

Safeguarding Code of Conduct

The aim of this policy is to provide clear guidance about behaviour and actions so as not to place pupils or staff at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a pupil.

Guidance

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)
- [Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings \(2022\)](#). All staff members must be aware of and adhere to this guidance.

Underpinning Principle

- The welfare of the pupil is paramount
- This code of conduct is applicable for staff and pupils at the school, including those pupils who are over the age of 18
- Staff should understand their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils
- Staff are 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 should work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way
- Staff should acknowledge that deliberately invented/malicious allegations are extremely rare and that all concerns should be reported and recorded
- Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from their line manager if they have acted in a way which may give rise to concern
- Staff should apply the same professional standards regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and sexual orientation
- Staff should not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or any substance, including prescribed medication, which may affect their ability to care for pupils. There are occasions when a modest amount of alcohol may be consumed such as at school functions and whilst in private accommodation for staff that live on site but are not on duty.
- Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in disciplinary action being taken against them, criminal action and/or other proceedings including barring by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) from working in regulated activity, or for acts of serious misconduct prohibition from teaching by the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA)
- Staff and managers should continually monitor and review practice to ensure this guidance is followed
- Staff should be aware of and understand their establishment's pupil protection policy, arrangements for managing allegations against staff, staff behaviour policy, whistle blowing procedure and the procedures of the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership.

All staff should be familiar with the following policies that contain important additional guidance and expectations in relation to conduct:

- Countering Bullying
- Safeguarding and pupil Protection
- Missing Girls
- Behaviour (Girls)
- Safety and Supervision on School Journeys
- Health and Safety
- Complaints
- E-Communications and E-Safety
- Taking, Storing and Using Images of pupils

Responsibilities

QM has always prided itself upon the good relationships between staff and pupils based upon mutual respect. All members of staff are expected to be good role models, to uphold the reputation of the school and to promote the welfare of all QM pupils. This Code of Conduct details our expectations of behaviour and conduct in an educational setting such as Queen Margaret's.

- Respect, Equality and Fairness
All pupils, irrespective of their race, colour, religion, sexuality and physical or educational needs deserve to be treated with respect and should be given every opportunity to develop their talents. Members of staff should ensure that the school's code of conduct is carried out in practice, rewarding good work and behaviour appropriately and applying sanctions in line with the school guidelines. Staff should promote good social values, respect for civil and criminal law and present political and religious issues in a balanced, sensitive and thoughtful way. Staff should denounce extremism. Staff should promote charity and sense of community, irrespective of culture or religion.
- Safeguarding
All staff have a responsibility to keep pupils safe and to protect them from abuse (sexual, physical and emotional), neglect and contextual safeguarding concerns. Pupils have a right to be safe and to be treated with respect and dignity.
All staff must read the safeguarding policy and be aware of the procedures in place to safeguard pupils, this includes knowing who is the designated safeguarding lead (DSL), their deputies, and the correct way to report any safeguarding concerns.
- Action if a girl is missing
All staff are required to be familiar with the School's Missing Pupils Policy and to be ready to implement the policy effectively immediately should they become aware that a girl may be missing.
- Security of premises and documentation
All employees are expected to contribute to the security of pupils by exercising vigilance and acting to challenge the presence on school premises of strangers. This

does not require employees to place themselves in danger; in case of doubt contact the Head's PA or the school Estate Office. All staff, visitors and contractors are issued with lanyards to enable staff to challenge unfamiliar adults with confidence.

You must not remove any School documents from the site nor take any photographs without due permission (see Policy [Taking, Storing and Using Images of pupils Policy](#)). The School reserves the right to request to search the outer clothing, bags, lockers and vehicles etc. of employees whilst on site. The employee may have a colleague in attendance on such (rare) occasions. Employees should also be aware of and comply with the Schools Data Protection Policy.

Acting professionally and appropriately in an educational setting (including off site events)

Guidelines on Acceptable Behaviour of Staff and Volunteers

In your language:

Remember that not only are you a role model to students and staff but you are also demonstrating the school values of respect, kindness and tolerance.

In your conversations around school (remembering that you are overheard) engage in appropriate humour/chat e.g. do not swear or use sexual innuendo and positively challenge inappropriate chat and language both from students and colleagues. Whilst sarcasm can be witty and engaging at times the ambiguous nature of the language used may be misunderstood and hurtful and therefore should be avoided or at least measured in tone.

At times when there are disagreements or disappointments which are becoming heated act professionally in ensuring that the argument is resolved away from students and parents.

Students should refer to you by your surname and prefix or as Miss/Sir as a sign of respect, likewise students should be addressed by the first or preferred name and referred to as such in conversation with staff and parents. Wherever possible do not name students when speaking to families other than their own.

In a girls' school environment it is tempting to continue with stereotypical approaches to conversations with girls and women where their appearance is the start of that conversation. In this environment we have a particular responsibility to consciously break these potentially damaging stereotypes which inadvertently put pressure on girls and women to be judged by their outward appearance. Avoid commenting on appearance unless specifically asked to do so or as part of your routines of enforcing school uniform rules.

In your conduct:

Keep your hands and body to yourself and if a student is accidentally touched e.g. in the process of handing out materials, ensure your actions could not be misconstrued.

Maintain the highest levels of professional integrity and conduct for all pupils, including those who are over the age of 18.

Staff should follow all safeguarding protocols for all pupils, including those pupils who are over the age of 18.

Do not carry a pupil unless essential and try not to handle a pupil below the shoulder unless there is a justifiable reason for doing so e.g. delivery of first aid according to all legal protocols. In such situations seek help from other adults nearby, send a pupil to fetch help and ensure others (students, parents, staff) can see what is happening. Explain what you are doing and why and if possible seek verbal consent to touch.

Common sense dictates that there are some situations where appropriate physical contact is either necessary or reasonable action to take. If a student's reaction shows that they are uncomfortable with being touched, the staff member should adjust their behaviour accordingly

If you need to talk to a student privately, make sure that this does not put you at risk i.e. the room should afford privacy but still be in the view of others. The door must always remain open when in a room by yourself with a student unless delivering first aid. In circumstances where this is not possible or helpful for the student e.g. music tuition, the student asks for privacy when talking to you, ensure others are aware of the meeting and the circumstances e.g. the rota for instrumental lessons, a quick update to a colleague nearby, a conversation in view of windows and passers by. If any physical contact occurs in a one-to-one situation, an immediate report must be made to a member of the DSL team.

Staff and volunteers should avoid entering students' toilets, changing rooms or showers except in an absolute emergency and ideally accompanied by another member of staff. Situations where staff have had to enter these areas should be openly discussed with the staff member's line manager as soon as practicable and if necessary recorded with the DSL. When conducting safeguarding visits to e.g. student toilets this must be done by a staff member for the same sex as the students and a knock on the door made to alert students to your presence.

Car journeys should only be offered to students in an emergency and, ideally, with parental permission. If permission is not given at the time due to the urgency, then parents or housestaff must be informed as soon as possible that this has occurred. Always inform your line manager and log details and reason for the journey as soon as possible. Staff must ensure they have appropriate insurance.

Do not arrange to socialise with students at events other than those relating to school events and with the permission of parents/ guardians and Head (e.g., end of term celebrations, at weekends or evenings). It is part of the richness of the community at QM that staff and students have appropriate and supportive relationships which are built on shared community events. Staff are encouraged to attend events arranged by the School and if they wish to arrange one themselves should seek the permission of the Head, liaise with the Senior Deputy and seek the permission of parents. Outside of school staff and volunteers should not socialise with students including those who have recently left the school. If staff find themselves at an event where students are present they should inform the DSL in writing as soon as possible afterwards to record where they were and why and which students were also present. In these circumstances it is never appropriate to buy students drinks or food or to accept similar from them. Staff should also be wary of accepting gifts or favours from parents which may compromise their professional relationship at another time.

Do not give the appearance of having favourites for example by singling out individual students for special gifts or favours or unnecessary individual attention. Any rewards you may choose to use in the classroom or house should be of limited monetary value, be clearly available to all and reasons for distribution should be clearly, fairly and consistently applied. Staff should always be aware of the possibility of infatuation or “crushes” on them or their colleagues, remembering that these might not necessarily be heterosexual in nature. If you believe you are the subject of student infatuation you should seek support from the DSL or Senior Deputy Head as soon as you can.

Do not arrange to visit students in their homes or to receive students at your home or in your school accommodation unless in an emergency related directly to their safety e.g. welfare check. This can be particularly difficult for staff who are also parents as they will naturally want to allow their daughter's friends to visit the family home. Where the home is not on the school premises staff should discuss and agree a protocol with the DSL which can then be recorded for their own safety and also discussed without embarrassment with other parents. The School follows the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 2022 which make it clear that students should not visit staff accommodation and this includes the accommodation of staff with children at a school.

Finally and most importantly. A culture of “it could happen here” is fundamental to the maintenance of the highest standards of safeguarding in a School and every member of staff and volunteer must be proactive in maintaining a culture of safeguarding which makes the School an undesirable place to work for adults wishing to harm pupils. Do not allow any allegations made by a student or third party to go unchallenged, unrecorded, or not acted upon. Report breaches of the letter or spirit of this code of conduct bearing in mind the School's Low Level Concerns, Whistleblowing and Safeguarding policies.

Power and positions of trust and authority

As a result of their knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, all those working with pupils in a school or education setting are in a position of trust in relation to all pupils on the roll.

It is an offence for a person aged 18 or over, such as a teacher, to have a sexual relationship with a pupil under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that pupil, even if, in the case of those over 16, the relationship is consensual. A situation where a person is in a position of trust could arise where the pupil is in full-time education and the person looks after pupils under 18 in the same establishment as the pupil, even if s/he does not teach the pupil. Staff are expected to apply the same standard of professional integrity to pupils over the age of 18.

Confidentiality

Staff members should never give 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 girl or adult from any retaliation or unnecessary stress that might be feared after a disclosure has been made.

Standards of 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 confidence and respect of the general public and those with whom they work.

Nicola Dudley (Head)

Date Agreed: September 2024

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