media
- 3. set out the expectations of standards and behaviour to be maintained within the School and
- 4. to help adults establish safe practices and reduce the risk of false accusations or improper conduct

Application: The Code of Conduct (**Code**) applies to all Staff working in Westonbirt Schools, whether paid or unpaid, whatever their position, role or responsibilities and "**Staff**" includes employees, casual workers, directors, contractors, temporary and supply staff, pupils and volunteers.

- 1. **Your duty:** It is the duty of every member of Staff to observe the rules and obligations in this Code. The School also has a duty of care to its Staff, parents, guardians or carers, and pupils and the implementation of the practices in this Code will help to discharge that duty.
- 2. **Wrongdoing:** All Staff are required to report their own wrongdoing, or any wrongdoing or proposed wrongdoing of any other member of Staff to the Head. The School operates a Whistleblowing Policy which should be followed where there is perceived wrongdoing.
- 3. **Application with other policies:** The Code should be read in conjunction with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the Whistleblowing Policy.

1. Core principles supporting the implementation of the policy statement

- 1.1 All Staff should put the wellbeing, development and progress of all pupils first by:
 - a. taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils under their supervision;
 - b. being responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions. Staff are role models at all times to the pupils in our care and must be mindful of this;
 - c. working, and be seen to work in an open and transparent way;
 - d. discussing and/or taking advice promptly from their line manager or another senior member of staff over any incident, which may give rise to concern.
 - e. Ensuring that records are made of any such incident and of decisions made/further actions agreed.
 - f. applying the same professional standards in keeping with ALL the School's policies.
 - g. dressing and presenting themselves smartly and professionally at all times.
 - h. knowing the name, role and contact details of their current Designated Safeguarding Lead and their deputies
 - i. being familiar with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
 - j. being aware that they can ask for support, help or guidance from their line-manager or any senior leader in the school.

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- k. being aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines or policies could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them; and
- l. being aware that they are in a position of trust (i.e. the adult is in a position of power or influence over the pupil due to his or her work); that the relationship is not a relationship between equals and that this position must never be used to intimidate, bully, humiliate, coerce or threaten pupils.

1.2 All Staff should demonstrate respect for diversity and take steps to promote equality by:

- a. acting appropriately and in accordance with this Code of Conduct and the *Safer Recruitment Consortium's Guidance for Safer working practice for those working with young people in education settings, February 2022*, towards all pupils, parents, guardians or carers and colleagues;
- b. complying with the School's Equality and Anti-Bullying policies and this Code of Conduct;
- c. addressing issues of discrimination and bullying whenever they arise; and
- d. helping to create a fair and inclusive School environment.

1.3 All Staff should work as part of a unified Staff body by:

- a. developing productive and supportive relationships with colleagues;
- b. acting in a respectful, collaborative, inclusive and fair manner, which includes in person and in communications such as Email, texts and other communications software;
- c. complying with all School policies and procedures;
- d. participating in the School's development and improvement activities;
- e. recognising the role of the School in the life of the local community;
- f. upholding the School's reputation and standing within the local community, building trust and confidence in it and not bringing the School into disrepute in any way. This means you must not make any comments that could damage the School's interests or reputation, or those of its Staff, even indirectly. This obligation extends to your use of social media, on which further details of your obligations are set out below; and
- g. Advising the HR Officer should you be cautioned or convicted of any criminal offence. All disclosures will be managed respectfully and in line with appropriate guidance and the School's policies.

1.4 All Staff should understand that the School has a legal duty to have regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. This is known as the Prevent duty. Schools are required to assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology. Consequently, Staff should be aware of:

- a. what extremism and radicalisation means and why people – including pupils and fellow staff members – may be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism as a consequence of it;
- b. what measures are available to prevent people from becoming drawn into terrorism and how to challenge the extremist ideology that can be associated with it; and
- c. how to obtain support for people who may be being exploited by radicalising influences.

1.5 All Staff must speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM) and involve children's social care as appropriate. Teachers

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must report to the police cases where they discover that an act of female genital mutilation appears to have been carried out or is about to be carried out. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining pupils.

- 1.6 Staff should take responsibility for maintaining the quality of the educational services provided by the School by:
- a. meeting the professional standards and expectations of their role and position within the School (including the Teaching Standards for teachers);
 - b. reflecting on their current practice and seeking out opportunities to develop knowledge, understanding and skills;
 - c. helping pupils to become confident and successful learners; and
 - d. establishing productive relationships with parents, guardians or carers by:
 - e. providing accessible and accurate information about their child's progress as directed by the School;
 - f. involving them in important decisions about their child's education; and
 - g. complying with this Code.
- 1.7 Staff should maintain public trust and confidence in the School by:
- a. demonstrating honesty and integrity;
 - b. understanding and demonstrating fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs;
 - c. understanding and upholding their duty to safeguard the welfare of children and young people;
 - d. maintaining good standards of behaviour whether inside or outside of normal School hours and whether on or off the School's site; and
 - e. maintaining an effective learning environment.

2. Safe Working Practices and Procedures

All staff, contractors and volunteers are required to read and acknowledge the Safeguarding Policy and the Code of Conduct. All other schools' policies must be read in order for the member of staff to familiarise themselves with Westonbirt Schools procedures. This constitutes a key part of the employees' induction process. These policies can all be found on the share point. This code of conduct guidance has been produced to help all staff establish the safest possible learning and working environments. The aims are to safeguard young people and reduce the risk of staff being falsely accused of improper or unprofessional conduct. This means that these guidelines apply to all staff working in education settings whatever their position, roles, or responsibilities.

Duty of Care. All staff, volunteers and contractors are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority; manage risk; use resources; and protect pupils from discrimination and avoidable harm. All staff, whether paid, contracted, or voluntary, have a duty to keep young people 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 staff and pupils and behaviour by staff that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement. There are legitimate elevated expectations about the nature of the professional involvement of staff in the lives of pupils. When individuals accept a role that involves working with children and young people, they need to understand and acknowledge the responsibilities and trust inherent in that role. Employers have a duty of care towards their employees which requires

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them to provide a safe working environment for staff and guidance about safe working practices. This means that staff should:

- a. understand the responsibilities, which are part of their employment or role, and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached
- b. always act, and be seen to act, in the child's best interests
- c. avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions
- d. take responsibility for their own behaviour and be accountable for their own actions.
- e. Complete the twice daily attendance registers and all other relevant registers of children on the premises, if it is within the remit of their position to do so. This is a legal responsibility and failure to do so could lead to a disciplinary.

Exercise of Professional Judgement. There will be occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or take action in the best interests of the pupils which could contravene this guidance or where no guidance exists. Individuals are expected to make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the children in their charge and in so doing, will be seen to be acting reasonably. This means that where no specific guidance can be found staff should discuss the circumstances that informed their action, or their proposed action, with a senior colleague. This will help to ensure that the safest practices are employed and reduce the risk of actions being misinterpreted.

Power and Positions of Trust. All adults working with pupils in education settings are in positions of trust in relation to the young people in their care. A relationship between a member of staff and a pupil cannot be a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people; staff have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification. Staff should always maintain appropriate professionalism and wherever possible, they should avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others, and report and record any incident with this potential. Where a person aged 18 or over is in a position of trust with a child under 18, it is an offence for that person to engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of that child, or to cause or incite that child to engage in or watch sexual activity. Where a person aged 18 or over is in a position of trust established with a person who has only recently left the school, any attempt to engage in sexual activity with that person will be a cause for concern and will be treated as a breach of trust established in that prior relationship. This means that staff should not:

- a. use their position to gain access to information for their own advantage and/or a pupil's or family's detriment
- b. use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine pupils
- c. use their status and standing to form or promote a relationship with a pupil, which is of a sexual nature
- d. attempt to initiate a relationship with a recent ex-pupil, which is of a sexual nature

Confidentiality. Members of staff may have access to confidential information about pupils in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities. In some circumstances staff may be given additional highly sensitive or private information. They should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil or their family for their own, or others' advantage. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the pupil. Confidential information about pupils should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need to know basis. In circumstances where the pupil's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously. There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a pupil, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a duty to pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated safeguarding responsibilities. If a member of staff is in

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any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from a senior member of staff. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the Head. Adults need to be aware that although it is important to listen to and support pupils, they must not promise confidentiality or request pupils to do the same under any circumstances. Additionally, concerns and allegations about adults should be treated as confidential and passed to the Head without delay.

Propriety and Behaviour. All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of pupils. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their peers, pupils and the public in general. Staff must be aware that their behaviour in their personal lives may impact upon their work with pupils and public. This means that staff should not:

- a. behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with pupils or act as a role model
- b. drink alcohol with current pupils unless in small quantities with over age pupils for celebration events, nor purchase alcohol for pupils. There may be exceptional circumstances where a member of staff may be personal friends with a parent which mean that normal social life will bring the pupil into social contact with a member of staff. Discretion and professional behaviour should apply in these situations
- c. compromise their position within the work setting so it is important to exercise due care and attention when outside of the school environment. Membership of organisations whose goals are in conflict with the values and equality policies of the school is not acceptable
- d. drink alcohol when supervising pupils or on school trips. This applies even when there are no pupils present, as the member of staff may be called to act if an emergency occurs
- e. make inappropriate remarks to a pupil (including through social media, email, text messages, phone or letter etc)
- f. discuss their own sexual relationships with or in the presence of pupils
- g. discuss a pupil's sexual relationships in inappropriate settings or contexts
- h. form relationships with children or young people who are pupils or pupils at another school will be a criminal offence if they are under 16 but may also be a criminal offence if under the age of 18 and will be regarded as gross misconduct. Such behaviour tends to bring the School into disrepute and gives rise to concern that the Staff involved cannot be trusted to maintain professional boundaries with pupils and pupils at the School. Whilst not necessarily a criminal offence, the School considers it unacceptable for Staff to form inappropriate relationships with a pupil of any school, irrespective of their age.
- i. make (or encourage others to make) unprofessional personal comments in any form of communication (e-mail, conversations or social networking comments)
- j. enter the boarding houses without permission or good reason unless it constitutes an integral part of their role.

Infatuations. Staff need to be aware that it is not uncommon for pupils to be strongly attracted to a member of staff and/or develop an infatuation. Staff should be aware that such circumstances always carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against staff. A member of staff who becomes aware that a pupil may be infatuated with themselves or a colleague should discuss this at the earliest opportunity with a senior colleague so that appropriate action can be taken. In this way, steps can be taken to avoid hurt and distress for all concerned. This means that staff should:

- a. report to the Head and DSL any indications (verbal, written or physical) that suggest a pupil may be infatuated with a member of staff
- b. be mindful if they are alone in a room with a pupil. Leave the door open if it is possible to do so

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- c. not invite a pupil into, the home of an adult who works with them, unless the reason for this has been firmly established and agreed with parents and senior leaders or the home has been designated by the School
- d. be vigilant in maintaining their privacy and mindful of the need to avoid placing themselves in vulnerable situations
- e. be mindful of the need to maintain professional boundaries

Communication with pupils (including the use of technology). Communication between pupils and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, webcams, websites, social networking sites, online gaming and blogs. Adults should not share any personal information with a pupil. They should not request, or respond to, any personal information from the pupil, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. Adults should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny. Adults should also be circumspect in their communications with pupils to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming. They should not give their personal contact details to pupils including e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers, unless the need to do so is agreed with senior leadership and parents. E-mail or text communications between an adult and a pupil outside agreed protocols may lead to disciplinary and/or criminal investigations. This also includes communications through internet-based web sites, such as social networking, instant messaging or gaming. Communication with ex-pupils who are over 18 is left to staff discretion. Please be conscious of the fact that ex-pupils may be in contact with current pupils. Be aware that actions that bring the school into disrepute will be investigated and can lead to dismissal. This means that staff should:

- a. only give their personal contact details to pupils, including their mobile telephone number, for professional reasons and with the knowledge of their line manager
- b. communicate with pupils in an appropriate and professional manner, making sure that parents have given permission for this form of communication to be used
- c. only make contact with pupils for professional reasons
- d. any communication with pupils, whether electronic or on paper should include a professional salutation and sign-off
- e. not use internet or web-based communication channels to send personal messages to a pupil
- f. not to have images of pupils stored on personal cameras, devices or home computers
- g. not make images of pupils available on the internet, other than through the school network/website, without permission from parents and senior teachers
- h. be cautious in their contact with ex-pupils, as there is still a professional relationship and there may be contact with current pupils. Any deviation from this could lead to disciplinary measures.

Behaviour Management. All pupils have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Staff should not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a pupil. The use of humour can help to defuse a situation. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards pupils is not acceptable in any situation. This means that staff should:

- a. not use force as a form of punishment
- b. try to defuse situations before they escalate
- c. keep parents or a relevant member of staff informed of any sanctions or incidents of concern
- d. adhere to Westonbirt Schools' Behaviour Policy

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Westonbirt Schools Pastoral Care and First Aid policies give detailed guidance for each of these aspects and must be referred to for specific guidance. However, for the purposes of the Code of Conduct the following information details the expectations of staff:

Care, Control and Physical Intervention.

Physical restraint: All forms of corporal punishment are unlawful and the use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence. The use of physical intervention should be avoided if possible. However, by law, Staff who are authorised by the Head to have control or charge of pupils, may use such force or physical contact as is reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do any of the following:

- a. committing a criminal offence
- b. injuring themselves or others
- c. causing damage to property, including their own
- d. engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to good order and discipline at the School or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom or elsewhere

Application of physical restraint policy: This applies when a teacher, or other authorised person, is on School premises and when he or she is in control or charge of the pupil elsewhere, for example on a field trip or other authorised out of school activity. It only applies where no other form of control is available and where it is necessary to intervene.

Before intervening: Before intervening physically you should, wherever practicable, tell the pupil to stop and what will happen if he or she does not. You should continue attempting to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident and should make it clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary. You should always avoid touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent. You should also avoid any form of aggressive contact such as holding, pushing, pulling or hitting which could amount to a criminal assault, nor act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury.

Inform senior Staff: You should inform the Deputy Head/ Head immediately following an incident where force has been used. This is to help prevent any misunderstanding or misrepresentation of the incident, and it will be helpful in the event of a complaint. You should provide a written report as soon as possible afterwards. This should include written and signed accounts of those involved, including the pupil. The parents, guardians or carers of the pupil should be informed about serious incidents involving the use of force. The Head will advise when parents should be contacted.

Action taken in self-defence or in an emergency: The law allows anyone to defend themselves against an attack provided they do not use more force than is necessary. Similarly, where a pupil is at risk of immediate injury or on the point of inflicting injury on someone else, any member of Staff (whether authorised or not) would be entitled to intervene.

Using reasonable force: There is no legal definition of "reasonable force". It will always depend on the circumstances. Note that:

- a. any use of force should be proportionate to the behaviour of the pupil involved and the seriousness of the harm prevented;
- b. physical force could not be justified to prevent a pupil from committing a trivial misdemeanour;
- c. any force should always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result; and

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- d. whether it is reasonable to use force and the degree of force that could be reasonably employed might also depend on the age, understanding and sex of the pupil.

Physical contact in other circumstances

When physical contact may be appropriate: Physical contact with a pupil may be necessary and beneficial in order to demonstrate a required action, or a correct technique in, for example, singing and other music lessons or during PE, sports and games. Any physical contact should be in response to the pupil's needs, of limited duration and appropriate to the pupil's age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Physical contact can be easily misinterpreted and should be limited. Staff should use professional judgement.

Guidance on using physical contact: You should observe the following guidelines (where applicable):

- a. explain the intended action to the pupil;
- b. do not proceed with the action if the pupil appears to be apprehensive or reluctant, or if you have other concerns about the pupil's likely reaction;
- c. ensure that the door is open and if you are in any doubt, ask a colleague or another pupil to be present during the demonstration; and
- d. consider alternatives if it appears likely that the pupil might misinterpret the contact.

Report concerns: If you are at all concerned about any instance of physical contact, inform the Deputy Head/ Head without delay, and make a written record and on the pupil's file if necessary.

Offering comfort to distressed pupils: Touching may be appropriate where a pupil is in distress and needs comforting. You should use your own professional judgement when you feel a pupil needs this kind of support and should be aware of any special circumstances relating to the pupil. For example, a child who has been abused may find physical contact particularly difficult. You should always notify the Deputy Head/Head when comfort has been offered in an 'unusual' situation that is out of the ordinary, record the action and should seek guidance if unsure whether it would be appropriate in a particular case. Ultimately, Staff should avoid all but the most necessary contact with pupils.

First Aid and Administration of Medication. The School has an administration of medication policy, which must be adhered to at all times. When administering first aid you should explain to the child what is happening and ensure that another adult is present or is aware of the action being taken. The treatment must meet the School's Health and Safety Manual and First Aid Policy, and parents, guardians or carers should be informed. Staff should:

- a. adhere to the School's policy on administering first aid/medication;
- b. comply with the necessary reporting requirements;
- c. make other adults aware of the task that is being undertaken;
- d. explain what is happening;
- e. report and record the administration of first aid;
- f. have regard to any health plans; and
- g. ensure that an appropriate health/risk assessment is undertaken prior to undertaking certain activities.

Staff are reminded that if they are taking prescribed or over-the-counter medication which needs to be on the school site it is their responsibility to ensure that it is kept securely out of reach of children or preferably in a locked medicine cupboard or in the Health and Well Being Centre. It must be clearly

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labelled with the staff member's name. In the case of controlled drugs, the Health and Well Being centre will ensure that they are securely contained in the locked medicine cabinet.

Pupils' entitlement to privacy including intimate care. Children are entitled to privacy when changing or showering. However there still must be an appropriate level of supervision to ensure safety. Staff should:

- a. avoid physical contact or visually intrusive behaviour when children are undressed;
- b. announce yourself when entering changing rooms/ bathrooms and avoid remaining unless required;
- c. announce yourself when entering a boarding pupil's room;
- d. not shower or change in the same place as children; and
- e. not assist with any personal care task which a pupil can undertake themselves.

All children have a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of an intimate nature is required (for example assisting with toileting or removing wet/soiled clothing). A care plan should be drawn up and agreed with parents for all children who require intimate care on a regular basis. Children should be encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their own personal care as is practicable. When assistance is required, staff should ensure that another appropriate adult is in the vicinity and is aware of the task to be undertaken. This means that staff should:

- a. make other staff aware of the task being undertaken
- b. explain to the child what is happening
- c. consult with colleagues where any variation from agreed procedure/care plan is necessary
- d. record the justification for any variations to the agreed procedure/care plan and share this information with parents.

Children with special educational needs or disabilities: Some children may need more physical contact to assist their everyday learning, which should be agreed and understood by all concerned, justified, openly applied and open to scrutiny. The Designated Safeguarding Lead and School SENCO will establish whether any reasonable adjustments are required for such pupils.

Where a child has been abused: Where a child has previously been abused, Staff should be informed on a 'need to know' basis and should be extra cautious when considering the necessity of physical contact. Some children may seek inappropriate physical contact. Staff should sensitively deter the pupil and help them understand the importance of personal boundaries. Such incidents should be reported and discussed with the Deputy Head/Head and parents, guardians or carers where appropriate. You should never view any part of the pupil's body normally covered by clothing.

Code of conduct for contact outside School

Contact outside School: You should avoid unnecessary contact with pupils outside School. You should:

- a. not give pupils your home address, home phone number, mobile phone number or email address;
- b. not send personal communications (such as birthday cards or faith cards, text messages etc) to children unless agreed with the Head or Deputy;
- c. not make arrangements to meet pupils, individually or in groups (whether in person or online), outside School other than on school trips authorised by the Head;
- d. not contact pupils at home unless this is strictly necessary, and you should keep a record of any such occasion;
- e. not give private tuition to current pupils of, or applicants to, the School;
- f. not give a pupil a lift in your own vehicle other than on School business and with permission from the Head;

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- g. not invite pupils (groups or individuals) to your home unless there is a good reason, and it has been approved by the Head. This prohibition also applies if you have on site accommodation;
- h. report and record any situation which may place a child at risk or which may compromise the School's or your professional standing;
- i. ensure that pupils do not see anything in your home that may cause embarrassment or that might become the subject of inappropriate gossip or rumour; and
- j. never engage in secretive social contact with pupils or their parents, guardians or carers.

Social contact: You should be aware that where you meet children or parents, guardians or carers socially, such contact could be misinterpreted as inappropriate, abuse of a position of trust or grooming. Any social contact that could give rise to concern should be reported to the Deputy Head/ Head. Where Staff have access to confidential information about pupils or parents or carers, Staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil. This includes informal discussions in social environments.

Friendships with parents, guardians or carers and pupils: Members of Staff who are friends with parents, guardians or carers of students or who, for example, are voluntary workers in youth organisations attended by pupils, will of course have contact with those students outside School. However, members of Staff should still respect the above advice wherever possible and should always keep the Head informed of such relationships, and should consult the Head for advice if they are ever in doubt about the appropriateness of any such contact.

Friendships of staff children with pupils of the School: where a member of staff's children are friends with pupils of the School, there may be occasions when pupils come to a Staff member's house. Staff should take care to ensure that other colleagues are aware of this and to liaise as appropriately with other parents. Where pupils are staying over, staff should adopt the approach as set out for boarding staff above. A senior colleague should always be informed when this happens. If in doubt, seek advice from the Deputy Head or DSL about how best to proceed.

Staff who have children who attend the School: It is acknowledged that some Staff also have children who attend the School. It is recognised that in these cases the staff fulfil a dual role of parent and employee. Parents as employees should ensure that they uphold boundaries between the two roles and that their behaviour may not be perceived as constituting a conflict of interest and that it does not impact on the reputation of the School. For example, they must maintain the same level of confidentiality despite social expectations. Parent-staff should discuss any potential inter-role conflict or other concerns with the Head or Deputy Head.

There may be occasions when pupils of the School attend the house of a member of Staff by virtue of the fact that those students are friends with the children of that member of Staff's children. Where this occurs, Staff should follow the rules set out about for "Friendships of Staff children with pupils of the School".

The School acknowledges that Staff who are also parents may wish to make contact with other parents, over social media. Staff must exercise caution and professional judgement in these circumstances and should not have any contact with pupils' family members via social media if that contact may constitute a conflict of interest or call into question their professionalism or if this may be damaging to the reputation of the School. If the member of staff is unclear on any issue, they should discuss this with the Head or Deputy Head.

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Scope of application of Code on contact outside School: The same guidelines should be applied to after school clubs, school trips, and especially trips that involve an overnight stay away from the School. There are separate, more detailed guidelines for school trips in the Educational Visits Policy. The principles of this guidance also apply to contact with children or young people who are pupils at another school.

Sexual Contact with Pupils. Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a pupil is both inappropriate and illegal. Pupils are protected by the same laws as adults in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour. They are additionally protected by specific legal provisions regardless of whether the child or young person consents or not. This includes the prohibition on adults in a position of trust. The sexual activity referred to does not just involve physical contact including penetrative and non-penetrative acts. It may also include non-contact activities, such as causing children to engage in or watch sexual activity. This means that staff should:

- a. not pursue sexual relationships with children and young people either in or out of school
- b. avoid any form of communication with a child or young person which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative i.e. verbal comments, letters, notes, electronic mail, phone calls, texts, physical contact.

Grooming. There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' where the sole purpose is to gain the trust of a child and manipulate that relationship so sexual abuse can take place. Staff should be aware that conferring special attention and favour upon a child might be construed as being part of a 'grooming' process, which is an offence.

Curriculum. Many areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit, or of an otherwise sensitive nature. Care should be taken to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the learning outcomes identified by the lesson plan. This plan should highlight particular areas of risk and sensitivity. The curriculum can sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussion about subject matter of a sexually explicit or otherwise sensitive nature. Responding to pupils' questions can require careful judgement and staff may wish to take guidance in these circumstances from a senior member of staff. Care should also be taken to abide by the policy on sex and relationships education and the wishes of parents. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of any sex education provided (but not from the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction necessary under the science curriculum). This means that staff should:

- a. have clear written lesson plans
- b. not enter into or encourage inappropriate or offensive discussion about sexual activity

Photography, Videos and other Creative Arts. Many school activities involve recording images. These may be undertaken as part of the curriculum, out of school activities, for publicity, or to celebrate achievement. Staff need to be aware of the potential for these aspects of teaching to be misused for pornographic or 'grooming' purposes. Careful consideration should be given as to how these activities are organised and undertaken. This means that staff should:

- a. be clear about the purpose of the activity and about what will happen to the photographs when the lesson/activity is concluded
- b. ensure that a senior member of staff is aware that the photography/image equipment is being used and for what purpose
- c. ensure that all images are available for scrutiny in order to screen for acceptability
- d. be able to justify images of children

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Using images of children for the school's publicity purposes has already had the consent of parents through the Parent Agreement. Images should not be displayed on other websites, in publications or in a public place without additional consent. This means that staff should not:

- a. have images of pupils stored on personal cameras, devices or home computers (in accordance with the Use of Technology and Social Media Policy)
- b. make images of pupils available on the internet, other than through the school network/website with permission from parents and senior teachers

Meeting with pupils

One to One Situations: Staff working in one-to-one situations with children and young people are more vulnerable to allegations. Teachers and others should recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure the safety and security needs of both staff and pupils are met. Pre-arranged meetings with pupils away from the school premises should not be permitted unless approval is obtained from their parent and the Head or other senior colleague with delegated authority. This means that staff should:

- a. avoid meetings with pupils in remote, secluded areas of the school
- b. ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in one-to-one situations
- c. inform other staff of the meeting beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by
- d. avoid use of 'engaged' or equivalent signs wherever possible. Such signs may create an opportunity for secrecy or the interpretation of secrecy
- e. always report any situation where a pupil becomes distressed or angry to a senior colleague
- f. consider the needs and circumstances of the pupil/children pupils involved
- g. avoid sitting or standing in close proximity to the pupil, except as necessary to check work;
- h. avoid idle discussion;
- i. avoid all unnecessary physical contact and apologise straight away if there is accidental physical contact;
- j. report any incident that causes you concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead under the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and make a written record (signed and dated);
- k. where it is necessary to conduct a one to one session online (for example, using a platform such as Zoom or Teams) Staff must ensure that a senior member of Staff is aware of the session and, wherever possible, arrange for a parent to be in the same room, or alternatively, ask a colleague or a member of SLT to join the session.

Pre-arranged meetings: pre-arranged meetings with pupils outside School should not be permitted unless approval is obtained from their parents, guardians or carers and the Deputy Head/ Head. If you are holding such a meeting, you should inform colleagues before the meeting.

In boarding spaces: all Staff should be aware of relationships within the boarding environment, which can be different from those in a day context. Staff should:

- a. be respectful of boarders' space and privacy;
- b. knock before entering the bedroom, giving time for a pupil to respond before entering (unless there is a fear of risk or immediate danger to the pupil);
- c. not spend too much time in a pupil's room - any lengthy conversations or social time, playing board games etc. should be done in the duty room or the social spaces of the house. Always keep

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- the door open when going into a single occupancy room and do the same if alone with a boarder in a multiple occupancy room;
- d. be aware of times when boarders may be in a state of undress and afford them the privacy they deserve;
- e. announce yourself when entering changing rooms/ bathrooms and avoid remaining unless required. Be mindful, in a shower a pupil may not hear you enter; and
- f. be especially careful of times when, as a boarding member of Staff, you may be in a one-to-one position with a pupil.

The use of personal living space: pupils should not be in or invited into the personal living space of any member of Staff, unless agreed with the parents, guardians and carers and the Deputy Head/Head. Pupils should not be asked to assist with chores or tasks in the personal living space. Personal living spaces should not be used as an additional resource for the School.

Transporting Pupils: In certain situations, for example out of school activities, staff or volunteers may agree to transport pupils. A designated member of staff should be appointed to plan and provide oversight of all transporting arrangements and respond to any difficulties that may arise. Wherever possible and practicable it is advisable that transport is undertaken other than in private vehicles, with at least one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort. When using a private vehicle on approved school business, drivers are covered through the school's insurance policy. This means that staff should:

- a. ensure that you are fit to drive and free from any substances that may impair your judgement or ability to drive;
- b. be aware that until the pupil is passed over to a parent/carer, you have responsibility for that student's health and safety;
- c. record and be able to justify impromptu or emergency lifts and notify the Head;
- d. ensure that there are proper arrangements in place to ensure vehicle, passenger and driver safety, including appropriate insurance, seat belts, adherence to maximum capacity guidelines etc;
- e. plan and agree arrangements with all parties in advance, responding sensitively and flexibly to disagreements
- f. ensure that they are alone with a pupil for the minimum time possible
- g. ensure that their behaviour and all arrangements ensure vehicle, passenger and driver safety
- h. take into account any specific needs that the pupil may have

Educational visits and extra-curricular activities. Staff should take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere of a residential setting or after-school activity. During school activities that take place off the school site or out of school hours, a more relaxed discipline or informal dress and language code may be acceptable. However, staff remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour cannot be interpreted as seeking to establish an inappropriate relationship or friendship. Where out of school activities include overnight stays, careful consideration needs to be given to sleeping arrangements. Pupils, staff and parents should be informed of these prior to the start of the trip. Health and Safety arrangements require members of staff to keep colleagues/employers aware of their whereabouts, especially when involved in an out of school activity. This means that staff should:

- a. always have another adult present in out of school activities, unless otherwise agreed with senior staff in the school
- b. undertake risk assessments as appropriate
- c. have parental consent to the activity
- d. ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times

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- e. never share bedrooms unless in a dormitory situation and arrangements have been discussed and agreed previously with the Head and, where appropriate, parents, guardians or carers and pupils.

Whistleblowing. Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. Please refer to the school Whistle Blowing Policy for further information. Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior leadership and/or relevant external agencies. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

Dress and Appearance

Staff should consider the manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role. We require pupils to be smart in their uniform. Smart and professional appearance is always expected for staff. Staff should ensure they are dressed safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake. Those who dress or appear in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate (which might include tattoos or piercings or contentious or political slogans on clothing or badges) may receive further guidance from their line-manager. This means that staff should ensure their appearance and clothing:

- a. promotes a positive and professional image
- b. is appropriate to their role
- c. is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative
- d. does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding and allow themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegation
- e. Jewellery should be discreet

Behaviour and Language

Staff will use appropriate language at all times; swearing and any form of offensive language is not permitted unless in the context of a learning situation. Discriminatory language is not tolerated from staff at any point and must be dealt with by staff if witnessed between pupils. Staff should:

- a. avoid words or expressions that have any unnecessary sexual content or innuendo;
- b. avoid displays of affection either personally or in writing (e.g. messages in birthday cards, text messages, emails etc);
- c. avoid any form of aggressive or threatening words;
- d. avoid any words or actions that are over-familiar;
- e. not swear, blaspheme or use any sort of offensive language in front of pupils;
- f. avoid the use of sarcasm, discriminatory, or derogatory words when punishing or disciplining pupils and avoid making unprofessional personal comments about anyone. Any sanctions should be in accordance with the School's behaviour and discipline policies.

Be aware that some parts of the curriculum may raise sexually explicit subject matters. Care should be taken in subjects where rules/boundaries are relaxed (e.g. drama or art). Staff should have clear lesson plans and should take care to avoid overstepping personal and professional boundaries.

Attendance and Timekeeping

Punctuality and good records of attendance are extremely important at both schools. Should you need to be absent or expect to be late for any reason, you should make a request in advance to Emily Leggate

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(WPS), The Head (WBS) or relevant Line Manager for Support Staff. If this is not possible, please contact the Head or your Line Manager at the earliest opportunity.

Gifts

Staff should be aware of the school's policy regarding arrangements for the declaration of gifts received and given. Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. There are occasions when pupils or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff, for example at Christmas or as a thank-you, and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value. Any member of staff concerned about whether they or their colleagues may be at risk of giving or receiving a bribe (financial or otherwise) should contact the Finance Director. Any member of staff receiving gifts or entertainment that is out of the ordinary, or they or their colleagues feel is excessive must report this to the Head. It is acceptable for staff to offer prizes of small value in certain tasks or competitions and for celebratory occasions.

Confidentiality

Any school information/records including details of pupils, parents, and employees whether actual, potential or past, other than those contained in authorised and publicly available documents, must be kept confidential unless the school's prior written consent has been obtained. This requirement exists both during and after your employment. In particular, you must not use such information for the benefit of any future employer.

Illegal and Illicit Drugs, Legal Highs, Alcohol, Smoking (including e-cigarettes) and Guns

The use of illegal drugs or legal highs is not permitted. Dealing in drugs, or providing alcohol to pupils is also strictly forbidden. Both these offences will be treated as gross misconduct. It is unacceptable to be under the influence of illegal drugs when at work, or in the vicinity of pupils.

Consumption of alcohol is not permitted on site save where at a school function or otherwise agreed when modest amounts of alcohol may be consumed. Employees conduct and performance must not be adversely impacted by alcohol when undertaking their duties. Staff who reside on site may consume modest quantities of alcohol in private accommodation when they are not on duty.

Smoking, including e-cigarettes, is forbidden anywhere on the schools' campus (neither in the buildings nor the grounds and including on school trips) other than staff accommodation off the campus; this is in order to promote a healthy and pleasant working environment, to minimise the fire risk, and to comply with the Government's smoke-free legislation. Smoking anywhere on the premises will be subject to disciplinary procedures and any employee discovered smoking in an area where there is a particular fire risk will be liable to dismissal without notice.

The possession and/or use of guns on the Westonbirt campus is forbidden unless by written consent by the Head for the use of pest control purposes and only when the site is not being used by people. Failure to adhere to this policy will be liable to dismissal without notice. Hunting or shooting over Westonbirt School grounds is strictly forbidden without the express permission in writing (by name, date, time and defined location) to be taken from the Head. No such permission will be granted unless, and until, the staff member

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seeking permission provides evidence of all necessary and valid licences. No permission whatsoever will be granted during term time.

Staff are expected to support the behavioural policies for pupils in line with drugs, alcohol, smoking and firearms.

Flexibility:

Due to the demands and nature of the school, employees should be prepared to transfer upon request within different subject areas/key stages/departments either temporarily or permanently, to undertake work of a different nature, providing it is reasonable and safe to do so and the employee is adequately trained.

Communication:

Effective communication between all members of the School community is vital. All communication between Staff, pupils and parents should take place within clear, explicit and professional boundaries. This includes both in person communication and online, via Email text or other communication software.

Communicating with pupils: All communication with children should conform to School policy and be limited to professional matters. Staff should carefully consider the way they communicate with pupils at all times so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives or behaviours. Except in an emergency communication should only be made using School devices.

Application: These rules apply to any form of communication including mobile phones, web-cameras, social networking websites and blogs.

Personal details: Staff should not give their personal contact details to pupils, including email addresses, home or mobile telephone numbers, nor should they communicate with them by social media, text message or personal email. If they need to speak to a student by telephone, they should use one of the School's telephones and email using the School system. Any communication on video call platforms, such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom must be for professional reasons only and should accord with the rules of this Code of Conduct at all times.

Communicating on trips and visits: The group leader on all trips and visits involving an overnight stay should either take a School-issued mobile phone with them or utilise a 3CX school phone number and may ask the pupils for their mobile numbers before allowing them out in small, unsupervised groups. The School-issued mobile should be used for any contact with pupils that may be necessary. The group leader will delete from the School-issued mobile any record of pupils' mobile phone numbers at the end of the trip or visit and should ensure that pupils delete any phone numbers that they may have acquired during the trip for the School-issued mobiles being used by Staff. Staff must never use their personal devices to contact pupils.

Communicating outside the agreed protocols: Communications between an adult and a pupil outside agreed protocols may lead to a report to external agencies in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, disciplinary action and/or criminal investigations. This also includes communications through internet- based websites.

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Communication with Parents: Form tutors are expected to be the first point of contact between parents and the School, although enquiries will also come through the School Office. Staff can contact parents by telephone, email or letter. Staff should not contact pupils, parents or conduct any School business using personal email addresses. Where a member of Staff receives an email from a parent, a reply should normally be made within one working day. If a full reply cannot be made within that time, the member of Staff should send a brief acknowledgment e-mail and let the parent know when a fuller reply can be expected. Staff must inform their line manager if they receive an offensive email or communication.

Use of Internet and E-mails

The policy regarding the use of the internet and e-mails relates to all internet and electronic mail facilities, multi-user computers, workstations, micro-computers and any networks connecting them provided by the School. It also covers all hardware owned, leased, rented or otherwise provided by a member of staff and connected to or otherwise accessing School networks or other facilities.

Hardware owned, leased, rented or otherwise provided by staff may be directly connected to the school intranet only by arrangement with, and with the explicit approval of, the Group Head of IT Services, or in their absence the Head.

The school computer system (intranet) must be used primarily in connection with your duties for which the School employs you. In addition, some limited use of e-mail and internet facilities for personal purposes is permitted. The School acknowledges that personal use may occur from time to time. Any such use must be in accordance with this policy and must not disrupt staff duties. Abuse or excessive use of the e-mail and/or internet will be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure.

You must not interfere with the work of others or the system itself. The facilities must be used in a responsible manner. In particular, staff are expected not to create, transmit or cause to be transmitted material that is:

- a. designed to, or likely to, cause annoyance, inconvenience, needless anxiety or offence
- b. obscene or indecent
- c. defamatory material
- d. likely to infringe the copyright of another person is infringed

In addition, staff are expected to not:

- a. download any files unless virus scanned
- b. use networked computing equipment for playing computer games
- c. gain deliberate unauthorised access to facilities or services accessible via local or national networks
- d. transmit by e-mail any confidential information of the School otherwise than in the normal course of your duties
- e. send any message internally or externally which is abusive, humiliating, hostile or intimidating;
- f. join any mailing groups or lists without the consent of the School
- g. gain unauthorised access to or violate the privacy of other people's files, corrupt or destroy other people's data or disrupt the work of other people
- h. disclose passwords to third parties without the consent of the School

In using the school computer systems and network. This means that staff are expected to:

- a. observe this policy at all times and note the disciplinary consequences of non-compliance which in the case of a gross breach or repeated breach of the policy, may lead to dismissal

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- b. ensure that you use the School standard e-mail sign off and disclaimer for all external e-mail
- c. produce and write e-mails with the care normally given to any form of written communication
- d. appreciate that electronic mail is relatively insecure and consider security needs and confidentiality before transmission

The School reserves the right to monitor staff communications in order to:

- a. establish the existence of facts
- b. ascertain compliance with regulatory or self-regulatory procedures
- c. monitor standards which are achieved by persons using the system in the course of their duties and for staff training purposes
- d. prevent or detect crime
- e. investigate or detect unauthorised use of the school's telecom system
- f. ensure the effective operation of the system such as protecting against viruses, backing up and making routine interceptions such as forwarding e-mails to correct destinations
- g. gain access to routine business communications, for instance checking voice mail and e-mail when staff are on holiday or on sick leave
- h. monitor the use of social media with pupils to ensure that:
 - you must not engage in dialogue on social media or any social media network site or message board with current pupils
 - if maintaining contact with a former pupil via social media, you must ensure that your dialogue is wholly professional and appropriate
 - any social network site or message board contact with friends outside Westonbirt must not damage the reputation of the school
 - you must not disclose your mobile telephone number to current pupils except for safety reasons when on a school trip, for example
 - conversations, or text communication with pupils is recognised as an opportunity for safeguarding, particularly for trips and excursions, but these details should not be kept on the phone post trip and should be kept at a very professional level

Social Networking Sites

School staff may use social networking sites for personal use. However, the school requires that profile and photos of the member of staff adopt the highest security settings so that pupils or parents do not have access to your personal data or images. Staff must deny current or recent pupils access to your profile so you do not put yourself in a vulnerable position. Staff should be aware that they leave themselves open to a charge of professional misconduct if images of a member of staff in a compromising situation are made available on a public profile by anyone. If a pupil does gain access to the profile of a member of staff by fraudulent means (impersonation or hacking) senior leadership should be informed immediately. Staff who are also parents at the school, or personal friends who are parents at the school, social networking is acceptable but extreme caution must be exercised so that professional standards are maintained and staff do not compromise themselves or the school. Staff can take advice on maintaining personal boundaries and professional standards from their line-manager.

Use of Telephone

Westonbirt School accepts that the school telephone system may be occasionally and reasonably used for making short private calls. In such circumstances, the calls would normally be restricted to the UK.

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The exception to this general rule is for staff accommodated on site with a telephone on the School's system. Where mobile telephones have been loaned to members of staff, they are for duty calls only and should not be used for private business.

Inventions, Patents, Copyright

You are required to inform the school immediately of any invention, improvement, discovery, process, design or copyright which you create or obtain whilst in the school's employ or as a consequence of it. This will become the absolute property of the School except as otherwise stated by statute.

External Interests

You may not engage in any outside activities or undertake any work outside the school, whether paid or unpaid, which might conflict with the school's interests, without the written consent of the Head.

Health and Safety and Risk

All staff are expected to understand their role in the processes of health and safety to ensure that they and their pupils are monitored carefully. Trips must be adequately staffed and a risk assessment completed and authorised, including DBS checks, where appropriate, for all eventualities.

All trips and excursions should be submitted and approved by the Educational Visits Coordinator prior to arranging.

All staff are expected to be mindful of their own responsibilities with regards to health and safety in the workplace and to report any concerns to their Line Manager.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
KCSIE 2025
Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy
Use of ICT and Social Media
Promoting Positive Behaviour
Pastoral Care
Grievance
Disciplinary and Conduct
Performance Management and Capability
Intimate Care
Equal Opportunities
Mission statement and ethos
Whistleblowing
Health and Safety
Risk Assessment
All EYFS policies (if working in the Early Years Department)
Dogs at Westonbirt