



## **Staff Code of Conduct including Guidelines for Teaching Staff**

It is essential that all staff, governors and volunteers working in school are conscious of how they should conduct themselves to minimise the risk of finding themselves as the subject of any child protection processes. All staff are held in a 'position of trust' by the children's parents and the school is required to formally state what behaviour and conduct is acceptable or unacceptable. All staff, governors and volunteers should be aware of the following code of conduct and abide by it at all times.

### **Safeguarding**

All staff are required to read and follow the school's Safeguarding Policy and all child protection procedures and report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), and external agencies where necessary, any concerns about child welfare and safety and concerns about the conduct of other school staff, volunteers and contractors. Do not misuse your position of power, trust and influence over children. Record all relevant incidents on CPOMS, whilst maintaining any written notes. Work in an open and transparent way, discuss and report any incidents that might lead to concerns being raised about your conduct towards a child. Report any incidents that suggest a pupil may be infatuated with you, or taking an above normal interest in you, to the DSL. Staff should not allow boundaries to be unsafe in more informal settings such as trips and out of school activities. Listen to pupils when they express concern about staff which might appear to be just and check facts versus fiction. Staff should read the Whistleblowing Policy and be able to follow the school's child protection procedures. In the absence of the DSL, please contact one of the Deputy DSLs if you have any concerns.

### **Child Protection Investigation**

Contact your professional association or trade union if you are the subject of concerns or allegations of a child protection nature. Fully co-operate with any investigation into child protection issues in school.

### **Confidential Discussions with Pupils**

In general, pupils should be encouraged to discuss with their parents or guardians issues that are troubling them, Failing this, a conversation with the school counsellor or member of the pastoral staff will often solve any issues of a personal nature a child may have. Under no circumstances should a member of staff engage in a conversation with a pupil, anywhere or anytime, that is of a sexual nature unless it is in a controlled environment such as a PSHCE or RSE lesson.

### **Physical Contact with Pupils**

Staff need to ensure that their actions do not inadvertently lay them open to allegations of inappropriate conduct or behaviour or be misconstrued by a parent or onlooker. No physical punishment of any kind is permitted. A member of staff can never take the place of a parent in providing physical comfort and should be cautious of any demonstration of affection. They need to treat all pupils with respect and try, as far as possible, not to be alone with a child or young person. Where this is not possible, for example, in an instrumental music lesson, or sports coaching lesson, it is good practice to ensure that others are within earshot. Where possible, a gap or barrier should be maintained between teacher and child at all times. Senior staff should be made aware in advance of any meetings with pupils in closed rooms. Any

physical contact should be the minimum required for care, instruction or restraint and should not be secretive. Staff should, therefore, use their professional judgement at all times.

If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be recorded as soon as possible via the low-level concerns form on the staff portal. However, if the incident is more serious, then the school's DSL should be informed.

Avoid volunteering to house children overnight.

### **Physical Restraint**

Any physical restraint is only permissible when a child is in imminent danger of inflicting an injury on themselves or on another, and then only as a last resort when all efforts to defuse the situation have failed. Another member of staff should, if possible, be present to act as a witness. Where physical contact is essential for educational or safety reasons, gain pupil's permission for that contact wherever possible. All incidents of the use of physical restraint should be recorded in writing and reported immediately to the Heads or DSL who will decide what to do next. Where this relates to the Pre-Prep department, parents will be informed of any physical restraint used on their child the same day or as soon as reasonably practicable.

### **Physical Education and Other Activities Requiring Physical Contact**

Where exercises or procedures need to be demonstrated, extreme caution should be used if the demonstration involves contact with pupils and, wherever possible, contact should be avoided. It is acknowledged that some staff, for example, those who teach PE and games, or who offer music tuition, will, on occasions, have to initiate physical contact with pupils in order to support a pupil so they can perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument or assist them with an exercise. This should be done with the pupil's agreement.

Contact under these circumstances should be for the minimum time necessary to complete the activity and take place in an open environment. Staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the child.

Allow children to change clothes with levels of respect and privacy appropriate to their age, gender, culture and circumstances.

### **Suitability of Sanctions**

No excessive punishments should ever be used including any punishment intending to cause pain, humiliation, anxiety or corporal punishment.

### **Transporting Pupils**

It is inadvisable for a teacher to give a lift in a car to a pupil alone. 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. If there are exceptional circumstances that make unaccompanied transportation of pupils unavoidable, e.g. an emergency trip to the hospital, the journey should be made known to a senior member of staff and best practice is for the child to be seated in the back of the car.

### **Confidentiality**

Staff members should never give absolute guarantees of confidentiality to pupils or adults wishing to tell them about something serious. They should guarantee only that they will pass on information to the minimum number of people who must be told in order to ensure that the proper action is taken to sort

out the problem and that they will not tell anyone who does not have a clear need to know. They will also take whatever steps they can to protect the informing pupil or adult from any retaliation or unnecessary stress that might be feared after a disclosure has been made.

## **Boarding House**

Only those staff on duty in the Boarding House should access the Boarding accommodation.

## **E-communication between Pupils and Staff**

Staff should not give their personal mobile phone numbers, personal email addresses or other personal details to pupils, nor should they communicate with them privately by text message, email or social media. If they need to speak to a pupil by telephone, they should use one of the school's telephones or the school's network for emails. Staff should only use their school email to correspond with current pupils to discuss school matters. If any communication is had between a past pupil, then the Head and the DSL must be informed about the nature of the correspondence. Appropriate decisions will be made at this point. Emails whether internal or external should be professional and staff should be mindful that they could form part of a Subject Access Request which could be passed on to parents and also children aged 12 and over as they can make a SAR for information about themselves.

## **Social Media**

All staff have a duty to uphold the good name and standards of the school, even when using social media outside of school. The school recommends that colleagues regularly check the privacy settings of their social media accounts. They should also not post images or statements which may adversely affect the reputation of the school in a public setting. This would include images of staff wearing school kit or passing comment on the school in a negative manner.

## **Attendance and Timekeeping**

Full time teaching staff who are not employed in boarding duties should expect to be in work by 8.00am (at the latest) Monday to Saturday and normally remain on site until at least 5.00pm regardless of their teaching timetable. However, a common sense approach should be taken on Wednesdays and Saturdays where staff members may depart once all duties have been fulfilled. These include the essential role of liaising with parents at pick-up in terms of PR and pastoral care. Should a staff member need to be absent or expect to be late for any reason, they should inform the Deputy Head Academic and their Head of Department in advance when possible. Procedures for requesting cover should be followed. Planned absences require the express permission of the Head no matter what. If this is not possible, they should contact the school office at the earliest opportunity. Teaching staff are given a free half day each week and this starts at 11.30am when they are permitted to leave the school campus in the case of a morning half day or if the half day is an afternoon, staff are expected to be at School by 1.30pm latest. Part time teaching staff and all non teaching staff should attend School in accordance with the times stated in their Contract of Employment.

Staff meetings are held weekly on Friday mornings and all members of staff are invited and expected to attend. Also, members of teaching staff will be asked to attend a number of parents' evenings per year, depending on teaching commitments.

There will clearly be occasions when members of staff are unable to attend lunch, and indeed they are not expected to attend on half-days. But lunch attendance should be seen as part of our everyday responsibilities. During this time staff should sit amongst the children rather than with their colleagues. This applies to both the teaching and non-teaching staff.

## **Public Relations**

All members of staff should be very aware of their responsibilities when parents are in the School e.g. Saturday afternoons, beginnings and ends of excats, beginning of term / end of term and at pick-ups and drop-offs. Where possible, it is helpful to greet parents at pick-ups, and the value of good relationships and open communication cannot be underestimated.

## **Alcohol and Illegal Drugs**

Consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs is not permitted on site. Illegal drugs of any nature are not permitted on the school site. Only at an official school function or otherwise may modest amounts of alcohol be consumed. Staff may not consume alcohol if they are on duty no matter what the event. Staff whose conduct or performance has been, or is, affected by the use of drugs or misuse of alcohol will be immediately suspended and procedures instigated. Staff who reside on site may consume alcohol in the privacy of their accommodation when they are not on duty. See the Schools Alcohol and Drugs Policy for further details.

## **Security**

Staff, especially those who live on site, play an important role in the security of the school. All staff should remain observant and be prepared to challenge or report anyone or anything they may regard as suspicious or unusual at the time. Gap students must seek permission from the Head if they would like a guest to stay on the premises

## **Personal Appearance**

The school regularly receives visits from parents, potential parents and others, and naturally wishes to convey an impression of efficiency, organisation and self discipline by the staff who act not only as role models for the pupils but also ‘in loco parentis’ by setting an example. You are required to look smart and tidy in appearance and wear appropriate clothing for a school environment. Ties should be worn by male members of teaching staff and female members of staff are expected to dress professionally.

## **Duties and Cover**

Due to the demands and nature of the school, staff should be prepared to transfer upon request within departments either temporarily or permanently, to undertake work of a different nature, providing it is reasonable and safe to do so and the staff member is adequately trained. Staff must also be prepared to cover for their colleagues when they are absent.

The Deputy Head Co- Curricular oversees the staff duties rota. All teaching staff should expect a number of duties as part of their daily routine. The cover system has been adapted to ensure that we are providing enough supervision in a large prep school with varying pick-up times. This rota is displayed clearly in the staff room and around the school, with guidelines as to what to do on each duty. It is the responsibility of the staff member to ensure they are on time and that the children have adequate supervision. If you are unable to make a duty then a swap must be arranged prior to this and the Deputy Head Co-Curricular

Any individual tutoring outside of school hours should always be arranged directly between the pupil’s family and the teacher and is therefore entirely independent from the School. Permission should be sought from the Head to undertake any personal tutoring in line with the School’s Contract of Employment.

## **Use of Mobile Phones and Cameras**

Images of children are only to be taken, published or shared in line with the Schools Photography and Film Policy.

## **Pastoral Care**

Various systems are already in place for watching over a child's general development:

- The Form Tutor System (including PSHCEE sessions)
- The Year System with Heads of Year
- Deputy Head Pastoral
- The Division system
- The Mentor System
- The Boarding arrangements
- The Nest & Wellbeing programme
- The School Counsellor
- Pastoral meetings
- CPOMS

And of course there are many moments during the working day: during games, activities, meal-times and in free time, when we are constantly aware of the children in our care. Any academic difficulties should be discussed with the member of staff concerned; worries about home should always be relayed to the Tutor and to the Boarding House-parents when appropriate.

## **Parental Divorce**

There may be an occasion when you become aware that a child at school may have parents who are going through a divorce or separation. The primary concern for you is the pastoral care of the child while they are at school and not matters concerning the breakdown of the parental relationship.

It is not unusual for one or both of the parents to attempt to involve the School in some way either through direct communication, verbal or written, or through a third party e.g. solicitors as a result of the breakdown in their relationship.

The guideline is that in all such instances you must not become involved nor are you to respond to any communication in any way, either verbally or written, from the parents or their legal representatives, without first consulting with the Headmaster or another appropriate member of the Senior Management team. If it is appropriate to respond or there is a legal requirement to respond then legal advice will be sought beforehand from the School's solicitors.

## **The Role of the Form Tutor**

At Cheam School it is expected that the Form Tutor takes on the following responsibilities:-

### 1. Registration of attendance

At present, registration is at the start of the day. Registration is done via the school administration system, iSAMS and it is a legal requirement that we compile these for each day of school. The School Secretaries ensure the Form Tutor has completed the Register in the morning and this is circulated to all staff as soon as possible

## 2. Assessments

These grades are produced on two separate occasions during the term and once in the summer term. They include the grades for effort and a level of attainment. The Form Tutor will also decide if any members of their form are worthy of a commendation or special mention for improvement. The tutors are expected to keep a close eye on the progress of their form through these grades. Assessment meetings are held to flag any concerns.

## 3. End of Term Reports

Form Tutors are responsible for reading Subject Reports at the end of each term for each member of their form. Each year group has two full sets of reports each year and a shortened version. All of the reports at Cheam School are completed on iSAMS. Form Tutors must then write their own Form Report before passing the complete set of reports on to the Headmaster for his attention and his own report. A separate guideline to writing and collating reports is available from the Deputy Head Academic. Any concerns or queries can be directed to Deputy Head Academic.

## 4. Form Rooms

Form Tutors are responsible for seeing that their rooms are kept tidy and acceptable to the teaching staff using them. Most Form Tutors make use of a Form Tidy Rota from which each pupil takes a turn at responsibility for the upkeep of the room.

## 5. Assemblies

These take place every week. On alternate weeks there is a split junior and senior assembly. Here the forms take it in turns to provide a fifteen minute themed assembly for the rest of the forms assembled. The form tutor takes responsibility for the production of his or her form's assembly.

## 6. Pastoral Welfare of Pupils

Within the School's current Pastoral System, the Form Tutor is regarded as the first point of contact regarding the pastoral welfare of his or her respective form members. Form Tutors are generally responsible for the well-being, appearance and personal organisation of each member of their form. It is hoped that each Form Tutor will have the necessary personal qualities to provide a caring and confidence-building atmosphere amongst members of their form, such that pupils will willingly approach the Form Tutor (or any other member of staff) to discuss problems of a pastoral nature which may arise during their time at school. Form Tutors should also expect to form links with parents of their form members and encourage them to contact them should they need to discuss matters of a pastoral nature. In most cases, Form Tutors should communicate their pupils' problems to other members of staff according to the current Pastoral System.

## 7. Personal Social Health Education (PSHCEE)

The Form Tutor is responsible for delivering a termly PSHCE package as directed by the Heads of PSHCE. Each week there is a timetabled lesson allocated to PSHCE, in which the Tutor and Tutee can get to know each other on a less formal basis and thus strengthen the Tutor/Tutee relationship. For some more sensitive topics, specialist speakers will be available and some issues may be covered in larger group sessions, year groups for example, and guest speakers brought in from time to time. Tutors should be aware that they can ask for support with the PSHCE programme at any time and should approach the Heads of PSHCE in the first instance.

## 8. Form Tutor Pastoral Files



Each Form Tutor has the responsibility for maintaining records concerning their tutees. Incidents and low-lying concerns can be entered onto CPOMS and other details are stored on iSAMS. The tutor should do their very best to keep these up to date so that they can be easily accessed by all staff members should the need arise.

## Other Pastoral Structures and Roles

### 1. Pupil Mentors

In Year 8, all pupils choose a “Mentor”. Their role is laid out below. This system was instigated to meet the growing demands of Year 8, and to alleviate some of the pressure that this puts on the Year 8 form tutors. Each Year 8 child is asked to nominate five members of staff, any of whom the pupil would be happy to have as a Mentor for the final year. Members of staff may have up to three ‘Mentees’ and, in exceptional circumstances, four.

The Mentor does not replace the Form Tutor in any way but acts as a support to help monitor progress and to bolster confidence in the Mentee’s final year. The Form Tutor will still take the global responsibility for his/her form tutees but will work with the various Mentors in monitoring the progress and encouraging the Year 8 pupils. The Deputy Head Pastoral is responsible for this.

The key responsibilities of mentors are outlined below.....

- To discuss progress on a weekly basis
- To maintain a Mentor Record Sheet
- To assist in writing the Headmaster’s report on that pupil
- To monitor their Calendars
- To see a cross-section of exercise books during mentorials
- To supervise/oversee individual revision programmes in the build-up to mock CE and the real thing in June
- To set aims for each term and to review these at the end
- To liaise closely with the Form Tutor and Year Head as required
- To pass on any specific concerns to the Headmaster if deemed necessary
- To support the Mentee generally in all aspects of school life
- To liaise with parents and establish a good working relationship with the family

### 2. Heads of Year

Year Heads were introduced at Cheam to provide further support for the pupils, as well as providing another reference point for staff. The role of the Year Head is:

- To oversee the academic and social welfare of the pupils in the year
- To monitor the academic progress of the pupils in the year group
- To take a global view of the year group’s academic, games and extra-curricular programmes
- To be available for consultation by subject teachers and form tutors where necessary
- To be a reference point for parents if required
- To meet parents with subject teachers/tutors if requested
- To send out communications to parents if required, after consultation with the Headmaster
- To address any disciplinary or social issues specific for the year group in consultation with the Head and Deputy Head Pastoral.

- To appraise the Head of any general concerns/worries about the year group
- To inform the Deputy Head Pastoral of any disciplinary concerns, the Deputy Head Co-curricular of any timetabling/logistical concerns and the Deputy Head Academic of any academic worries
- To raise any specific issues about the year group at staff meetings
- To meet with the year group if required
- To oversee the production of the Year Handbook in consultation with the Head and Deputy Head Academic
- To attend any courses/conferences pertinent to the age range of the pupils
- To attend Year Heads' Meetings when required (chaired by the Deputy Head Pastoral)

### 3. The School Counsellor

Cheam School employs the services of a School Counsellor who is available to pupils and staff every Tuesday and Thursday. Their expertise can be used in a variety of ways, e.g. counselling sessions with individual children, observations within the classroom and/or discussions with the teacher over strategies with individual children or any other relevant matter. The Counsellor's role is separate from any academic disciplinary system and the confidentiality of pupils must be understood and protected at all times. The counsellor also attends the Pastoral Committee which is made up of HoYs and senior pastoral staff. They also work very closely with the Nest.

If you have any concerns about the emotional well-being of a child in your form, either because of how the child behaves or talks, or because of unexplained difficulties with motivation or performance then they should be referred by the Nest referral system.

#### Referral Procedure

It is very important that the Nest referral form system is rigorously followed so that the children's needs are adequately met.

- A Nest referral should be put in writing
- The Counsellor will then decide the right course of action
- The Counsellor will obtain permission from the parents for them to either see the Nest or the School Counsellor.
- Appointments with the Counsellor will be timetabled and will inform all parties concerned of dates and timings.

#### **Role of the Independent Listener**

It is a requirement of Social Services that the school has an Independent Listener so that children who feel they cannot talk about a subject to anyone within the school, can talk to the independent listener knowing that it will be handled sensitively and that the listener will not be wearing a 'school hat'.

They provide their telephone numbers so that a child can contact them directly and these are posted around the school. They also attend an assembly, at the start of year, so that all pupils are aware who they are of who they are and their role.

Their role is to listen to and assist a child with any problem they meet. It is not to put the school point of view but rather to assist the child from theirs. Thus, from time to time, they may find themselves at odds with the school policies and it is up to them to enlist any internal support that may be necessary to carry out their duty.



Whilst remaining independent, it should be appreciated that the reputation of the school is at stake and all information gained about the school or the home families must remain confidential within the school.

Information should only be given to the school when it needs to know and only with the child's permission. It is hoped that the listeners can work alongside the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy Head enlisting their support where necessary and discussing cases. Also the School Counsellor may be able to provide a broader understanding of the problem than that given by the child.

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed and the child must know before going into any great detail that matters concerning child safety will have to be passed on to the correct authorities. For this to happen the Independent Listener must receive training in Child Protection every three years.

*Their action may be as follows:*

- To help the child resolve the problem.
- To pass on the concern to the relevant department with the child's permission.
- To assist the child in seeing an appropriate adult.
- To talk to relevant staff about a problem that is arising without giving any names.
- To get a group of children together to resolve a problem.
- To encourage the child to go and talk to their Tutor, Houseparent or the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- To report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Social Services themselves, any concern which is relevant to the Child Protection & Safeguarding procedure.

The Independent Listener are chosen because of their sensitive and understanding nature and staff should not feel threatened by their presence unless they have something to hide. The listeners should enhance the relationship of both pupils and staff and we should have confidence in their integrity to take the best course of action in a crisis.

## **Whistleblowing Policy**

The School's Whistleblowing Policy is available to all staff and outlines how members of staff can raise concerns internally and in a confidential fashion about fraud, malpractice, health and safety issues, criminal offences, miscarriages of justice, and failures to comply with legal obligations or unethical conduct. The policy also provides, if necessary, for such concerns to be raised outside the organisation.

Whistleblowing is when an individual knows, or suspects, that there is some wrongdoing occurring and alerts their employer or the relevant authority accordingly. The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 gives protection to individuals and employees who make a disclosure when they reasonably believe it is in the public interest for them to do so.

The School's policy on Whistleblowing is intended to demonstrate that the School:

- Will not tolerate wrongdoing or malpractice;
- Will provide a clear and simple procedure for raising concerns, which is accessible to all members of staff.
- Respects the confidentiality of staff raising concerns and will provide procedures to maintain confidentiality so far as is consistent with progressing the issues effectively;
- Will provide the opportunity to raise concerns externally where this is appropriate.

If you know, or suspect, that some wrongdoing is occurring within the School, you should read the Whistleblowing Policy and follow the guidelines outlined.

## Low-Level Concerns

There is a form that can be found on the staff portal to enable staff members to raise low level concerns. It is entirely confidential and is seen only by the Deputy Head Pastoral. It is to be used to share any concern that is not an allegation, but rather a nagging doubt or uncomfortable moment. For clarification, an allegation should be reported immediately to the DSL. An allegation concerns behaviour which indicates that an adult who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed or may harm a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children

The low-level concerns form should be used when a staff member feels someone has behaved in a way that is not consistent with the school's Code of Conduct or that relates to their conduct outside of work which, even if it linked to a particular act or omission, has caused a sense of unease about that adult.

Examples could include:

- being overly-friendly with children
- having favourites
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one level in a secluded area
- using inappropriate language or either an offensive, intimidating or sexualised nature

This form can also be used for self-reporting. If a member of staff feels they were put in an awkward position, despite not having done anything wrong, they can use the form to make the Head aware.

## Gifts

Special attention on one child should only be conferred as part of an agreed school plan or policy. Children should not be given personal gifts and regular gifts from children should not be accepted by staff.

## Conduct in School

It is important that all employees display the highest standards of behaviour, conduct and professionalism in the workplace and behave in a way which shows dignity and respect for others. All staff are expected to abide by the School's rules, policies and procedures at all times. If a member of staff is, at any time, uncertain about how to act in a particular situation, they should seek guidance from their manager to clarify expectations.

Staff should familiarise themselves with the Schools Dignity at Work Policy, the School's Disciplinary Policy and the Schools Relationships at School Policy. All staff should conduct themselves at all times in line with these policies. The School is committed to providing a working environment that is free of bullying and harassment and where everyone is treated, and treats others, with dignity and respect.

## Conduct Out of School

All staff are expected to act with professionalism when they are not in School. Staff must not access abuse images (sometimes referred to as child pornography) or other inappropriate material and must not engage in activities out of school that might compromise their position within school for example staff

must avoid establishing social contact with pupils outside the school. Staff are reminded of the Schools rules and must be careful to not do anything that might bring the School into disrepute.

#### Policy Owners

Staff: Deputy Head Pastoral and Head of Compliance and HR

#### Latest Reviews

Staff Policy Owner: September 2024

Compliance: October 2024

Board of Governors: November 2024