

	Vanguard Learning Trust <i>As a group of local primary and secondary schools, Vanguard Learning Trust's mission is to serve its local community by providing outstanding, inclusive education. We have a collective purpose and responsibility to provide effective teaching, through a curriculum based on equality of opportunity and entitlement that allows our young people to shine both in and out of the classroom. Each school in the Trust has its own ethos, which also complements the Trust's vision and values, and the common aspiration that all young people can achieve their potential.</i>
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Staff code of conduct

Part A: Trust-wide

September 2026

Contents

Part A: Trust-wide policy	3
1. Introduction	3
2. Executive summary	3
3. Staff propriety and conduct	5
4. Dealing with students	6
5. Physical contact and personal privacy	8
6. Behaviour management and physical intervention	8
7. One-to-one situations and meetings with students	9
8. Transporting students	10
9. Administering first aid	10
10. Educational visits and school clubs	10
11. Curriculum	11
12. Information Technology (IT)	12
13. Communication	13
14. Social contact via social media	13
15. Photography, Videos and other Creative Arts	15
16. Raising concerns	15
17. Smoking/Vaping	16
18. Health and safety	16
19. Confidentiality	16
20. Conflicts of interest	17
21. Criminal actions	18
22. Expected professional standards	19
23. Disciplinary	19
24. Fitness for work	19
25. Gifts	20
26. Holding external multiple positions	20
27. Intellectual property	21
28. Parent contact	21
29. Taking student attendance registers	21
30. Staff who have children at the school	22
31. General	22
Appendix 1: Teachers' Standards: Personal and Professional Conduct	25
Appendix 2 : De-escalation policy/advice	26
Appendix 3 : General Health and Safety Guidelines for all employees of Vanguard Learning Trust	27
Appendix 4: IT acceptable use policy (staff)	29
Appendix 5: Misconduct and Gross Misconduct	32
Appendix 6: Staff Code of Conduct reply form	34

Part A: Trust-wide policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The code of conduct ('the code') sets out the professional standards expected and the duty on staff to abide by it across all schools and the central team in the Vanguard Learning Trust (VLT). All staff have a duty to keep students safe, promote their welfare and to protect them from sexual, physical and emotional harm. This duty is, in part, exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between adults and students, and conduct by adults that demonstrate integrity, maturity and good judgement. The code will help to safeguard staff from being maliciously, falsely or mistakenly suspected or accused of misconduct in relation to any aspect of their role and required professional standards.

1.2 Safeguarding

The board of trustees (BoT) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students and requires all employees and volunteers to demonstrate this commitment in every aspect of their work. All adults (including employees, volunteers and other adults who come into contact with our students) are expected to demonstrate the highest levels of conduct.

1.3 Equality and diversity

The Trust is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among its workforce and creating a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination in respect of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010. All staff have a role in the promotion of dignity and respect for all, in a workplace where individual differences and contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.

1.4 Definitions

For the purposes of this document:

- 'Staff' means any adult working with students of 19 years and under. It includes employees, volunteers (including trustees and governors), consultants, contractors, casual/agency staff. The sections of this code apply to all staff but some aspects are context dependent due to the role of the staff member.
- 'Headteacher' means the school's substantive headteacher, an acting headteacher or the executive headteacher for primary.
- 'Governing body' means the local governing body (LGB) for each school.
- 'CEO' means the chief executive officer of Vanguard Learning Trust.
- 'Student' is a child or pupil who attends one of the Trust's schools.
- HR lead is the person designated as responsible for HR in a school or the central team; this may be either the HR lead, administrator or director or people.

2. Executive summary

2.1 Guiding principles

The following principles apply in all cases:

- Staff are responsible for their own actions and conduct 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.
- All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of students. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their peers, students and the public in general. An individual's conduct, either in or out of the workplace, should not compromise their position within the work setting or risk bringing the school into disrepute.
- All staff working with students are in positions of trust; a relationship between a member of staff and a student cannot be a relationship of equals.

- All staff set examples of conduct which can be copied by students. Staff must therefore avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.
- Staff are encouraged to seek advice if they are ever in doubt but should be aware that any conversation with another member of staff cannot be confidential; therefore under certain circumstances it may be advisable for staff to seek advice from a third party such as a union representative.
- All staff must, therefore, demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage others to do the same.

The code cannot provide an exhaustive list of what is, or is not, appropriate conduct for staff, governors or volunteers. However, it does highlight conduct that is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable in relation to the required professional standards. There will be occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or take action in the best interests of the student where no specific guidance has been given. Adults are expected to make responsible and informed judgements about their own conduct in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the students for which that individual is responsible.

2.2 Breaches

Any member of staff who is found to have not fulfilled their obligations in relation to the code may be subject to disciplinary action, especially if any investigation concludes their actions were willful. Such conduct may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal.

2.3 Allegations of abuse

When an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff, the headteacher/CEO and/or governing body will follow the Trust's Whistleblowing Policy, the guidance set out in the Trust's safeguarding policy, in KCSiE and the statutory guidance within *'Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and other Staff'* (Department for Education (DfE) Oct 2012) where it is alleged that a member of staff, a governor or volunteer has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or,
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he/she would pose a risk of harm if he/she works regularly or closely with children.

2.4 Whistleblowing

All staff must feel able to raise issues of concern and everyone must fully recognise the duty to do so particularly in terms of child protection. A member of staff who, in good faith, makes a public interest disclosure will have the protection of the relevant legislation: Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, c23, s2 Right not to suffer detriment 47B. Adults have a duty to report any child protection or welfare concerns to the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL). If the concern relates to the DSL, this should be reported to the headteacher and, if it relates to the headteacher, this should be reported to the local chair of governors. The Trust's whistleblowing policy should be referred to for further clarity on other matters that could be considered whistleblowing.

2.5 Concerning conduct

The following is a non-exhaustive list of conduct which would be a cause for concern. An adult who:

- allows a student to be treated badly; pretends not to know it is happening;
- gossips/shares information inappropriately;
- demonstrates inappropriate discriminatory conduct and/or uses inappropriate language;
- dresses in a way which is inappropriate for the job role;
- does not treat students fairly;
- demonstrates a lack of understanding about personal and professional boundaries;
- uses their position of trust to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine;
- appears to have an inappropriate social relationship with a student or students;
- appears to have special or different relationships with a student or students;
- seems to seek out unnecessary opportunities to be alone with a student;
- uses school property for personal use; and

- speaks inappropriately about students, eg. calling students names.

2.6 Amendments to the code

This code does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

3. Staff propriety and conduct

3.1 Conduct in and out of the workplace

All adults working with children have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of students. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their colleagues, students and the public in general. An individual's conduct or actions, in person, via all forms of communication including emails and either in or out of the workplace (including work-related events and work-related social functions), should not compromise their position within the work setting or bring the school or Trust into disrepute. The misuse of drugs, alcohol or acts of violence would be examples of such conduct.

3.2 Unacceptable conduct

All staff are expected to treat other colleagues, students, and external contacts such as parents, with dignity and respect, in compliance with the Trust's equality policies. Unacceptable conduct, such as discrimination, bullying, harassment, or intimidation will not be tolerated. This includes physical and verbal abuse and use of inappropriate language or unprofessional conduct with colleagues, students, and parents etc.

3.3 Expectations for working with colleagues

When working with colleagues staff are expected to:

- treat others with courtesy, respect and trust, not making derogatory or hurtful remarks
- promote a positive approach to working as a team
- listen to and enable all staff to have a voice
- try to keep a sense of perspective and understand differing viewpoints
- make every effort to be flexible and accepting of change
- work together in the best interests of the Trust to solve problems
- maintain self-control in potentially difficult situations
- respect and value the diversity and views and all backgrounds represented
- seek a solution rather than apportion blame
- avoid personal disputes, settling conflict as soon as possible and in a calm and rational manner

3.4 Professional conduct

In line with the VLT internal communication protocol, staff need to be mindful of conversations with other staff which could be construed as gossiping about other colleagues and/or students, and that conversations are conducted in a calm and professional manner. Staff should not discuss any concerns on leadership decisions in communal areas such as the staff room. Any concerns should be addressed through the line management process in a professional manner. It is a misconduct for staff to refer to students by inappropriate language such as derogatory names.

3.5 Sexual harassment

3.5.1 Unlawful sexual harassment

The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act, which comes into effect in October 2024, creates a duty on all workplaces to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of their employees in the workplace. Sexual harassment can occur between any individuals, regardless of their sex, gender or sexual orientation. Unlawful sexual harassment is not limited to the workplace, it can occur while employees are travelling for VLT-related activities or at VLT-related events and social situations.

3.5.2 Unwanted sexual conduct

An individual can experience unwanted conduct from someone of the same or different sex. The recipient of the conduct decides whether or not it is unwanted and it can be one-off; it does not need to be repeated

to constitute sexual harassment. Unwanted conduct does not need to be directed at a person, it can be witnessed or overheard. It does not matter whether the conduct is acceptable to others or is common in the person's work environment, it is sexual harassment if it is unacceptable for the person subjected to the conduct. Sexual interaction that is invited, mutual or consensual is not sexual harassment because it is not unwanted; however, sexual conduct that has been welcomed in the past can become unwanted.

3.5.3 Examples of sexual harassment

Sexual harassment includes a wide range of conduct, such as:

- sexual comments or jokes
- displaying sexually graphic pictures, posters or photos
- suggestive looks, staring or leering
- propositions and sexual advances
- excessive complimenting
- making promises in return for sexual favours
- sexual gestures
- intrusive questions about a person's private or sex life, and discussing their own sex life
- sexual posts or contact on social media
- spreading sexual rumours about a person
- sending sexually explicit emails or text messages
- unwelcome touching, hugging, massaging or kissing
- criminal conduct, including sexual assault, stalking, indecent exposure and offensive communications.

3.5.4 Complaints about sexual harassment

If an employee has witnessed or experienced sexual harassment they should raise this immediately with the headteacher/CEO (refer to Section 2.4, Whistleblowing). The matter will be investigated in a fair and timely manner in line with the VLT disciplinary policy and, depending on the nature of the complaint, the employee may be advised to refer the case to the police. The Trust has a duty of care to its employees who have witnessed or experienced sexual harassment and they will receive welfare checks from a designated person in line with the Trust's protocol for staff welfare checks.

3.6 Personal property

Personal property of a sexually explicit nature such as books, magazines, CDs, DVDs or such material on any electronic media must not be brought onto or stored on the school premises or on any school equipment.

3.7 Communication with parents/guardians

When communicating with parents/guardians staff should:

- take time to listen to them with respect and confidentiality;
- respect that parents/guardians may come from different backgrounds;
- remain calm and display empathy;
- be proactive in involving them where appropriate and show appreciation when volunteering their help;
- be realistic and honest in their communication;
- remain professional and support colleagues should the need arise;
- work together in the best interest of the student; and
- keep appropriate and accurate records where required.

4. Dealing with students

4.1 Social contact

Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with students, including sixth form students over the age of 18, for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. There may be occasions when there are social contacts between students and staff, where, for example, a parent and staff member are part of the same social circle. These contacts, however, will be easily recognised and openly acknowledged. This means that staff should have no secret social contact with students, including

sixth form students over the age of 18, or their parents and should advise the headteacher of any situations which may give rise to concern. Staff should be mindful of work-related conversations during social gatherings, particularly if these take place in the vicinity of the school and environs as there is a risk of these conversations being overheard by family members or acquaintances of the family.

4.2 Sexual activity

4.2.1 Sexual activity with a student

Staff should not engage in sexual activity with any student, including any sixth form student aged 18 or over. Failure to comply with this is illegal, will be reported to the police and will result in a disciplinary process that could lead to dismissal.

4.2.2 Definition of sexual activity

Sexual activity includes sexual contact and non-contact activities, such as:

- including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex);
- non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing;
- non-contact activities, such as causing a student to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of youth produced sexual imagery; or
- encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse.

4.2.3 Sexual activity with students and the law

Students are protected by the same laws as adults in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour. They are additionally protected by specific legal provisions regardless of whether there is consent or not. Where a person aged 18 or over is in a specified position of trust with a child or student under 18 years, the Sexual Offences Act 2003 makes it an offence for that person to engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of that child or to cause or incite that child to engage in or watch sexual activity.

4.2.4 Definition of sexually suggestive activity

Sexually suggestive activity includes sexual remarks, about a student or adults and can take various forms including:

- verbal comments;
- letters, notes, texts, electronic mail; and/or
- phone calls, social networking contact.

Staff should take care that their language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculations. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought.

4.2.5 Grooming

There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' where the sole purpose is to gain the trust of a child or student, and manipulate that relationship so that sexual abuse can take place. Staff should be aware that conferring special attention without good reason or favouring a student has the potential to be construed as being part of a 'grooming' process, which is a criminal offence.

4.3 Infatuations and Crushes

A student may develop an infatuation with an adult. A member of staff who becomes aware that a student may be infatuated with them must report this without delay to the DSL so that appropriate action can be taken to avoid any hurt, distress or embarrassment. The situation will be taken seriously and the adult should be careful to ensure that no encouragement of any kind is given to the student. It should also be recognised that careless and insensitive reactions may provoke false accusations.

4.4 Scenarios to be reported

As noted in Sections 4.2.3 and 4.2.4, examples of situations which must be reported are given below:

- A member of staff is concerned that they might be developing a relationship with a student that could have the potential to represent an abuse of trust;

- A member of staff is concerned that a student is becoming attracted to them or that there is a developing attachment or dependency;
- A member of staff is concerned that actions or words have been misunderstood or misconstrued by a student such that an abuse of trust might be wrongly suspected by others;
- A member of staff is concerned about the apparent development of a relationship by another member of staff or volunteer, or receives information about such a relationship.

5. Physical contact and personal privacy

5.1 Physical contact with students

Staff need to be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the student, an observer or by anyone to whom the action is described. If a student is upset, appropriate verbal responses and sympathetic body language should be used. Age-appropriate physical contact may be appropriate in providing comfort and reassurance; this is outlined in part B for primary schools. Staff should always remain self-aware in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation. Staff must never touch a student in a way which may be considered indecent or inappropriate. Staff need to be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact can be open to scrutiny. If staff believe they have been involved in physical contact that could be misinterpreted, they must report it to the DSL at the earliest convenience.

5.2 Use of reasonable force

Staff are advised to avoid making physical contact with students unless it is related to the safety of students and/or adults at risk. Staff who have physical contact with students in order to intervene in a physical incident, or imminent physical incident, must see the DSL to complete a written report.

5.3 Acceptable reasons for physical contact

There are occasions 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 ways appropriate to their professional role. For example in PE, music tuition or drama/performing arts, staff may have to initiate physical contact with students in order to support them to perform a task/exercise safely or to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment or musical instrument. This should be done with the student'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 student.

5.4 Health and safety of students

Students are entitled to respect privacy when changing clothes or taking a shower. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard students, satisfy health and safety considerations and ensure that bullying or teasing does not occur. This supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the students concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

5.5 Intimate care

Staff with a job description which includes intimate care duties will have appropriate training and written guidance. No other member of staff or volunteer should be involved in intimate care duties except in an emergency. Staff and volunteers should be aware of current guidance on safe teaching practice contained in the DCSF "Guidance for safer working practice for adults working with children & students" (2009).

6. Behaviour management and physical intervention

6.1 Degrading behaviour

All students have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Corporal punishment is unlawful in all schools. Staff and volunteers must not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a student. The use of sarcasm, which is demeaning or insensitive comments towards students, is not acceptable in any situation. Deliberately intimidating students by shouting aggressively, hectoring or overbearing physical presence is not acceptable in any situation. It is recognised that staff will occasionally need to raise their voice in order to gain students'

attention but it should never intend to intimidate students. Any sanctions or rewards used should be part of the school's behaviour policy (part B).

6.2 Physical intervention

Physical intervention can only be justified in exceptional circumstances. Staff may legitimately intervene to prevent a student from committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property, engaging in conduct prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline. Staff should have regard to the health and safety of themselves and others. Under no circumstances should physical force be used as a form of punishment. The use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence. Specific guidance on de-escalation is provided (see **Appendix 2**).

6.3 First aid personnel

All schools must have trained first aiders/appointed persons. Staff must have had the appropriate training before administering first aid or medication except in an emergency.

6.4 Staff who have subjected to discriminatory or abusive conduct by students

The Trust has a duty of care to its employees and will not tolerate any form of discriminatory or abusive conduct by students towards staff members. All staff who are the subject of such actions should ensure that they report any such incidents through the processes as set out in Trust's behaviour policy. Employees will receive welfare checks from a designated person in line with the Trust's protocol for staff welfare checks

7. One-to-one situations and meetings with students

7.1 Visibility

Staff must avoid meetings with students in remote secluded areas of the school. Staff should ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in one-to-one situations. Where appropriate, staff should inform colleagues of the meeting beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by. Staff should always report any situation where a student becomes distressed or angry to a senior colleague. Pre-arranged meetings with students away from the school are not permitted without the approval of the DSL. Meetings with students at times of the day when few staff are on site also require this permission to be sought in advance.

7.2 Students during lessons

students should not be sent out of lessons to stand alone in the corridor. If staff want to speak to students individually during a lesson in the corridor this should be done by the door in view of the class.

7.3 One-to-one settings

One-to-one situations have the potential to make students more vulnerable to harm by those who seek to exploit their position of trust. Adults working in one-to-one settings with students may also be more vulnerable to unjust or unfounded allegations being made against them. Staff must recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly.

7.4 Staff homes

No student should be in or invited into, the home of an adult who works with them, unless the reason for this has been established and agreed with parents/guardians and a senior leader/headteacher. The exception would be staff who have or have had a child at the school. Staff need to be mindful of these situations and refer to Sections 31.1, 31.2 and 31.3.

7.5 Home visits

Home visits should only be carried out in agreement with the senior leadership team (SLT). Staff should adhere to agreed risk assessments, avoid unannounced visits wherever possible and never enter a home without the parent or carer's consent or when the parent is absent.

8. Transporting students

8.1. Staff in school transport

In certain situations, eg. out of school activities, staff may agree to transport students. Transport arrangements should be made in advance by a designated member of staff and should be in an official school vehicle such as the school minibus. Wherever possible and practicable, eg. in all but emergency situations, transport should be provided other than in private vehicles, with at least one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort. An additional adult is not needed if students are transported within the London Borough of Hillingdon; however, the driver should ensure that they have arranged for an agreed member of SLT in their school to be available to assist with any issues if required.

8.2 Legal requirements

Adults should ensure that their conduct is safe and that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. They must ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.

8.3 Sixth formers and taxis

Sixth form students who study a subject at another secondary school may opt to use a taxi service which is funded by the school. These arrangements should be made in advance by a designated member of staff with a taxi company approved by the school.

8.4 Staff offering lifts

It is inappropriate for staff to offer lifts to students outside their normal working duties, unless this has been agreed with the DSL and parents/guardians.

8.5 Emergency lifts

There may be occasions where a student requires transport in an emergency situation or where not to give a lift may place a student at risk. Such circumstances must always be recorded and reported to a senior leader and parents/guardians.

9. Administering first aid

9.1 General provision of first aid

Any member of school staff may be asked to undertake first aid tasks but they cannot be required to do so. Teachers and other staff working with students are expected to use their best endeavours at all times, particularly in emergencies, to secure the welfare of the pupils and students in the same way that parents might be expected to act towards their children. In general, the consequences of taking no action are likely to be more serious than those of trying to assist in an emergency. In all cases where a member of staff administers first aid, a dedicated 'first aider' in the school (or appointed person) must be notified and a record kept. More information can be found in the Trust's *Health, safety and welfare* policy.

9.2 Administering medication to students with medical conditions

Only appropriately trained staff should administer medication to students with known medical conditions. When administering first aid or medication wherever possible staff should ensure that another adult is present or aware of the action being taken. Staff should follow the guidance available in the following school policy *Supporting students with medical conditions* policy.

10. Educational visits and school clubs

Staff and volunteers should take particular care when supervising students in the less formal atmosphere of an educational visit, particularly in a residential setting, or after-school activity. Staff and volunteers remain in a position of trust and the same standards of conduct apply. It is the trip leader's responsibility to ensure that any necessary medication is available to individual students throughout the duration of the trip and that students are placed in groups where accompanying members of staff are suitably trained to administer such medication as necessary. Staff should refer to the school's School Visits Policy. Alcohol must never be

consumed by adults supervising school visits until they return to their accommodation at the end of the day's outdoor activities and then only consumed in moderation. The members of staff who are on designated duty during the evening must refrain from consuming alcohol. It is the responsibility of the visit leader to delegate and communicate in advance who the designated duty team is for each evening.

10.1 Communication with parents/guardians on school visits

10.1.1 Staff updates on trips

A key objective on extended school visits is for students to develop a sense of independence away from home but within a safe controlled environment. Therefore, staff leading school visits will not contact parents/guardians as a matter of routine.

10.1.2 Emergency contact number

For residential visits, parents/guardians will be given an emergency contact number in their final information pack about the visit.

10.1.3 Communication with parents on trips

Staff accompanying a visit should correspond with parents/guardians in situations such as those below:

- Serious behaviour issues which are likely to result in terminating the student's place on the visit or further sanctions on return to school;
- Accidents or injuries which have required specialist medical attention;
- Illness during the visit;
- Significant changes to the itinerary, eg. a cancelled flight or other significant delay to the journey.

10.1.4 Returning from the trip

Any concerns, including those above, should be communicated to parents/guardians by a member of school staff when the student is collected on return from the trip.

10.1.5 Updating parents

Staff should not ordinarily call parents/guardians to inform them of routine matters such as arrival at a destination.

10.1.6 Social media updates on trips

On residential visits, if the trip leader would like to give updates on the activities of students this should be provided for parents and guardians via the dedicated school's Instagram, Facebook or X (Twitter) accounts, using a school device. The school's social media guidance should be followed when creating social media posts.

10.2 Staff social media whilst on a trip

Staff should not post any comments or photographs on their personal social media accounts about a school trip.

11. Curriculum

11.1 Appropriateness of resources

Many areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is contentious, sexually explicit, or of an otherwise sensitive nature. Care should be taken to ensure that resource materials are vetted and are appropriate to the age group, limit misinterpretation as much as possible and clearly relate to the learning outcomes identified by the lesson plan. Staff are encouraged to check the appropriateness of materials with their colleagues and/or line manager to help assess its suitability. Unexpected responses by students to the materials or resources presented should be reported to the staff member's line manager.

11.2 Answering students's questions

Responding to students' questions can require careful judgement and staff must take guidance in these circumstances from a senior member of staff.

11.3 Content of lessons

Staff should:

- ensure that content of lessons is appropriate to the student's age and cognitive development; and
- take care, when encouraging students to use self-expression, not to overstep personal and professional boundaries; and
- be able to justify all curriculum materials and relate these to clearly identifiable lesson objectives.

Staff should not:

- enter into or encourage inappropriate discussion which may offend or harm others; and
- undermine fundamental British values; and
- express any prejudicial views; and
- attempt to influence or impose their personal values, attitudes or beliefs on students.

11.4 Sex and Relationships Education Policy

Staff should refer to the school's Sex and Relationships Education Policy.

12. Information Technology (IT)

12.1 Unacceptable use of IT facilities

All staff are to read and sign the IT acceptable use policy (**Appendix 4**) annually at the start of each academic year, or within one week of commencing employment in the VLT.

12.2 Use of equipment

Under no circumstances should staff use school/Trust IT equipment to access inappropriate images or indecent material in or out of school.

12.3 Privacy

The contents of the IT resources and communications systems are the property of the school. Therefore, staff 'should have no expectation of privacy in any message, file, data, document, facsimile, telephone conversation, social media post, conversation or message, or any other kind of information or communications transmitted to, received or printed from, or stored or recorded on the school's electronic information and communications systems. This includes the Google Suite of web applications.

12.4 Monitoring of IT resources

The Trust/school reserves the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, staff usage of IT resources and communications systems, including but not limited to telephone, email, messaging, voicemail, CCTV, internet and social media postings and activities, to ensure that the rules are being complied with and for the following purposes:

- to monitor whether the use of the email system or the internet is legitimate and in accordance with this code;
- to assist in the investigation of alleged wrongful acts; or
- to comply with any legal obligation.

12.5 CCTV

CCTV systems monitor schools twenty-four hours a day. This data is recorded and may be used as evidence of any alleged wrong-doing. The data is stored in line with the Data Protection Act, 2018.

12.6 Personal use of IT

Staff should avoid using the school's IT system, including email, for personal use unless in exceptional circumstances. This principle also applies to school mobile phones, the school/central team phone system and internet telephone application (3CX). Staff can refer to the VLT internal communication protocol.

12.7 Email during lessons

Staff must not open their email account when students are in the classroom unless in the case of a lockdown. This principle must be followed by all staff. Staff can refer to the VLT internal communication protocol.

12.8 Telephone and mobile phone use

Staff can only use the Trust's telephone systems for work related purposes unless in the case of an emergency for a personal matter. The finance team monitors the monthly bill and may ask staff to validate specific items. Any work-related international calls must be approved by a senior leader.

12.9 Mobile phones

Staff who wish to use their mobile phones for school purposes must do so discreetly and away from students and public areas of the school. Phone calls should not be made or accepted on mobile phones in front of students. Staff should not use their mobile phones to check emails in the vicinity of students; however, it is recognised that staff may want to log an incident on their phone at the time of the incident.

13. Communication

13.1 Communication policies

VLT has clear expectations in relation to communication (staff can refer to the VLT internal communication protocol and school parent communication policies). It clearly outlines the expectation of how staff should communicate with other colleagues and with parents. All staff should read relevant policies and ensure they adhere to the sentiments, including tone of communication and response time to parents.

13.2 Use of names in email

When referring to a student or another member of staff in an email, staff should not put their name or initials in the subject bar of the email. Staff can refer to the VLT internal communication protocol.

13.3 Password protection

Staff should arrange password protection procedures for any sensitive data.

13.4 Surreptitious recording

The Trust does not give anyone, parents, visitors, students, staff, governors, third party employees, permission to surreptitiously record a meeting and/or conversation. This may be in contravention of current legislation. Legal advice will therefore be sought if any person is suspected of recording a meeting.

14. Social contact via social media

14.1 Students and social media

Staff must not, under any circumstance, make contact with students on social networking sites. Communication between students and staff on school platforms such as Google Classroom should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. There should be no social contact between students and staff via any other form of communication, including social media. This includes social media sites such as Facebook and X, mobile phones and related apps, game consoles, emails, webcams, digital cameras, video images, websites and blogs. This is not an exhaustive list as social media is constantly changing. Staff and volunteers should not share any personal information with students. If a student seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the adult must not respond and inform the school's DSL to ensure the student is spoken to.

14.2 Staff who are parents and social media

Staff who are parents of students at the same school in the Trust should be mindful of their professional responsibilities and should not communicate directly with other students using social media, for example by sending or accepting 'friend' requests or similar communications including X, Facebook and such like. This is by no means an exhaustive list as social media is constantly changing.

14.3 Staff who are friends with parents

As set out in the VLT home-school protocol, the Trust appreciates that some parents may be known to staff personally, especially those living in the vicinity of their school. It is imperative that any correspondence does not relate to school matters and parents should appreciate staff's professional responsibility in relation to specific information they may become aware of through a social media platform.

14.4 Personal contact details

Staff and volunteers must not give their personal contact details such as home/mobile phone number, home or personal email address or social networking details to students.

14.5 Privacy settings

It is recommended that staff ensure that all possible privacy settings are activated to prevent students from making contact on personal profiles and to prevent students from accessing photo albums or other personal information which may appear on social networking sites. This includes any social media account owned by an employee, irrespective of the name of the account. If a student makes contact, the member of staff should report this immediately to the school's DSL. If they are not available, they should report this to a deputy or a member of the school's SLT. The member of staff should not block or delete the message, or respond to the contact in any way until a course of action has been agreed between the member of staff and the school's DSL.

14.6 'Friends' with ex-students

Staff must not have any students or any ex-students under the age of 19 as friends on their social networking sites. Staff should not be 'friends' with ex-students over the age of 19 who have siblings at the school. As stated, staff must not have any online friendships with any students under the age of 19, unless they are family members. Staff are advised not to have online friendships with parents or guardians of students, or members of the governing body. Where such online friendships exist, staff must ensure that appropriate professional boundaries are maintained.

14.7 Comments about work

Staff must not post any comments about their school or the Trust on any form of media (except official school media). This includes any comment about school trips, and photographs taken at work or on school trips.

14.8 Comments in line with the Trust ethos

Staff are personally responsible for what they communicate in social media and must bear in mind that what is published might be read by staff, students, the general public, future employers and friends and family for a long time. Staff must ensure that their online profiles are consistent with the professional image expected by the school and they model safe practice at all times. Staff should not post material which damages the reputation of the school or Trust, or which causes concern about their suitability to work with children and students. Those who post material which may be considered as inappropriate, or who offer views and/or opinions that do not represent the school/Trust's ethos and values could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations of misconduct which may be dealt with under the Trust's disciplinary procedure. Even where it is made clear that the writer's views on such topics do not represent those of the school or Trust, such comments are inappropriate. It is advisable for all employees to note that in line with KCSIE guidelines, if an employee moves to another school, the school may conduct a social media search when an employee is offered a post as part of their safer recruitment process.

14.9 Professional/personal life

Staff must not publish information about any school matter, including school trips, on social media (except official school media). Staff need to keep their professional working life separate from their personal one.

14.10 Identification of account

Staff should not follow the school social media accounts with their own personal accounts unless the photo and account name does not identify them. Similarly, staff should also be mindful of being identifiable when liking, reposting and sharing school social media posts.

14.11 Use of WhatsApp

Staff should not use WhatsApp as a means of official internal communication within their school or the central team; it should not be used to share confidential information about the school or Trust, or any of its students, staff, governors or trustees.

14.12 Messages used in formal proceedings

Staff should be aware that conversations on WhatsApp or other social media messaging services may be disclosed as part of a formal process or legal proceedings such as court or employment tribunal proceedings, or in relation to a data subject access request. As with other methods of digital communication, it is wise to consider whether the user would communicate in the same way in a face-to-face conversation or meeting.

14.13 Business networking websites

In accordance with the Trust's 'Providing employment references policy', employees should not provide open recommendations, endorsements or references, which are then published on their personal profile web pages for other contacts or connections, or prospective contacts or connections, to read. As these could potentially be construed as open references given on behalf of the Trust, all managers and employees are prohibited from providing these types of recommendations, endorsements, or references online to, or for the benefit of other employees or ex-employees, unless express permission is obtained from the headteacher/CEO. If these types of recommendations, endorsements or references are requested online by clients, customers, contractors, suppliers or other school-related business connections, managers should, in the first instance, refer such requests to their line manager and seek the permission of the headteacher/CEO before responding.

15. Photography, Videos and other Creative Arts

15.1 Consent for photography

Staff should only publish images of students where their parent/guardian has given consent to do so; staff should refer to their school's guidance on the use of images and the consent forms therein. Staff should be clear about the purpose of the activity and about what will happen to the photographs when the lesson/activity is concluded, and should ensure that a senior leader is aware that photography/image equipment is being used and for what purpose. Staff should avoid taking images in one-to-one situations.

15.2 Approved equipment

Adults should only use equipment provided or authorised by the school to make/take images of a school activity, and should not use mobile telephones or any other similar devices to make/take images.

15.3 Age appropriate films

DVDs or other videos/films shown to students should be age appropriate with staff following the censor's guidelines ie. a '15-rated' film by the British Board of Film Classification should only be shown to a class where every student is over 15 years old and the material is deemed suitable within an educational environment. Where an online video has been flagged for age-restriction, for example on Youtube, the member of staff should consult with their line manager and/or a member of the school's safeguarding team.

16. Raising concerns

16.1 Concern about use of IT

Staff who have concerns about any alleged abuse or inappropriate use of IT resources, camera/recording equipment, telephone, social networking sites, email or internet facilities or inappropriate communications, whether by students, parents, guardians or staff, or others should alert the headteacher or CEO. Where a concern relates to the headteacher this should be reported to the chair of the governing Body; where a concern relates to the CEO this should be reported to the chair of trustees. If a matter concerns child protection it should also be reported to the DSL.

16.2 Inappropriate staff conduct

Bullying can be experienced by staff as well as students. Staff should notify the headteacher/CEO if they are subject to bullying. The school will endeavour to protect staff and stop any inappropriate conduct.

17. Smoking/Vaping

17.1 Breaks

Staff cannot smoke or vape in any part of the Trust's building and/or grounds. Staff are allowed to smoke/vape only during their allocated breaks and should sign in and out of the building.

17.2 Location

Staff should ensure they smoke or vape discreetly by making sure they do not encounter students, including sixth formers. In addition, staff must be mindful of smoking/vaping in a group close to residents' houses and leaving cigarette remains close to houses (staff are advised to put them in a bin).

18. Health and safety

The health, safety, and welfare organisational structure and responsibilities have been endorsed by the trustees, LGBs, and headteachers. The BoT holds ultimate accountability for health and safety, ensuring compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and other relevant regulations. Their duties include establishing and reviewing health and safety policies, delegating implementation to individual school LGBs and headteachers, identifying and managing significant risks, reviewing control measures, allocating sufficient resources, securing competent health and safety advice, and fostering a culture of high health and safety standards across all schools within the Trust. All staff have a responsibility for health and safety in schools across the Trust and must follow the guidance outlined in 'Appendix 3: General health and safety guidelines for all employees of VLT.

19. Confidentiality

19.1 Regulation

As data controllers, all schools are contractually obligated and subject to current regulation. In addition, staff owe a common law duty of care to safeguard the welfare of their students. This duty is acknowledged in the provisions governing disclosure of information about students. Intentional sharing of confidential information with persons who should not be receiving the information will be managed under the Trust's disciplinary policy.

19.2 Sensitive/confidential information

19.2.1 Access to confidential information about students

Members of staff and governors may have access to confidential information about students in order to undertake their responsibilities. In some circumstances the information may be sensitive and/or confidential. Confidential or personal information about a student or their family must never be disclosed to anyone other than on a 'need to know' basis. In circumstances where the student's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the student.

19.2.2 Disclosure of information

A member of staff cannot promise confidentiality to any individual in their professional capacity. Staff could have to disclose information if required. The law does not prevent the sharing of sensitive or personal information within organisations. If the information is confidential, but there is a need for disclosure, sharing of it may be justified. Such information can be shared lawfully within the parameters of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). An individual employee cannot give a personal assurance of confidentiality.

19.3 Sharing information

There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a student, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a duty to pass information on without delay to the school's DSL or a deputy as set out in the Trust's safeguarding policy. The DSL (or deputy) should always be available to discuss safeguarding concerns. If in exceptional circumstances, the DSL (or deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Staff should consider speaking to a member of the SLT and/or take advice from local authority children's social care. In

these circumstances, any action taken should be shared with the DSL (or a deputy) as soon as it is practically possible. Staff should not assume a colleague, or another professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe. The Data Protection Act and UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare. If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the DSL (or deputy). Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

19.4 Storage of information

Confidential information about students must be held securely. Confidential information about students must not be held off the school site other than on security protected school equipment. Information must only be stored for the length of time necessary to discharge the task for which it is required.

19.5 Guidance

If a member of staff is in any doubt about the storage or sharing of information he/she must seek guidance from a senior member of staff. Any media or legal enquiries must be passed to the SLT.

20. Conflicts of interest

20.1 Conflicts of interest and declarations

A conflict of interest is when a personal relationship overlaps a professional one. This is defined as:

- a family/close personal relationship
- a business/commercial/financial relationship
- a romantic/sexual relationship

This can cause a potential risk to the organisation and therefore has to be managed. The first step of this is to ensure that any conflicts are known and in some circumstances they have to be declared.

20.2 Declaration

Staff are required to declare a conflict of interest when they are aware of a known or potential conflict. This allows for full transparency. In most situations, the conflicts need to be managed. For example, an employee cannot be involved in the appointment of a person known to them in terms of selection and interview process. Where the situation is in conflict with the ethos of the school/Trust, a number of possible actions may need to be taken, including the employee withdrawing from the organisation.

20.3 Relationship with individuals

Staff should declare their relationship with any individual(s) where 20.1 applies. Failure to make a relevant declaration of interest is a serious breach of trust and, therefore, if employees are in doubt about a declaration, they are advised to take advice from the school/Trust.

20.4 Business services

Staff must declare any relatives, partners or friends who are engaged in a business, which either currently provides services to the school/Trust, or schools with which a Trust school collaborates or is federated, or may do so in the future. This is in order to minimise the risk of suspicion that some influence may be exerted over a particular customer as to the choice of provider, or that the provider gained advantage in terms of information received.

20.5 Governors, members and trustees

Staff who have a connection in a private, social or domestic capacity with someone who is a governor, member or trustee that may potentially create, or be thought to create, a conflict of interest, will need to declare this to the headteacher/CEO.

20.6 Private tutoring/childcare

Staff must not organise paid private tutoring, childcare or supervision for any student who currently attends any school in the Trust, or former students. This includes tutoring onsite or at any other location, including private homes.

20.7 Private work

Staff should inform the headteacher/CEO of any other employment, especially part-time staff who may have another job. It is important that any paid work is divulged as it is a potential conflict of interest. Should a member of staff be an Ofsted inspector, there will need to be agreement between the Trust and the school before they can proceed with inspections whilst being employed by Vanguard Learning Trust. Their payment for inspection work will be made to the Trust not the employee.

20.8 Submission of declarations

All declarations should be submitted in writing to the headteacher/CEO on a register of business interests form.

20.9 Tender for a contract

Employees who wish to tender for a contract from the school/Trust must declare such an intention to the headteacher/CEO as soon as intent has been formed, and at the earliest opportunity.

21. Criminal actions

21.1 Informing the headteacher/CEO

Staff must inform the headteacher/CEO if they are arrested/convicted/cautioned of a crime and, if arrested, must notify the headteacher/CEO of the development and outcome of the case as soon as it happens. Employees do not need to disclose fixed penalty notices for minor driving offences, such as speeding tickets, defective lighting etc., unless driving is a requirement of an employee's role or the conviction results in disqualification. The headteacher/CEO will discuss this with the employee in the context of their role and responsibilities in order to help safeguard students and other employees in the Trust.

21.2 Effect on employment

Disclosing a conviction does not necessarily mean disciplinary action against an employee. The extent to which a criminal offence may affect employment depends on whether the conduct:

- makes the employee unsuitable for their type of work; and/or
- may reflect adversely on the school/Trust's reputation or ability to perform its function.

21.3 Failure to disclose an arrest or conviction

Staff should always notify the headteacher/CEO if there is any doubt as to whether or not they need to share information about an arrest or conviction. Failure to disclose such information may lead to disciplinary action.

21.4 Financial conduct

21.4.1 School resources

Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.

21.4.2 Bribery

All staff must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or if they request, agree or accept, or receive a bribe from another person. If someone believes that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act, they should refer to the Whistleblowing procedure for schools.

21.4.3 Bankruptcy/liquidation

Employees must inform the headteacher/CEO if they are declared bankrupt or are involved as a director of a company which is wound up or put into voluntary liquidation if it may impact upon their role or duties. Bankruptcy may impact on the duties of employees who have a financial responsibility. Such information will be treated in the strictest confidence. The purpose of this is to ensure that a proper framework of support is in place.

21.4.4 Benefits in kind (BIK)

All employees are subject to tax on all earnings from their employment, including their salary and anything else that is provided that has a value unless it is specifically exempted from legislation or HMRC statutory concession. A benefit in kind (BIK) is a non-cash benefit that has monetary value and may need to be declared for tax purposes. The Trust is not aware of any benefits it provides that could be considered a BIK. Staff should not use employer benefits for personal gain (eg. revision books purchased using an employer discount). Employees should always inform their headteacher if they have, or suspect they have, received a BIK. Failure to do so could result in penalty fees for the Trust and may be investigated in line with the Trust's disciplinary policy.

22. Expected professional standards

22.1 Teachers' standards

Teachers are required to comply with the Teachers' Standards in force 1st September 2012, both part 1 and part 2, Personal and Professional Conduct (refer to **Appendix 1**).

22.2 Keeping children safe in education

All staff governors and volunteers must be familiar with and act in accordance with the most recent Part 1 and Annex A of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' DfE.

23. Disciplinary

23.1 Misconduct and gross misconduct

Appendix 5 outlines main examples of conduct that constitute misconduct and gross misconduct that form part of the VLT disciplinary policy. This list is not exhaustive.

23.2 Disciplinary action

All staff need to recognise that failure to meet these standards of conduct and conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal, in line with the VLT disciplinary policy.

23.3 Employees elsewhere

For staff who are not employed by VLT, the Trust will follow up any allegations of misconduct/gross misconduct with the staff member's employer and, where applicable, report the incident to the relevant professional body and also the police. If the allegation relates to any child protection concerns, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will always be contacted and the police for any possible criminal activities.

24. Fitness for work

24.1 Medication

If taking medication, staff must seek the advice of their doctor to ensure that such medication will not impede their ability to fulfil their role/responsibilities. Staff must inform the HR lead/director of people of any situations where a risk to themselves or others may arise because of this.

24.2 Impairment of performance

The HR lead/director of people will consider the options available for assisting employees who are required to take legally prescribed drugs and whose levels of performance may be impaired. In these circumstances, a risk assessment will be undertaken and further advice will be sought.

24.3 Alcohol

The Trust accepts that alcohol is legally and freely available, but staff must ensure that the use of alcohol outside of work does not adversely affect their work performance, the health and safety or welfare of themselves or others, and does not damage the school/Trust's image and reputation. Alcohol must not be consumed during the lunch break.

24.4 Under the influence of alcohol/drugs

Staff must not consume or be under the influence of alcohol, use illicit drugs or other illegal substances while at work.

24.5 Managing staff

The headteacher/CEO will consider the options available for managing employees in the above situation and will seek advice as and when necessary.

25. Gifts

25.1 Suppliers

All gifts from suppliers or associates of the school need to be declared to the headteacher/CEO, with the exception of "one-off" small token gifts from students or parents.

25.2 Gifts over £10

It is against the law for public servants to take bribes. Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed by others as a bribe, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. Each school has a register of gifts log on which staff must record all gifts with an estimated value of £10 or more. Staff are recommended to inform their line manager whenever they receive a gift. Small gifts given by a third party may be exempt from tax and National Insurance Contributions (NIC) if the following conditions are met:

- The gift consists of goods or a voucher that are not exchangeable for cash
- The third party making the gift is not the employer or a person connected with the employer
- The gift is not made in recognition of, or in anticipation of, the performance of particular employment services
- The gift has not been directly or indirectly procured by the employer or by a person connected with the employer
- The total cost of all gifts made by the provider to the employee, or to members of the employee's family, during the tax year is £250 or less (inclusive of VAT).

25.3 Hospitality

Where hospitality in the form of meals and drinks is offered by a business contact, this is only acceptable where it forms part of a normal business meeting (for example, refreshments at training events or meals at evening meetings). Offers of hospitality to specific events, such as a dinner or sporting event, should only be accepted after authorisation from the headteacher/CEO. These would normally only be approved where there is a clear and demonstrable benefit to the school/Trust and the hospitality would not expose the school/Trust to criticism that the business contact was exerting undue influence.

25.4 Gifts for students

Personal gifts must not be given to students. This could be misinterpreted as a gesture either to bribe, or single out the student. It might be perceived that a 'favour' of some kind is expected in return. Any reward given to a student should be consistent with the school's behaviour policy (part b), recorded, and not based on favouritism.

26. Holding external multiple positions

26.1 Requirements of staff

All staff employed by the Trust in any capacity must be mindful of the local conditions of service and requirements placed upon them in holding multiple positions.

26.2 Additional posts

Staff must ensure that any additional posts held do not interfere with employment at the school/Trust or have any conflict of interest with the school or bring it into disrepute.

26.3 Timing of additional work

Employees who are permitted to engage in other businesses or take up any additional employment must not undertake any work in connection with their additional employment during the time in which they are scheduled to be in the school/working in the central team. It is the responsibility of each individual to declare any additional personal income to His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC). Should a member of staff be an Ofsted inspector, there will need to be agreement between the Trust and the employee before they can proceed with inspections whilst being employed by Vanguard Learning Trust. Their payment for inspection work will be made to the Trust not the employee.

26.4 Declaration to the headteacher/CEO

Employees who have any doubt should make a declaration, so that the headteacher/CEO can make a judgement as to whether a conflict exists.

27. Intellectual property

27.1 Ownership of intellectual property

The school/Trust is entitled to ownership of intellectual property, eg. copyright of material created by the employee in the course of duties carried out by them during their employment at the school/Trust.

27.2 Information obtained

Staff must not use any information obtained in the course of employment for personal gain nor pass it on to others who might use it in such a way or for any purpose for which it was not originally intended.

28. Parent contact

28.1 Protocols for meetings

Staff should not meet with parents/guardians in school on their own; all meetings should be attended by two members of staff. It is good practice to meet with the parents before the student enters the meeting.

28.2 Support for parent/carer

Some staff may, as part of their professional role, be required to support a parent or carer. If that person comes to depend upon the staff member, or seeks support outside of their professional role, this should be discussed with a senior leader and where necessary referrals made to the appropriate support agency.

28.3 Social situations with parents

If staff are in a social situation with parents and/or students from their school or in the Trust they should avoid conversations about the school and the Trust. If a parent raises a concern regarding the school, the member of staff must not respond and should provide the parent with advice on who to contact at the school.

29. Taking student attendance registers

29.1 Accurate registers

Student registration is a legal requirement and the accuracy of the data is essential in terms of the school's primary role to safeguard all students. All staff must complete an accurate register within the first ten minutes of a lesson/session.

29.2 Student teachers and registers

If a student teacher is leading the class, it is still the responsibility of the normal class teacher to ensure that an accurate register is completed within the ten-minute timeframe.

29.3 Inaccurate registers

The attendance officer will inform the senior leader responsible for attendance of any members of staff who submit inaccurate registers on more than three occasions within one term. The senior leader will meet with the member of staff to resolve the issue and may follow up with good management advice.

30. Staff who have children at the school

30.1 Communication with staff

Staff who have children at the same school, or in another school in the Trust, must adhere to the same protocols as all other parents as set out in the school's parent communication policy and the school's home-school agreement. Staff must not expect preferential treatment and/or communicate with their child's teachers directly without prior communication. Internal communication, including email, must not be used by a parent (member of staff) wishing to contact a member of staff. Equally, staff should use the same protocols for contacting any parent irrespective of whether they work at the school.

30.2 The school day

Staff should avoid entering the school building with their child and they should not arrange to meet with the child during the school day unless they have sought permission from their line manager due to a one-off reason.

30.3 Social media

Staff who are parents of students at their school should be mindful of their professional responsibilities and should not communicate directly with other students using social media, for example by sending or accepting 'friend' requests or similar communications including X, Facebook and suchlike. This is by no means an exhaustive list as social media is constantly changing.

31. General

31.1 Assets

Staff should be mindful of their responsibility for assets including keys, ID cards, books and electronic items. Staff must inform a member of the SLT immediately if an asset is thought to be lost or stolen. Staff need to be clear when they are the designated guardian for an asset.

31.2 Dress

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. All members of staff, including governors and volunteers, should dress appropriately as professionals in order to model the expectations the school has of its students. A person's dress and appearance should exclude anything likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative and specifically should not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding, should be culturally sensitive and free of any political or otherwise contentious slogans, and not considered to be discriminatory. Those who dress or appear in a manner which may be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations of misconduct. The school/central team's dress code can be found in part B.

31.3 Concern about appearance

If staff have concerns about another colleague's appearance, they should refer it to a member of the SLT; they should not speak to the member of staff directly.

31.4 ID

Staff are expected to wear or have their ID badge and lanyard on their person.

31.5 Investigations by professional bodies

All staff must inform the headteacher/CEO if they are being investigated by any professional body and any sanction imposed. If employees are in any doubt any of the above, advice from the headteacher/CEO should be sought, in the first instance.

31.6 Meeting deadlines

It is a teacher's professional duty to meet all deadlines and ensure that their line manager is aware if there are extenuating circumstances for not being able to meet a deadline. If a teacher fails to meet the specified deadline with no extenuating circumstances evident, the line manager will send an email to the member of

staff, sending a copy to the senior leader with responsibility for their area of responsibility. If this happens on more than one occasion, the senior leader will meet with the member of staff about their professional duty to meet deadlines and a follow-up email will be sent to the member of staff outlining the points raised at the meeting. The member of staff's line manager and the headteacher will be sent a copy of the email.

31.7. Paperwork

Staff are expected to have a 'clean desk' policy and must not leave unattended any items that contain confidential and/or sensitive information on their desks, including being mindful of the Data Protection Act.

31.8 Post-resignation

When a member of staff intends to leave the school, attendance on external courses or conferences will not be approved. Participation in school trips during the school term will be considered, but attendance on residential trips may not be approved unless the trip in question has a staffing shortfall.

31.9 Probity of records and other documents

Where an employee has falsified records or other documents, including those held electronically, this will be regarded as a serious disciplinary matter and potentially a criminal offence.

31.10 Recruitment of staff

If a member of staff is put in a position of being the line manager to a relative, close friend, or partner, this must be immediately disclosed. Employees must not be involved in the recruitment and selection of anyone with whom they are in a close personal relationship outside of work

31.11 Remote learning

If a situation arises that necessitates learning to be conducted remotely, staff should ensure that protocols are followed as set out by their school and in the IT acceptable use policy (staff) (**Appendix 4**).

Version history

First issue/revision date	Approved by	Summary of changes if not first issue
May 2026	Board of trustees	Throughout the policy, references to staff 'behaviour' have been amended to 'conduct'. 3.1: amended to include that all forms of communication, including emails, are included as 'conduct'. 3.5.4: any employee who has witnessed or experienced sexual harassment will receive welfare checks in line with the Trust's protocol for staff welfare checks. 6.4: states what should happen should a member of staff be subjected to discriminatory or abusive conduct by students. 14.5: states that it is recommended that all possible privacy settings applied to any social media account owned by an employee, irrespective of the name of the account. 14.13: states that open recommendations, references and endorsements should not be provided by employees via business networking websites, in line with the 'Providing employment references' policy. 19.1: states that the intentional sharing of confidential information will be managed under the Trust's disciplinary policy. 20.6: now includes a statement to confirm that tutoring of former students is prohibited. 21.4.4: states that employees should not use employer benefits for personal gain.
July 2025	Board of trustees	Section 21.4.4 has been added to provide staff clarity that the Trust does not offer benefits in kind (BIK), and that employees

		should always inform head teachers if they have, or suspect they have, received a BIK. Section 26.3 has been amended to include details of arrangements should a staff member also be an Ofsted inspector required to undertake a school inspection.
June 2024	Board of trustees	New policy

Appendix 1: Teachers' Standards: Personal and Professional Conduct

A teacher is expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour, conduct and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct throughout a teacher's career.

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics, and conduct, within and outside school, by:
- treating students with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position;
- having regard for the need to safeguard students' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions;
- showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others;
- not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
- ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit students' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

Appendix 2 : De-escalation policy/advice

In dealing with incidents that require staff to de-escalate the situation, it is important to note that each one will be different and therefore the following information should help to support staff to respond effectively to the specific context.

If a situation when a student is highly agitated and their conduct is likely to cause harm to themselves or others, the following protocol should be followed:

1. Through verbal communication the member of staff should instruct the student(s) to follow him/her to the closest quiet part of school where there is likely to be other members of staff e.g. (see part B for locations).
2. Always try to alert other members of staff to assist by using your radio and/or sending a student to the school office to ask for help.
3. If the student has not responded to the instruction, staff can guide a student by gently placing their hand on the arm/shoulder (only if they are not moving) and articulate the reason for touching the student. For example: *"I am placing my hand on your shoulder, I am allowed to guide you to a safe place as I have a duty of care to all students"*.
4. If a student still does not respond and remains stationary, the member of staff should stay with him/her until other staff arrive.
5. The member of staff should send all other students away, but try to note mentally the names of one/two witnesses.
6. In the situation where there are clearly two protagonists, the member of staff should remain with one, and instruct the other to go to the main office. For example: *"I need to separate you for your safety from this situation; please report to the main office"*.

In the situation when a physical altercation is in progress, staff should try to separate the students through clear oral communication. If the students do not respond, it is school policy to allow staff to use reasonable physical restraint (see general guidance) to prevent harm; again staff should articulate loudly and clearly what they are doing and why. It is important for staff to remember in situations that their primary role relates to their duty of care to prevent harm to any individual and therefore their actions should be guided by this principle.

General guidance

Restraint must NOT:

- involve hitting the student ;
- involve deliberately inflicting pain on the student;
- restrict the student's breathing;
- involve contact with sexually sensitive areas;
- involve locking the student in a room.

During any incident the person restraining should:

- offer verbal reassurance to the student;
- cause the minimum level of restriction of movement;
- reduce the danger of any accidental injury;
- cease the restraint if there are any signs of physical distress in the student such as sudden change in colour, difficulty breathing or vomiting.

In all incidences where physical intervention is deemed necessary the incident and subsequent actions should be documented and reported to the DSL.

Appendix 3 : General Health and Safety Guidelines for all employees of Vanguard Learning Trust

Staff must:

- Be familiar with emergency and fire procedures at their school;
- Be familiar with all Safety Policies and risk assessments affecting their particular area or activity;
- Take note and follow any specific Health & Safety instructions given by others or provided via signage;
- Comply with any local rules when working on external premises;
- Be familiar with hazards in the working environment wherever this may be;
- Request information on hazards when working at external premises;
- Ensure that all work has been risk assessed and that relevant controls are followed;
- Use any personal protective equipment provided;
- Report unsafe working practices that become apparent;
- Report potential slip, trip and fall hazards, eg. damage to floor surfaces;
- Report an accident or near miss to their line manager/Health and Safety Coordinator/Senior Leader in charge of Health and Safety or those deputising for SLHS;
- Request assistance when unsure of personal responsibilities or safety precautions that apply within work;
- Complete risk assessments for any activity not already covered by standard classroom practise protocols for example as detailed in the VLT Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy, ensuring bags are stored under tables, exits are never blocked, tables are not used by students to sit on;
- Be aware of display screen usage leaflet;
- Be aware of projector safety notices.

Staff must not:

- Use electrical equipment if it appears to be faulty, or if the Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) has not been carried out.
- Overload electrical appliances;
- Repair or use equipment they have not been trained to use;
- Lift or move loads that are clearly too heavy for one person to lift;
- Access areas that are clearly unsafe or that are marked out of bounds;
- Put others at risk by taking them into environments that are clearly unsafe or that are marked out of bounds;
- Access high levels or other hazardous environments without carrying out a risk assessment;
- Access fragile surfaces or roofs without appropriate precautions being in place;
- Tamper with fire equipment or other equipment provided to safeguard health & safety;
- Ignore control measures that have been put in place as a result of a risk assessment;
- Block fire exits or emergency escape routes;

Failure on the part of any employee, irrespective of their position, to comply with the Health and Safety Policy, including any safe system of work, may render that employee liable to disciplinary action and could result in criminal/civil proceedings.

Failure to comply

Employees and trustees will have varying levels of safety responsibility. The amount of responsibility will depend on their position, the work that they do and the number of people reporting to them. In particular, those that deal with or who have responsibility for controlling a site and site personnel (eg. a headteacher) will have the greatest responsibilities. The CEO will ensure that the decisions that they make (or the decisions that they do not make) are in compliance with their health and safety policy and procedures made under it.

All employees should be aware that failures to comply with statutory or the Trust's health, safety and welfare requirements or acts of negligence (including misuse of safety related equipment) are liable to be dealt with under the Trust's disciplinary policy. In particular, employees must not put the school into a

position where the organisation is at risk of criminal or civil litigation by their actions particularly in relation to:

- **consent** – being aware of a safety issue that is going on and actively agreeing to it, going along with the non-compliance;
- **connivance** – being aware of what is going on and turning a blind eye, pretending the situation does not exist; and
- **neglect** – actively breaching a legal requirement or obligation.

Staff signature

I have read and understood my role and responsibility for adhering to the health and safety guidelines and expectations of all employees of Vanguard Learning Trust.

Signature Date

Full Name (printed)

Job title

Appendix 4: IT acceptable use policy (staff)

1. I understand that Information Systems and IT include networks, data and data storage, online and offline communication technologies and access devices, eg. mobile phones, digital cameras, email and social media sites.
2. I will only use the school's email and any related technologies for professional purposes or for uses deemed 'reasonable' by the headteacher (school-based staff) and CEO (central team staff).
3. I understand that I must not open email accounts when students are in the classroom unless in the case of a lockdown.
4. I understand that modest personal use of the school's IT equipment is acceptable but must not become routine and not interfere with the operation of school services; involve cost implications for the school; or take precedence over my job accountabilities.
5. I understand that the use of privately owned devices (eg. mobile/smart phones, tablets) for private non-academic purposes must be outside of the working day (eg. during break, lunch, after school) and must be conducted privately (away from students).
6. Password security is essential for all users, particularly staff as they are able to access sensitive student data. Staff and students are expected to have secure passwords which are not shared with anyone. Staff and students are regularly reminded of the need for password security. If a password has been compromised for any reason, it is vital that it is changed as a matter of urgency. This includes personal laptop/desktop computers.
7. I understand that any hardware and software provided by my workplace for staff use can only be used by members of staff. To prevent unauthorised access to systems or personal data, I will not leave any information system unattended without first logging out or locking my login as appropriate.
8. I will not upload hardware or software without the permission of the Trust's IT team.
9. I will ensure that all electronic communications with students and staff are compatible with my professional role whether using school or personal systems. This includes the use of email, text, social media, social networking, gaming, web publications and any other devices or websites. My use of ICT will not interfere with my work duties and will be in accordance with this acceptable use protocol and the related legislation, including data protection.
10. I will not give out personal details, such as mobile phone numbers and personal email addresses, to students. I will only use the approved, secure email system(s) for any school business and adhere to the VLT staff communication protocol when contacting parents and students.
11. My electronic communications with students, parents/guardians and other professionals will only take place via work approved communication channels, eg. via a school provided email address, telephone number or Google Classroom. If there is an urgent safeguarding concern during a school closure I may use my own phone to contact a parent but must ensure I block my number using 141. If I do this the DSL, or a deputy, must be informed at the earliest opportunity.
12. I will not create, display, download, upload or distribute any material that could be considered offensive, illegal, discriminatory, likely to harass or cause needless anxiety to any other person, or anything which could bring my professional role or the school into disrepute.
13. I will report any accidental access, receipt of inappropriate materials, filtering breaches or unsuitable websites to the headteacher/CEO as soon as possible.

14. I understand that images of students and/or staff can only be taken using a school camera or mobile device, stored and used for professional purposes in line with school policy and with written consent of the parent, guardian or staff member. I will not use personal recording equipment (mobile phone, camera, etc.) to produce or store images, videos or recordings; nor will I distribute images outside the school network without the permission of the parent/guardian, member of staff or headteacher/CEO.
15. I will ensure that any personal data of students, staff or parents/carers is kept in accordance with current legislation. This means that all personal data will:
- be obtained and processed fairly and lawfully;
 - kept only for specific purposes;
 - held no longer than necessary; and
 - kept private and secure with appropriate security measures in place, whether used in the workplace, hosted online or accessed remotely.
16. I will report all concerns regarding children's online safety to the DSL (or a deputy) without delay. As outlined in the Department for Education's 'Working together to safeguard children' (2024), all staff have a statutory obligation to protect children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online. I am aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse and other risks online as well as face to face. I know that information about online safety, as well as indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation, can be found in the Department for Education's 'Keeping children safe in education' (2024) as well as the Trust's safeguarding policy. I will also receive and engage with safeguarding and child protection updates, which includes online safety, throughout the academic year.
17. I will promote e-Safety with the students in my care and will help them to develop a responsible attitude to safety online, system use and to the content they access or create. If I have any queries or questions regarding safe and professional practice online either in school or off site, then I will raise them with the Headteacher.
18. I understand that my use of the information systems, internet and email may be monitored and recorded to ensure policy compliance. Where the school or central team leaders believe unauthorised and/or inappropriate use of the service's information system or unacceptable or inappropriate behaviour or conduct may be taking place, this will be investigated in line with the Trust's disciplinary policy. If it is suspected that the system may be being used for criminal purposes or for storing unlawful text, imagery or sound, the matter will be brought to the attention of the relevant law enforcement organisation.
19. I will report the loss of any IT equipment assigned to me, including visualisers, iPads and cameras, as soon as practically possible to the Headteacher.
20. For the purposes of using Google Classroom, I acknowledge that I may send and receive messages and emails to and from students using the message facility. I will only communicate with student school email addresses and all communication will be professional and transparent.
21. If I witness any inappropriate online behaviour or receive any emails from students that are not directly related to school business, I will inform the headteacher immediately.
22. I acknowledge that by communicating via Google Classroom email with students this will lead to the student email address being saved in my address book and I must ensure that under no circumstance do I send an email to a student that is meant for staff.

Remote Learning

23. If conditions necessitate a return to remote learning, I will adhere to local guidelines in my school.

24. I understand that whilst working remotely during a school closure:

- all ICT equipment remains the property of the VLT and must be returned on the request of the headteacher;
- I must not save any school or personal data (including personal files, photographs media etc) on an electronic device;
- I must not send unprotected, sensitive or confidential information to an external source;
- I must not make official commitments through the internet or email on behalf of the VLT unless authorised to do so;
- equipment and media taken off-site must not be left unattended in public places and not left in sight in a car; and
- I must use only software that is authorised by the VLT.

25. I further understand that whilst working remotely during a school closure:

- I will record all Google Meet lessons;
- I will not share the copy of the Google Meet lesson with any classes on Google Classroom unless authorised to do so by the headteacher; and
- I will not conduct one-to-one Google Meet meetings with students unless authorised to do so by the headteacher.

Staff signature

I agree to follow this user agreement, and understand that failure to do so may result in disciplinary proceedings in line with the Trust's disciplinary policy.

Signature Date

Full Name (printed)

Job title

Appendix 5: Misconduct and Gross Misconduct

A4.1 Gross Misconduct

The following are examples of offences that would normally be considered as gross misconduct. This list is not exhaustive and the panel may consider a derivative of these examples as an offence constituting gross misconduct. They may, however, also be considered as misconduct according to the seriousness of the offence and the nature of the employee's job.

- Dishonesty associated with place of work or job being undertaken
 - Theft of property belonging to the school, contractor, an employee or student, or member of the public.
 - Deliberate falsification of timesheets or expenses claims for pecuniary advantage.
 - Demanding or accepting monies or other considerations as a bribe for the use of School property, provision of School service or the showing of favour on behalf of the School.
 - Falsification of any information given on an application form for a post to gain advantage whether pecuniary or otherwise.
 - Failure to disclose criminal convictions, cautions, bindovers or warnings.
 - Falsification of registration of students for pecuniary gain.
- Deliberate refusal to carry out a reasonable, lawful and safe instruction or the normal agreed defined duties of the post
- Gross negligence in failing to attend to or carry out the agreed duties of the post.
- Wilfully ignoring responsibilities/instructions thus placing other employees/students in danger, e.g. ignoring handling instructions/safety regulations in respect of chemicals, machinery, equipment or food.
- Being unfit to perform duties associated with the post as a result of taking drugs, other than in accordance with medical advice, or taking alcohol.
- Wilful unauthorised disclosure of information (classified as confidential), by employees who, in the course of their duties, have access to such information which, by its release, could be harmful to students, other employees, governors or the reputation of the school.
- Acts of violence or vandalism in the course of employment
 - Malicious damage to school/contractor/other employees/students' property.
 - Physical violence towards students, staff/governors/parents/volunteers/ members of the public.
- Sexual misconduct at work
 - Sexual misconduct whether criminal or not.
 - Sexual conduct towards or relations with students.
- Off-duty misconduct
 - An act of criminal sexual misconduct by an employee.
 - Drug offences committed by employees whose job brings them into contact with students.
 - Sexual conduct towards or relations with students, or students.
- Misuse of the internet or email or phone facilities of the school:
 - Using the internet to access unseemly or sexually explicit material;
 - Using email for communicating unseemly or sexually explicit material;
 - Using phones for communicating unseemly or sexually explicit material.

A4.2 Misconduct

The following are examples of offences that would normally be considered as misconduct. They may, however, also be considered as gross misconduct according to the seriousness of the offence and the nature of the employee's job.

- Absenteeism and lateness, for example:
 - failure to remain at the place of work during normal working hours without permission or sufficient cause for absence;
 - frequent failure to attend work punctually;

- failure to comply with the sickness absence reporting procedure.
- Dishonesty, petty wrongs, for example:
 - making unauthorised private telephone calls and/or sending personal mail at the school's expense;
 - failure to report any loss and/or damage to any property issued to or by the employee in connection with their employment.
 - using the school's telephone, computer, fax, email or internet for unauthorised personal purposes.
- Neglect of duty, for example:
 - failure to adopt safe working practices/use protective equipment where required by law or management;
 - negligent use of school property in such a way as is likely to cause serious damage or loss;
 - failure to discharge without sufficient cause the obligations which statute or the contract of employment places on the employee;
 - insubordination;
 - failure to exercise proper control or supervision of students.
- Abusive behaviour/offensive language which arises directly out of or in connection with work and which is directed at students, colleagues, governors, contractors, volunteers or members of the public.
- Bullying, harassment or victimisation of students, other employees, volunteers, governors or contractors in the course of duty.
- Unlawful discrimination against students, other employees, volunteers, governors or contractors in the course of duty.
- Discrimination, whether unlawful or not, in the course of duty against students, other employees, volunteers, governors or contractors on the grounds of age, sex, marital or civil partnership status, race, disability or sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, religion, faith or belief.
- Undertaking additional employment outside normal working hours which would be detrimental to the work to be performed as a full-time employee of the school.

Appendix 6: Staff Code of Conduct reply form

To: HR lead (*school/central team to add name*)

Re: Staff Code of Conduct

I have read and understood the above guidance in terms of my role and responsibility to adhere to professional conduct in all matters (please tick): ☐ ☐

Having read the document I would have liked more guidance on the following issues:

Should staff have any query or concern about these guidelines, they should speak to the HR lead (*school/central team to add name*) who will happily deal with their enquiry.

Staff signature

This slip needs to be signed and returned to the HR lead (*school/central team to add name*).

Signature Date

Full Name (printed)

Job title

	Vanguard Learning Trust <i>As a group of local primary and secondary schools, Vanguard Learning Trust's mission is to serve its local community by providing outstanding, inclusive education. We have a collective purpose and responsibility to provide effective teaching, through a curriculum based on equality of opportunity and entitlement that allows our young people to shine both in and out of the classroom. Each school in the Trust has its own ethos, which also complements the Trust's vision and values, and the common aspiration that all young people can achieve their potential.</i>
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Staff code of conduct

Part B: Hermitage Primary School

Summer 2026

Contents

Part B: Hermitage Primary School, staff code of conduct, contextual information	3
Section 1: Absence	3
Section 2: Car Parking	3
Section 3: De-escalation protocol and age-appropriate physical contact	4
Section 4: Dress Code	5
Section 5: Evacuations	6
Section 6: Online Learning/online meetings: Safer practice for pupils, families and staff	6
Section 7: Punctuality	7
Appendix 1: Physical contact guidance	9

Part B: Hermitage Primary School, staff code of conduct, contextual information

Section 1: Absence

1.1 Staff absence

If a member of staff is unable to attend work, they must follow the procedure depending on their role in the school (refer to Section 1.2). It is not permissible to send a text, email, leave a voice message or inform another member of the team. The member of staff must ring the school by 3:00pm that same afternoon to confirm whether or not they will be returning to work the next day. In rare cases, it may not be possible to state whether or not they will be able to return the next day; if this is the case, then they must follow the same procedure the following day.

1.2 Informing a member of SLT

The member of staff must call the designated member of SLT between 6:45am - 7:15am on the first day of absence. They then need to contact the same designated member of SLT by 3:00pm informing them whether they are able to return to their duties the next day or not. This allows the member of SLT to make the necessary arrangements if the absence is continuing. If the absence continues, the member of staff should repeat the process above for the end of each day of absence until the day they return to work. Staff should also inform their phase lead/line manager of their absence. Should the headteacher require leave, they must inform their line manager, the director of people and their deputy/deputies of their absence by email by 7:00am on each day of absence. The member of staff must share any duties or clubs that must be covered on that day. Cover arrangements will be put into place and shared via the staff daily PPA schedule. A clear plan for the day should be made available for the cover arrangements to be effective. If a staff member becomes unwell during the school day, they must inform a member of SLT in person about their decision to leave work and return home.

1.3 Working from home during absence

Staff who are absent due to illness should not work remotely from home; it may be appropriate for staff absent due to dependency leave to work remotely if agreed with the headteacher.

Section 2: Car Parking

2.1 Registration

Staff must park in designated bays only. Staff must also ensure their car registration number is registered with the HR administrator.

2.2 Parking Protocol

General Parking Expectations

- Sequential parking: All vehicles must park from the bottom up, starting from the playground end, leaving no gaps between vehicles.
- Vehicle size allocation: Larger vehicles (eg. SUVs, vans) must park on the left side upon entry to the car park. Smaller cars should fill the bays on the right side to maximise space.
- Disabled parking: The designated disabled bay is reserved strictly for staff with approved additional needs.
- No double parking: Under no circumstances should any staff member double park or block in other vehicles.

Overflow Car Park Use

- The overflow car park is not to be used for regular staff parking, unless the main car park is full.
- Access is restricted and will be locked during the day for safety and security, as agreed with the site manager.
- Gates to the overflow car park must be locked between 8:15am–9:00am and again from 3:00pm onward, due to high footfall around the school perimeter during these times.

- Visitors directed to the overflow car park must be accompanied, and the gate must be staffed during their arrival and departure.
- Gate management: The gate is to remain locked throughout the school day. It is to be opened only under supervision and should be immediately re-secured.

Specific guidance for school chef

- The chef may use the overflow car park for arrival and departure only during non-peak times.
- The chef must not exit via the overflow car park during student home time, to avoid safety hazards and unmonitored gate access.
- The chef is reminded to ensure the gate is securely closed upon every use to avoid unauthorised entry.

Visitors and Events

- There is no on-site parking for visiting teams or spectators attending school sports matches.
- This must be clearly communicated in advance to the event lead from the visiting school by the member of staff coordinating the event.

2.3 Parked cars not in designated spaces

The premises manager will record all cars that are not parked in designated spaces. On the first occasion a member of staff parks outside of a designated parking bay, their line manager will be notified and they will be expected to speak to the employee. On any subsequent occasion the member of staff will meet with the HR lead; a plan will be discussed at this meeting to address any issues arising and a good management advice email will be sent by a member of the senior leadership team. Any subsequent parking in non-designated spaces is likely to be subject to disciplinary proceedings as a staff misconduct matter.

Section 3: De-escalation protocol and age-appropriate physical contact

3.1 Protocol

If a situation arises where a pupil is highly agitated, or cannot self-regulate, and the class teacher has followed the school behaviour policy, the next steps are to seek support from a member of the SLT by informing them of an incident (through the use of school radios, school phones). An available SLT member will arrive to support. Their initial aim is to de-escalate the situation as well as help the pupil to self-regulate. Once regulated the SLT member will discuss the incident with the pupil, using the school's restorative approach. When ready, the pupil will be reintegrated back into class.

3.2 De-escalation

Children with high attentional needs and distracting attentional behaviours also need to be taught and supported in how to gain fair and appropriate attention. To do this, our staff teach them alternative and appropriate patterns of behaviour and social skills. With all children, we need to be aware of ensuring we have communicated in the best way for them eg. discussion, modelling, drawing, social stories etc.

3.2.1 Non-verbal cueing

Non-verbal cues are a quick and effective way to raise a pupil's behavioural awareness. This could be pointing to ears to indicate that a group should be listening, or holding up an open hand to indicate that the teacher would like the group's or the class's attention. When using cues, it is important to be aware of emphasising or gesticulating in a non-threatening way (not pointing or tapping on a table for example).

3.2.2 Deferred consequences

Deferred consequences range from the 'chat after class' to missing part of break/lunchtime. A deferred consequence, such as 'restorative conversations', should always relate to the behaviour, eg. choosing to disrupt learning, not adhering to the school's expected behaviours. Within the restorative conversations

framework, pupils are encouraged to problem-solve their inappropriate behaviour choices and consider appropriate choices and actions. The framework aims to rebuild and restore relationships.

3.3 Age-appropriate physical contact

Age-appropriate physical contact by a student when in distress varies based on the child's age, cultural norms, and the context of the situation. Some general guidelines for different age groups are outlined in sections 3.3.1 to 3.3.2. In all cases, the primary goal is to provide comfort and support while respecting the student's boundaries and maintaining a safe and professional environment. The appendix to this part b provides more information.

3.3.1 EYFS and KS1 (Ages 3-7)

- Side hugs: A brief side hug can be comforting and is usually appropriate.
- Holding hands: This is appropriate in certain situations, such as a child feeling scared or needing guidance or reassurance.
- Handshakes or High-Fives: These can be used to offer support more formally or casually.
- Touch on the upper arm/shoulder: This can be used to affirm an instruction or to provide physical reassurance.

3.3.2 General Considerations

- Consent: Always respect a child's comfort level and ask for consent before initiating physical contact.
- School policies: Adhere to the school code of conduct and behaviour policies regarding physical contact.
- Cultural sensitivity: Be aware of cultural differences in physical contact norms.
- Professional boundaries: Maintain professional boundaries to ensure that the contact is appropriate and not misinterpreted.

Section 4: Dress Code

4.1 Appropriate dress

The school recognises that a person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, staff are seen by children as role models and should always give careful consideration to how they dress and act and should adopt high standards of personal conduct and appearance, to maintain the confidence of the children and community. Working with children is an active role but staff are still expected to dress smartly in a way that does not undermine their professionalism and gives an appropriate message to the children and the community.

4.2 Professional attire

The following is a list of guidance for professional attire:

- Any trousers worn are plain and smart and must not be faded, torn and low cut. Black jeans worn with a smart top are permitted. Jeans of any other colour are not permitted.
- Tracksuits must only be worn on days when the adult is delivering a PE lesson and staff are expected to wear trainers when delivering P.E. lessons/sessions.
- Open-toed shoes with good foot support are allowed, as long as they are secure enough for staff to run safely and with ease when necessary.
- It is not permissible to show too much skin; therefore thin strappy tops/low cut tops, mini skirts or short beach shorts are not appropriate.
- Transparent clothing, sweatshirts or t-shirts with slogans or symbols that could cause offence are not permitted.
- Staff must also be aware of the health and safety implications when wearing jewellery; this is also the case with facial piercing.

Staff will be made aware if their dress is considered not to be within the school's expectations. The dress code may be relaxed in the event of a heatwave/adverse weather/themed days. Staff will be informed of this.

4.3 Relaxed dress

When staff are working in school during INSET, non-uniform days and the school holidays, a more relaxed dress is acceptable. On trips where pupils wear school uniform, staff must wear professional dress as they would in school. On trips where pupils are dressed casually, or in PE kit, relaxed dress for staff is acceptable.

Section 5: Evacuations

In the event of an evacuation, all staff share responsibility for the safety of all stakeholders. In particular:

- Fire marshalls, as identified in the health, safety and welfare policy, must check that all rooms in their defined area are evacuated. Once clear, (or if any persons are trapped), fire marshalls should indicate this via their two-way radio to the premises duty staff.

Premises staff will:

- remain at the fire panel, and record fire marshall notifications regarding evacuated areas / confirmation of personnel accounted for / missing persons / time taken to evacuate the premises; and
- receive emergency services.

All lower school teaching and student-facing support staff will:

- close the internal door of their classroom and walk their class/group out the external door of the classroom to the MUGA and form a straight line underneath their class sign;
- take a register and hold the evacuation register in the air to indicate that all pupils are present and accounted for; and
- supervise and reassure the pupils in their class.

All upper school teaching and student-facing support staff will:

- close the door of their classroom and walk their class/group down the stairs and out to the MUGA, and form a straight line underneath their class sign, around the building to their designated area;
- take a register and hold the evacuation register in the air to indicate that all pupils are present and accounted for; and
- supervise and reassure the pupils in their class.

All administrative staff will ensure:

- a medical bag is taken to the emergency point;
- the critical incident bag is taken to the emergency point;
- the iPad is taken to the emergency point for the Inventory check (electronic sign-in); and
- all visitors are accounted for.

All support staff will:

- remain silent whilst waiting outside; and
- stand with the class that they were working with.

If a member of support staff is working with a pupil away from the classroom, they will exit the building via the nearest exit and make their way to the designated meeting point. They will bring the pupil to their class and inform the teacher that they are present. They will then stand in silence with that class.

Section 6: Online Learning/online meetings: Safer practice for pupils, families and staff

6.1 Employee responsibilities

Teaching staff and teaching support staff will receive regular refresher training sessions on how to use Google Classroom. When providing remote learning, staff must be available during their contracted hours of work. If they are unable to work for any reason during this time, for example, due to sickness or caring for a dependent, they should report this using the normal absence procedure. The SENDCO is responsible for ensuring that pupils with EHC plans continue to have their needs met while learning remotely, and liaising with the headteacher and other organisations to make any alternate arrangements for pupils with EHC plans, as well as identifying the level of support.

6.2 Pupils

When a pupil is ill for an extended period of time or recovering from a procedure, teachers will provide online learning activities via Google Classroom or Class Dojo. Informative Google Slides/PowerPoints will be uploaded alongside activities and tasks, with online resources added and then allocated to the pupil with teacher instructions. It is not the policy of the school to run live lessons.

6.3 Keeping in touch with pupils who aren't in school and their parents

If there is a concern around the level of engagement of a pupil, parents should be contacted via phone to assess whether further school intervention can assist engagement. School staff must not use their personal devices to make telephone contact with parents.

6.4 Pupils and parents

Staff can expect pupils learning remotely to:

- engage with the remote learning set by teachers;
- complete work to the deadline set by teachers;
- seek help if they need it, from teachers; and
- alert teachers if they're not able to complete work.

Staff can expect parents with children learning remotely to:

- make the school aware if their child is sick or otherwise can't complete work;
- seek help from the school if they need it, and
- be respectful when making any complaints or concerns known to staff.

6.5 Parents/carers and staff

From time to time meetings with parents and carers will be held remotely. It is expected that all members of the community will continue to adhere to the usual school policies and procedures regarding behaviour and safety. During the online meeting, staff and parents/carers must adhere to the following:

- staff and parents/carers must wear suitable clothing;
- staff and parents/carers must ensure the meeting takes place in a private, separate room without other household members present;
- any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms (if the member of staff is offsite), and where possible be against a neutral background or using the blurred background facility;
- if the meeting is recorded, permission should be sought from all participants;
- language must be professional and appropriate; and
- as in the classroom, all communication should be open and transparent and avoid the possibility of misinterpretation.

Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils. All communication should be in line with the Trust's staff code of conduct as well as the home-school communication protocol. Personal details (home/mobile numbers, personal email, web-based identities i.e. Facebook, Twitter etc) must not be shared with pupils or parents. If a pupil or parent seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the adult must not respond and inform the school's DSL to ensure the family is spoken to.

Section 7: Punctuality

7.1 Teacher arrival time

Teachers should be in school by 8:25am each morning. The exception is Wednesday when staff are expected to be onsite by 8.15am to attend the morning briefing. All staff members are expected to sign in upon arrival each morning.

7.2 Support staff times

Support staff start times are as per the agreed contract.

7.3 Late arrival

Staff arriving at school after their designated start time must sign in at reception on arrival as normal (using Inventory) and then see the deputy headteacher /assistant headteacher to discuss the reason for their lateness.

7.4 Lateness known in advance

If staff know in advance that they are likely to be late to school on a particular day, they must follow the same procedures as for leave of absence requests and complete a special leave request form.

In the case of 'on-day' emergency lateness / attendance issues, the member of staff should call a member of SLT to inform them. If staff are delayed eg. traffic, emergency, they should call their line manager explaining the reason and expected time of arrival. The message will be relayed to the appropriate member of staff or SLT (if cover needs to be arranged).

7.5 Monitoring of punctuality

All staff who are late more than once in a half term will meet with their line manager. A plan will be discussed at this meeting to address any punctuality issues. Staff who do not notify their arrival time to the DHT/Assistant headteacher (in person) when they arrive late may be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

7.6 Line managers' responsibility

Line managers must report any knowledge of staff tardiness to the school's HR lead (DHT).

Version history

First issue/revision date	Approved by	Summary of changes if not first issue
Revision June 2026	LGB	Very minor word omissions and additions Section 4.2: Clarification on appropriate open toed footwear Section 6.5: Clarification on remote online meeting expectations

Appendix 1: Physical contact guidance

Listed below are the different types of touch and physical contact that may be used. These are:

1. Casual / Informal / Incidental Touch - Staff use touch with children as part of a normal relationship, for example, comforting a child, giving reassurance and congratulating. This might include taking a child gently by the hand, patting on the back, high fives, handshakes, or putting an arm around their shoulders. The benefit of this action is often proactive, supportive or can help prevent a situation from escalating.

2. General Reparative Touch - This is used by staff working with children who are having difficulties with their emotions. Healthy emotional development requires safe touch as a means of calming, soothing and containing distress for a frightened, angry or sad child. Touch used to regulate a child's emotions, triggers the release of the calming chemical oxytocin in the body. Reparative touch may include sitting on an adult's lap, where possible within sight of other colleagues. This will be age and stage appropriate and may also be listed on a child's behaviour plan or risk assessment. Other examples of this type of touch include patting a back, games such as 'round and round the garden', or holding hands to guide calming breathing techniques

3. Contact Play - Contact play is sometimes used by staff adopting a role similar to a parent in a healthy child-parent relationship. This will only take place when the child has developed a trusting relationship with the adult and when they feel completely comfortable and at ease with this type of contact. Contact play may include an adult chasing and catching the child where either may tap the other on an arm or back, or an adult and child playing a game of building towers with their hands **in sight of others**

4. Essential Intimate Care - This may take place if a child is required to get changed due to toileting issues, including nappy changes. If a child needs support getting changed or pulling up items of clothing, an adult may be required to support a child with this. We ask that the children who attend our school who still wear nappies, come to school with 'pull-up' style rather than 'tabbed' nappies. Although there is no legal requirement for 2 adults to be present for a nappy change, we find that it is best practice for this to happen where possible. If a child needs support with wiping after using the toilet, an adult would instruct a child on how to do this but they would not be expected to use any physical contact to support them with this. If we have concerns around the hygiene of the child, their parent/carer would be contacted. **First aid trained staff will also have physical contact as needed for the treatment**

5. Positive Handling/Restrictive Intervention

Positive Handling/Restrictive Intervention will only be used as a last resort in order to stop students:

1. causing injury to themselves
2. causing injury to others
3. damaging property
4. having a negative impact on good order

This must be reported via CPOMS to ensure that other staff are aware. The positive handling must be conducted in line with the school's and Trust's policy by trained adults.

6. Instructional action - There are times that a staff member may be required to touch a pupil to help guide them to achieve better outcomes. This may include holding their hand whilst guiding how to hit a tennis ball with a tennis racket, or showing a child how to hold a pencil better to create a more successful grip. In both of these examples, they happen in the context of being in front of a whole class of pupils and are appropriate to the lesson that is being taught.

It is imperative to note that, to be able to utilise physical touch, staff must know the children in the school well. There are some children who will respond differently to others when touched physically, regardless of the context.

7. Inappropriate Physical Contact:

- Kissing or allowing children to kiss staff members
- Extended hugs
- Touching private areas or any area that might be considered invasive
- Any form of physical punishment
- Rough or aggressive contact.

All children at our school are taught about positive and negative physical touch through our PSHE and RSE programmes of study. We regularly revisit the NSPCC Pants rule within class and also share this information with parents. This allows us to feel confident that children are aware of what is appropriate and what to do if they feel that something isn't right.