

Staff Conduct

Vicky Bingham, Headmistress

Basic expectations

Staff are asked:

- To promote the school's TORCH values (Thoughtfulness, Open-heartedness, Respect, Honesty and Courage) in their relations with other members of the community – pupils, colleagues and parents.
- To adopt a 'can-do' mindset in their approach to their roles and to engage with the GDST and School's programme of Professional Development and appraisal in the spirit of 'reflective practice'.
- To have an open dialogue with their line manager and with the senior leadership team about any concerns, barriers or challenges facing them in their role
- To take pride in matters of professionalism e.g. punctuality, communication, dress

Appearance and dress

As in most matters, the example set by staff is an important yardstick for pupils. All staff are expected to be dressed smartly, professionally and appropriately at all times when at work or representing the school. Informal dress on occasional non-uniform days or school trips where informal wear is appropriate should not attract unwarranted attention.

Alcohol

A member of staff should never be visibly under the influence of alcohol while exercising his or her professional duties either inside or outside the classroom. During working hours – including on educational visits – there is a duty to refrain from any intake of alcohol which could impair the proper performance of one's duties or cause justifiable adverse comment. Colleagues should also be aware of their obligations within the law and within the bounds of good practice not to purchase for or serve alcohol to pupils. If you are to drive a vehicle on school business, you must abstain from alcohol.

If alcohol is to be served at an evening function, no charge may be made. The school premises are not licensed and so any cost must be included in the ticket price. A member of staff must undertake all supervision and serving of alcohol; at no time must any pupil serve alcohol.

Staff socialising within the immediate vicinity of the school must remember that will be easily identifiable as SHHS staff.

Communication with pupils

Communication between pupils and staff, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. Staff must only communicate electronically with pupils using school email accounts and the school virtual learning environment and at appropriate hours. Staff are welcome to use Microsoft Teams to post messages for groups of pupils but we discourage staff from using the Chat function with any individual student. Staff are allowed to have 1:1 video calls with students when needed. Staff must not communicate with pupils on any website (including email) which is not operated and scrutinised by the school or the GDST. All communication between staff and pupils must be transparent and open to scrutiny. Staff must not share any personal information (including personal telephone numbers or email addresses) with a pupil. Staff are expected to ensure that Facebook and other social networking profiles are private (not accessible by pupils) and Twitter posts are not inappropriate. The internet, web and email systems should only be used in accordance with the GDST's policy.

Confidentiality

Proper confidentiality is important for the smooth functioning of the school and preserving relationships of trust between colleagues and with parents and pupils. Conversations with parents should always be strictly professional: other pupils or parents should not be discussed, nor should information private to the school be disclosed. Except in appropriate internal meetings and using appropriate language, staff should not comment adversely on the actions of other staff, or on school policy. Discussing parents or pupils with third parties, even where this may seem innocuous should be avoided.

Drugs

The possession or use of illegal drugs by a member of staff, in or out of school, is likely to be regarded as gross misconduct. Guidance is available separately for staff as to how to deal with incidents or suspicions about the use of drugs by pupils.

Fire and Emergency procedures

It is your duty to familiarise yourself with the fire and emergency precautions and evacuation procedures. A fire drill is held at least once each term. Whenever the fire alarm is sounded, all pupils and staff are to move without delay to the assembly areas according to the rules posted in each room.

Staff must not return to any building until the member of staff in charge gives the all clear. Staff should set an example to the pupils, refrain from conversation and ensure appropriate behaviour among the pupils.

Gifts

If a staff member receives a gift worth more than £25 from a pupil or parent this must be declared on the Gifts Register which can be found on Firefly. Further details on when a gift can and should not be accepted are available in the Gifts and Hospitality Policy which can be found on the GDST Hub.

ICT

All members of staff are expected to read and adhere to the GDST Acceptable Use Agreement. School ICT resources must be used correctly and not misused or abused. This includes computers and iPads, but also electronic services such as email and internet access. All staff should be committed to conforming to good practice in this area. Use of the school's ICT facilities implies acceptance of the conditions of use. Staff should familiarise themselves with the ICT Code of Conduct document, which sets out current policy and practice.

Media

All contact with the media must be authorised: staff should refer any requests for comment or information to the Headmistress. Letters or articles published which identify the writer as an employee of the school should, as a matter of courtesy and good practice, be shown to the Headmistress.

One to one situations

Reasonable and sensible precautions should be taken to protect both pupils and staff. For example, the door should be left open. The glass panels should not be covered. Every attempt should be made to ensure the safety and security of pupils and the adults who work with them.

Meetings with pupils outside school hours and sites should not take place without the agreement of the Headmistress and the pupils' parents. By 'school hours' we mean the hours on which pupils are permitted on-site (07:45-06:00).

Other employment

Colleagues should seek prior permission from the Headmistress if they wish to undertake other paid employment which might impact on their teaching post or on the school's reputation. Colleagues should not provide tuition for the 11+ London Consortium examinations for any student applying to South Hampstead High School.

It is a condition of employment that staff shall not, without the prior consent of the Headmistress, receive any special remuneration or reward for work with any pupil in the school at any time. If parents ask teachers to provide additional paid tuition, staff should refer them to the academic support systems at the school.

Out of hours obligations

Staff are required to attend parents' meetings for girls in their classes, any general staff meetings and relevant after school meetings. Staff are also required to attend certain other major school functions such as Welcome Evenings. Staff are also encouraged to attend other functions and performances such as plays and concerts.

Protection from allegations

The following advice applies to all staff:

- There is no ban on physical contact with a pupil as this may occasionally be necessary for teaching purposes, for reasons of health and safety, or occasionally in a moment of acute pastoral crisis. Staff should not, however, engage in physical contact with pupils as a matter of course and when required for teaching purposes, they should seek consent verbally.
- Doors should, ideally, be left open when in a 1:1 situation with a pupil. If the conversation is especially sensitive and the door has to be closed, staff members should remain in view of any glass panels.
- Ensure that conversations with pupils are always appropriate and professional (e.g. a teacher must not unnecessarily comment on the physical appearance of a pupil (dress, hair) or share their own sensitive, personal information).
- Never 'follow' or allow a pupil to 'follow' you on social media – if they send friend requests, decline them
- Never liaise with pupils using any personal email accounts or phones – any communication with pupils and parents should be via SHHS platforms
- Never drive pupils in your car, except in case of a serious emergency.
- If receiving a report involving indecent images of a minor, staff must never ask to be shown the images or sent them.
- If in any doubt about a situation, a written account must be given to the DSL or Headmistress at the earliest opportunity.

Staff must ensure they are familiar with the Safeguarding Policy and current statutory guidelines. They must report any concerns as per the procedures; this includes but is not restricted to incidents in lessons (YouTube pop ups), students crushes on teachers etc.

Punctuality

It is impossible to insist on punctuality from pupils if we are unable to demonstrate it ourselves. Teaching staff must ensure that they are in their classroom ready to start teaching punctually at the start of each lesson. Colleagues must also be scrupulous about punctuality when they are covering lessons. With staff and pupils moving between different parts of the school, punctuality will sometimes be harder to achieve but efforts must be made to achieve it.

References

A colleague considering applying for a post elsewhere is welcome to consult with the Headmistress or Head of the Junior School or another senior colleague to discuss the nature of their application and gain advice on the presentation of their curriculum vitae or the most suitable referees. It should be assumed that the Headmistress may be asked for an employer's reference, whether named as a referee or not. Because of the legal obligations on referees and on the school, staff who are asked to act as referee for a colleague, whether as manager or friend, must ensure that the Headmistress is aware of this and approves the intended reference. It is common practice in education for teachers to alert the Head that they intend to make an application for another teaching post. The same courtesy is not usually followed in other industries but if support staff intend to seek alternative employment, the Headmistress appreciates early warning.

Road safety

Staff must be constantly vigilant about the safety of pupils and other staff on the roads. Teachers are expected to set an example to pupils when crossing the roads near or outside the school. They are asked particularly to use the designated routes and crossings during school hours. Not to do so increases the risk of pupils imitating dangerous behaviour.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. Everyone who works with our pupils should make sure that their approach is child-centred (that is, that they consider at all times what is in the best interests of the child).

All staff are required to undergo safeguarding training when they first join the school and participate in annual refresher training, including reading key documents every year to stay abreast of existing and new requirements in safeguarding practices and procedures. In addition to the annual refresher training, documents are circulated regularly to relevant staff, addressing specific safeguarding issues and certain topics may be included in other staff meetings of INSET days throughout the year.

Any member of staff who has a safeguarding concern about a pupil must make that concern known to a Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately. Information about school procedures around sharing such information is included in the annual training and policy documents. Even low-level concerns that may not immediately reach a safeguarding threshold must be recorded on CPOMS with the Head of Year being informed. In this way, all worries about an individual child are collated and able to be reviewed in the round by those looking after that pupil pastorally.

School rules

Staff are expected to be familiar with the Behaviour Policy and to ensure that school rules are known and kept by pupils and that any pupil in breach of them is properly and promptly dealt with. Teachers are expected to discharge their duties in a competent manner and to maintain control and discipline in the classroom and elsewhere. Teachers have a duty of care to exercise disciplinary control in order to maintain good order, and safeguard pupils' health and safety. A teacher may be deemed negligent if they endanger the physical and emotional well-being of a pupil by failing to maintain order. Teachers, however, cannot be expected to foresee every incident, nor should they run the risk of personal injury, by intervening where it is not safe so to do. Teachers should familiarise themselves with the SHHS policy on the use of physical restraint but are reminded that corporal punishment must never be used to address a lapse in behaviour.

Social events involving pupils

From time to time, members of staff organise or are in some way involved in social events for staff and pupils together, such as parties, after plays or concerts or to say farewell to a tutor group or teaching group. Staff should ensure that such events are treated like a normal educational visit and consent must be sought from the Educational Visits Coordinator (Head of Junior School or Senior Deputy Head). Parents must be informed that the event is happening.

Smoking

Smoking is not allowed on or immediately outside any school premises and should not take place within sight of pupils during visits or expeditions.

Staff members who are also SHHS parents

Being a staff member and a parent of a current pupil increases the likelihood of potentially awkward situations. It is understandable that staff who are SHHS parents may be more frequently in social situations with other parents. Staff in such situations, however, must avoid potentially inappropriate discussion about School life, e.g. the sharing of professional confidences. If staff members are put into a difficult situation by other parents who wish to complain directly to the staff member about the school in a social setting and request the staff member's intervention or comment, the staff member should remind the parent that they are present in a social setting and ask the parent to make an appointment with the appropriate member of staff at school.

The same guidance would apply to staff members who, for whatever reason, regularly came into social contact with SHHS parents.

Visitors

If you are expecting a visitor to the school please ensure:

- that your Head of Department and any relevant senior member of staff are aware of the nature of the visit and have agreed the arrangements
- complete a [pre-visit check if the visitor will be addressing pupils](#)
- that Reception has a note of the name of the visitor, their approximate time of arrival, and your expected location as you await the visitor's arrival (so that you may be contacted by telephone)
- that visitors know where they must first report to sign in and collect a visitor's badge which must be worn throughout the visit

All speakers invited to the school are expected to abide by the principles set out above. Thus they are expected to avoid gratuitously offensive and intolerant use of language and the intentional demeaning of individuals or groups defined by ethnicity, race, religion, sexuality, gender, disability or age.

All visitors that are invited to the school must be checked for suitability before they come to the school to ensure that the content of a visiting speech is not likely to undermine the values and aims of the school and the school's Promotion of British Values and Prevention of Radicalisation Policy. Verification checks can be undertaken by confirming references or recommendations by valid sources. Research can also be undertaken by checking official websites e.g. of registered charities, academic institutions, public bodies. Checks can also be undertaken by confirming with publishers, publications and known affiliations. Staff inviting a speaker or staff supervision pupils who have invited a speaker must fill in this form and submit it to a member of SLT for approval. As this check is part of our Safeguarding procedures, the form should then be submitted to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Teacher in the Senior School or the Junior School as appropriate. The DSL in the Senior or Junior School will keep copies of these check forms in the same place as other confidential Safeguarding documents.

Welfare

The school is sensitive to the pressures which staff may encounter either in their personal or professional lives. Staff are encouraged to make use of the pastoral framework which offers them help either within the school or if necessary outside the school, including the employer helpline offered by the GDST. Colleagues at South Hampstead are also entitled to three free confidential counselling sessions from one of the Counselling Team. Colleagues are encouraged to speak to the Headmistress or Head of HR if they find themselves in a stressful predicament. In appropriate cases, the school will arrange compassionate leave and liaise with the colleague to arrange suitable counselling or medical advice, if such is required.

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