



Heltwate School

Staff Code of Conduct

This guidance is based on the model policy document downloaded from -
The Key Services website.

Head Teacher – Mr. Adam Brewster

Chair of Governors – Mr. Chris Marshall

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Adapted for purpose by D Shaw – Safeguarding & Welfare Manager Sept 2021, reviewed Sept 2022

Due for review Sept 2023 or as required

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1. Aims, scope, and principles

Heltwate School takes pride in the fact that we provide a happy and safe environment where every pupil can thrive and is encouraged to do the very best, they can, by a caring and hardworking staff team who will support them throughout their time at the school.

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

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our school is an environment where everyone is safe, valued, happy, and treated with respect.

Many of the principles in this code of conduct are based on the [Teachers' Standards](#).

- We recognise that all school staff have a position of influence for students and will act as effective role models by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.
- We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards
- We expect all support staff, other contracted staff, governors, and volunteers will also act with high levels of personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of our students' others.

Failure to follow this Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in our staff disciplinary procedures.

Please note that this Code of Conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of its pupils and of the school.

2. Legislation and guidance

We are required to establish procedures for the regulation of staff conduct under regulation 7 of [The School Staffing \(England\) Regulations 2009](#).

In line with the current statutory safeguarding guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), we should have a staff Code of Conduct, which should cover acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media. We adhere, where appropriate to the current 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in Education settings'

3. General obligations

The welfare of the child is always paramount

Every member of our student community is formally diagnosed with a degree of learning difficulty and disability and as such they require all members of staff and adults in the school to set a continuous and good example of behaviour and mutual respect for them to follow.

Staff are therefore expected to:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school either to students or colleagues
- Treat all pupils and other members of our school community with dignity and respect
- Show tolerance and respect for the rights and opinions of others
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Sensitively but consistently challenge any form of harassment or bullying, including those incidents of a sexual, cyber/online or of a physical nature, and report such concerns in line with the school's safeguarding policy so that they can be resolved effectively.
 - Staff should reassure the victim that their concerns are taken seriously and that what they have experienced is not their fault, whilst also supporting the perpetrator appropriately according to the school's Positive Management of Behaviour, and all other relevant policies.
- Not express personal beliefs and opinions in a way that will overly influence our students, and which will exploit their vulnerabilities or special educational needs, thereby potentially leading them to break the law
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within
- Be aware of and understand school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, arrangements for managing allegations against staff and amongst pupils themselves, and our whistle blowing procedure
- Adhere to the Teachers' Standards

4. Safeguarding

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from harm, and to report any concerns they may have in a timely fashion.

This includes

- physical abuse,
- emotional abuse
- sexual abuse,
- and neglect.

Staff will familiarise themselves with our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and procedures, alongside the Prevent initiative, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have any concerns about a child.

Our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, procedures and other relevant safeguarding protocols are available on the 'Every' and 'My Concern' platforms and can be found in hard copy in the staff room. They are also advertised for the benefits of parents, carers, and the wider community on the school website at www.heltwwate.co.uk. New staff will receive electronic copies of these documents on arrival, and all staff will receive reviewed and revised documents when they become available.

4.1 Low-level concerns about members of staff

A low-level concern is a behaviour exhibited towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the 'harms' threshold, but it is inconsistent with the expectations of the staff code of conduct and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt.'

For example, such concerns may include:

- Being over-friendly with children
- Having obvious favourites, or showing obvious preference to a child over their peers
- Taking photographs of children on a personal device
- Engaging in one-to-one activities where they cannot easily be seen
- Using inappropriate language

Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and also outside of work.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have about colleagues and other adults in school by using the reporting procedures set out in our Safeguarding and Child Protection and Whistle Blowing policies. These should be shared in the first instance with the head teacher, or in his/her absence, with the deputy head teacher only.

We also encourage staff to self-refer and to seek support if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted, if for example a child is over affectionate towards them and is causing the adult to be uncomfortable in their presence.

If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage them to report it, so there is openness and transparency with all staff and student interactions.

All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive, and proportionate way.

Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed quickly, the staff member supported to correct their practice at an early stage, and monitoring put in place.

These expectations create and promote a culture of openness, trust, and transparency in which our collective values and expectations of behaviour are constantly upheld, monitored, and reinforced by all staff, while minimising the risk of abuse for students

5. Staff-pupil relationships

Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position.

They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so.

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

- This takes place in a public place that others can access
- Others can see into the room, or any views are not deliberately obstructed
- A colleague or line manager knows that this interaction is taking place

There are occasions when adults are known to embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming,' where their sole purpose is to gain the trust of a child and manipulate a relationship so that sexual abuse can take place.

All staff contracted or otherwise, governors and volunteers should be aware that conferring 'special attention' without good reason or favouring one pupil before others has the potential to be construed as part of the 'grooming' process, and that it is a criminal offence.

Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of school hours.

Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils, and this includes social media profiles. Staff are also discouraged from having contact, online or otherwise with ex-students, unless there is a recognised historical and known, formal or familial relationship.

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

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, or if a staff member is concerned at any point about the interactions between a fellow staff member and a pupil, this should be reported in line with the procedures set out in our Safeguarding and Child Protection and Whistle Blowing policies.

Such concerns should be shared in confidence with the head teacher only, and in his/her absence, with the deputy head teacher.

6. Physical Contact and Personal Privacy

There are occasions during the school day when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with students, but it is crucial that they only do so in a way that is in line with their professional role.

Staff should remember that physical contact should always be proportionate to the needs of the student at that time, of limited duration and appropriate to the child's biological age, physical and mental development, gender, ethnicity culture and background.

Staff should consider if their actions are appropriate in relation to the special educational needs of the student they are physically or emotionally supporting, and whether such contact may escalate or de-escalate

a given situation, e.g., our students with ASD often prefer not to be touched at all by others and may require time out to achieve regulation when they are distressed.

Physical contact should never be secretive or casual and should always have a transparent purpose. It should never be used for the gratification of the adult. Physical contact on a regular basis is likely to raise questions unless the justification for this forms a part of a formally agreed, developed and transparent management or support plan. Any such plan may be subject to review at any time, and wherever possible, staff should always seek the pupil's permission before initiating physical contact of any kind.

There may be occasions when a distressed child needs comfort and reassurance. Such contact should always be transparent and wherever possible limited in duration according to the needs of the individual pupil.

Physical contact and adult support during such activities as PE, performances and physical instruction should always only be performed after seeking the student's permission to do so, and with staff being vigilant and sensitive to any distress or discomfort such contact may cause the child. Wherever possible, a second member of staff should be present.

Pupils have the right to expect privacy when changing clothes or taking a shower. However, school recognises that an appropriate level of supervision and support is necessary in order to ensure the safety of our students, to satisfy health and safety considerations and to ensure that behaviour expectations are met amongst peers.

Staff supervision should be age and wherever possible gender appropriate and sensitive to the needs of the individual in terms of the support required and provided

7. Personal & Intimate care of students

Pupils should be encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their own personal care as is possible and practicable.

When staff assistance or support is required, this should normally be undertaken wherever possible by **two** members of school staff in the vicinity.

However, we recognise that in certain circumstances this higher level of support may not be possible due to supervision needs in the classroom. When lone working to support personal or intimate care needs, staff should try to ensure that another appropriate adult is in the locality who is aware of the task to be undertaken and that, wherever possible, they are visible and/or audible.

The views and consent of the parents, carers and where appropriate the pupil, regardless of their age and understanding, should be actively sought in formulating a personal or intimate care plan if needed. Staff should endeavour to make parents and carers fully aware of the range of different circumstances under which their child may receive personal or intimate care at school.

Pupils are always entitled to respect and privacy, especially when in a state of undress, including, for example, when changing, toileting and showering. Staff should consider the child's needs, feelings, and personal autonomy first and foremost in such circumstances.

Placement students, volunteers, and supply staff, irrespective of the duration of their support role and the time they have been in school, should not be asked to engage in toileting or personal and intimate care of

students. They have signed to say that they will not undertake such tasks at their induction, and for supply staff this task is not a part of their contractual expectations.

For more detailed information, staff should consult the Intimate Care policy.

8. Positive Management of student behaviour

Staff should not use any form of degrading or humiliating treatment or language to punish or belittle a child.

Where pupils display difficult or challenging behaviour, staff should follow the school's Positive Management of Behaviour policy using agreed strategies appropriate to the circumstance and situation at hand or refer to the individual's Risk Reduction plan. These are in place for all students across our community and can be found on the school server – Staff Share – Behaviour. These plans are reviewed on a regular basis by the class and Behaviour lead as required.

In contentious and challenging situations, staff are asked not to shout or behave in a domineering manner towards students. If they feel that they are at risk of doing so, they should ask a colleague to support them, and distance themselves from the situation until they regain a sense of calm and self-moderation. A raised or louder voice should only be used when there are safety concerns or where a child is at risk of accidentally or purposefully hurting themselves or others due to their reduced contextual understanding, or escalated emotions.

All Heltwate staff have the opportunity to be trained in a form of positive handling called Team Teach – training which is reviewed on a regular basis by our in-house training team.

Staff who have recently joined the school **should not** engage in any form of physical intervention or restraint until they have been trained to do so, safely. They are however allowed to act in a supportive and proactive role, offering and implementing de-escalation techniques prior to a behavioural crisis being reached. If not intervening could put a child at significant risk, the Loco Parentis rule will apply.

Physical intervention and restraint will always only be used as a very last resort and in circumstances where the student has become a dangerous risk to themselves or others. Such circumstances should be evidenced on the IRIS system, with appropriate justification recorded in full by the staff member involved.

In all situations where physical intervention has taken place, staff must record full details of the incident and follow up interventions on IRIS. An alert is then forwarded to the head and deputy teacher to ensure that they are fully aware of the circumstances. Parents and carers must also be fully informed if their child has been in receipt of physical intervention, even if it has been of minimum duration.

Under no circumstances should physical force be used as a form of punishment or to dominate a student.

The school's behaviour policy includes clear guidance about the use of isolation and seclusion spaces. The legislation on these strategies is complex and staff should take extreme care to avoid any practice that could be viewed as unlawful, a breach of the pupil's human rights and/or false imprisonment. All contentious situations involving the use of the school's 'calm rooms' should be fully recorded on IRIS.

Sometimes children take themselves to a calming or secluded space in order to regulate their own behaviour. If a child chooses to use a calming area of their own accord, and there is no behaviour incident attached, then it does not need to be documented and parents do not need to be informed. In these cases, the child should be monitored but there is no the need for him/her to be closely observed at all times

9. Transportation of pupils

In certain circumstances, members of staff may be asked and will consent to transport students as part of their curriculum needs, or to support out of school activities. Wherever possible, school vehicles should be used for these journeys, with at least one adult in addition to the driver, acting as an escort.

If a member of staff uses their own personal vehicle, they must ensure that consent to do so has been sought from parents and the head teacher or a member of SLT, and that business insurance to cover the purpose of the journey is already in place and agreed.

Staff should ensure that the child's behavioural record is primarily safe and that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. The vehicle must be checked as being roadworthy and appropriately insured, and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded. Child seats should be considered as required.

It is not appropriate for staff to offer lifts to pupils outside of their normal working hours unless this has been expressly agreed by the head teacher and discussed with parents and/or carers beforehand.

In circumstances where a pupil requires transport in an emergency, or where not doing so would put the child at additional risk, permission and agreement must be sought from the head teacher, a member of SLT and from the student's parents/carers and again the rule of Loco Parentis will apply. Such circumstances should be reported on the IRIS system, with appropriate justification recorded.

Staff should take particular care when supervising pupils away from the school site, during trips and visits elsewhere, and remember that they remain in a position of trust, where the same high standards of safety and conduct apply.

10. Our Curriculum

At Heltwate School, we offer an open forum for debate and consultation to our students, and where their thoughts and opinions are instrumental and hugely important in the ongoing development of our school. Many areas of their curriculum may raise subject matter which could be contentious and of a sensitive nature.

Care should be taken to ensure that any resource material will not be mis-interpreted and that it does not show bias, intolerance, or discrimination in terms of gender, culture, ethnicity, sexuality and/or faith.

Staff must not enter into or encourage inappropriate discussion about sexual activity or sexual behaviour with students.

11. Communication and use of social media

Some of our more able students will have capacity to search for the social media profiles of staff members social profiles online and may attempt to make contact and communicate with staff in this way. School staff are expected to follow the guidance laid down in 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings, as follows.

"Staff should not give their personal contact details to children for example, e-mail address, home or mobile telephone numbers, details of web-based identities. If children locate these by any other means and attempt

to contact or correspond with the staff member, the adult should not respond and must report the matter to their line manager. The child should be firmly and politely informed that such contacts are not allowed or acceptable.”

Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship and they should not make any efforts to find pupils’ or parents’ social media profiles. The Class Dojo platform should be used wherever possible to communicate with parents and messages should always be child centred.

All staff are encouraged to make every effort to keep their social media and other personal information private by using the security and profile restriction options available to them when online, to mitigate the risks posed by a student or parent making unwanted contact with them.

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at the school without their parent’s consent.

Staff should be aware of the school’s Online safety and acceptable use policy and are discouraged from forming relationships of any kind or being in communication with former students.

12. Acceptable use of technology

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

Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, in school hours or in front of pupils. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.

School leaders have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system.

The school acknowledges that some staff may have existing genuine friendships, family relationships or other social contact with the parents and carers of our pupils, which are independent of their professional relationship. Staff are asked to strictly consider the professional and moral boundaries of such relationships and prioritise their contractual responsibilities to the school and our students over their personal and private relationships with others

Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents via social media, or by any other means outside school, to develop any sort of personal relationship with them. They must not make any efforts to find pupils or parents social media profiles and view these surreptitiously.

Staff are asked to remember that they remain representatives of the school and our community even during their personal lives, and as such, they should ensure that they act accordingly.

13. Confidentiality

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

This information should never be:

- Disclosed to anyone unless required by law or with consent from the relevant party or parties
- Used to humiliate, embarrass, or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than that which it was collected and intended for

This does not overrule staff's duty to report safeguarding and child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, as detailed further in our Safeguarding policy and Child Protection policy.

14. Honesty and integrity

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when managing or supporting pupils, when handling money, claiming expenses, and using school property and facilities.

Staff will not accept pecuniary or other bribes and should make the school management team aware if an attempt is made to do so.

Gifts worth more than £25 must be declared and recorded on the Gifts and Hospitality register.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the school is correct. This should include:

- Background information (including any past or current investigations/cautions related to conduct outside of school)
- Qualifications
- Professional experience

Where there are any updates to the personal information provided to the school, the member of staff will update the school as soon as is reasonably practicable. Consideration will then be given to the nature and circumstances of the matter and whether this may have an impact on the member of staff's employment contract.

Staff must ensure that all personal information given to the school about themselves, and their qualifications and professional experience is correct

15. Dress code

At Heltwate School, we do not have a strict dress code, but we do believe school personnel should be clothed professionally, smartly, responsibly, and appropriately at all times whilst at work. Our staff act as representatives of the school and role models for our students, and as such, should be dressed accordingly.

The way in which staff dress and present themselves, plays an important part in the image we wish to give to pupils, parents and carers, visitors, and the general public. For this reason, we ask all staff to be aware of their presentation and to always adhere to an appropriate and 'common sense' dress code when at work or when representing the school.

We also respect the right of individuals who wish to wear specific clothing because of their faith, providing that the type of clothing does not cause any health and safety issues to themselves or to others.

Staff must dress in a professional, appropriate manner, and in clothing that is appropriate for the task that they are undertaking.

School personnel are asked to use their common sense and personal judgment regarding their individual dress code and respect that their timetable should determine what they wear.

Outfits must not be overly revealing, both with regards to length of the torso and legs. Necklines must not be low and therefore revealing and female staff are expected to wear appropriate supportive underwear which should not be visible through the clothing above.

During the summer months, or when the weather is warmer, we appreciate that staff will want to be cool and comfortable whilst supporting and working with our students. Staff are however reminded that shorts, and hemlines of other seasonal attire should be of a sensible and non-revealing length.

Staff are reminded that those who dress or who conduct themselves in a manner which could be viewed as offensive or inappropriate will render themselves more vulnerable to reactive behaviours from students, and criticism or allegation from others.

Staff are reminded that our pupils because of their diverse learning needs and disabilities are sometimes not aware of or struggle to understand social boundaries and accept visual clues as their normality. They therefore need the support and guidance of staff and adults around them to act as suitable role models. Our students do sometimes develop 'crushes' on staff, and the wearing of revealing clothing may unfairly encourage these inappropriate feelings and emotions.

We ask that wherever possible and appropriate, tattoos and piercings are covered up, the latter for safety reasons.

All school staff must abide by the safety policies and procedures of their specific work areas and wear appropriate clothing and footwear.

Wearing of high heeled or open-toed footwear is done at the individuals own risk and the school will not be held responsible for any injuries caused by inappropriate footwear or clothing.

Jewellery or badges must not be worn if they breach the health and safety policy and procedures, if they cause offence to pupils, parents/carers, or other members of staff, or if they pose a danger to others. The wearing of long and dangling jewellery is discouraged for safety reasons as children may grab and pull them, causing injury.

Clothes must not display any offensive or political slogans. Contravention of this guidance will be challenged on an individual basis and rectified by SLT where required

16. Conduct outside of work

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school, or the teaching profession, into disrepute. This covers conduct including but not limited to relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school on social media.

17. Staff breaks

At Heltwate School, all staff, governors, and volunteers work extremely hard, usually giving the students 'an above and beyond' experience of teaching, support, and guidance on a daily basis.

The school recognises that our staff need and fully deserve a well-earned break away from their students at various intervals throughout their working day, in order to recharge, take on sustenance and socialise with their colleagues. We also appreciate that some members of staff will prefer to spend a proportion of their breaks smoking cigarettes to relax.

Whilst we recognise that smoking is an integral part of today's adult society and that many of our parents and carers also smoke, we still expect staff, governors, placement students and volunteers to act as suitable role models for our students in terms of their personal health and well-being.

Staff are reminded that they should desist from smoking within the sight of the school and our students and consider the school's neighbours and local residents in terms of residual waste.

18. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed biennially but can be revised as needed and it will be approved, ratified, and formally adopted by the governing board.

Our Governing Board, supported by the school's senior leadership team will ensure this staff Code of Conduct is implemented effectively, and will ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard children and deal with any concerns.

19. Links with other policies

This policy links with our policies on:

- Staff disciplinary procedures, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct. It also sets out examples of what we will deem as misconduct and gross misconduct
- Staff grievance procedures
- Child protection and safeguarding
- Gifts and hospitality
- Online safety
- Acceptable Use policy
- Intimate Care policy
- RSHE policy
- Whistle Blowing policy
- Data Protection policy
- Social networking policy
- Data Sharing policy
- Policy for the use of mobile phones & other recording devices
- Positive management of behaviour

This Staff Code of Conduct was ratified by the Governing Board on:	5 th October 2022
Due for review on or by:	September 2023
Signed by the Designated Safeguarding lead/ Headteacher:	Mr. Adam Brewster
Date:	
Chair of Governors:	Mr. Chris Marshall
Date:	