



## Staff Code of Conduct Policy

### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out clear guidance on the standards of conduct and behaviour expected from all staff at Open Box Education Centre. The principles underlying the guidance aim to encourage staff to achieve the highest possible standards of conduct and minimise the risk of inappropriate conduct occurring.
- 1.2 School staff are in a unique position of trust and influence as role models for students. Therefore, staff must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all students within the school.
- 1.3 Staff also have an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, both inside and outside working hours and work setting.
- 1.4 This policy applies to all staff in the school regardless of their position, role or responsibility. References to 'staff' throughout the policy relate to all of the following groups:
  - 1.4.1 All members of staff including teaching and support staff
  - 1.4.2 Volunteers, including Governors and Members
  - 1.4.3 Casual workers
  - 1.4.4 Temporary and supply staff, either from agencies or engaged directly
  - 1.4.5 Student placements, including those undertaking initial teacher training and apprentices.
- 1.5 Open Box Education Centre requires that all staff have read and agree to comply with this policy (see 17.1)
- 1.6 Breach or failure to observe this policy will result in action being taken under the school disciplinary procedures including, but not limited to, dismissal or in the case of volunteers/agency staff the cessation of offers of work
- 1.7 This code of conduct is not an exhaustive list of acceptable and unacceptable standards of behaviour. In situations where guidance does not exist in this policy staff are expected to exercise their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the students and the school.

## **2.0 Professional Behaviour and Conduct**

- 2.1 Staff are expected to demonstrate the highest possible standards of personal and professional conduct and behaviour and consistently act with honesty and integrity. Open Box Education Centre expects staff to treat each other, students, parents and the wider community with dignity and respect at all times.
- 2.2 Staff must act in accordance with their duty of care to students and ensure that the safety and welfare of students are accorded the highest priority.
- 2.3 Staff should show fairness in their treatment of students and under no circumstances use behaviours such as embarrassing or humiliating students, making jokes at the expense of students, discriminating against or favouring students and sarcasm.
- 2.4 Staff must have regard for the ethos and values of the school and must not do or say anything which may bring the school or governing body into disrepute. Staff should act in accordance with the school's policies and procedures at all times.
- 2.5 The school recognises and respects individuals' right to a private life without interference. However, individuals connected with the school must not act in a way that would bring the school, or their profession, into disrepute or that calls into question their suitability to work with children. This covers relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, inappropriate behaviour such as lewd or offensive action, as well as negative comments about the school or its community.
- 2.6 Workers must disclose to the school (Principal and in the case of the Principal to the Chair of Governors) immediately, any wrongdoing or alleged wrongdoing by themselves (regardless of whether they deny the wrongdoing/alleged wrongdoing), including any incidents arising from alternative employment or outside of work which may have a bearing on their employment or engagement with the school.

## **3.0 Dress and Appearance**

- 3.1 Open Box Education Centre recognise that dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, all staff must dress in a manner that is appropriate to a professional role and that promotes a professional image.
- 3.2 Staff should dress in a manner that is not offensive, revealing or sexually provocative and in a manner that is absent from political or contentious slogans. Staff should avoid clothing that displays messages or wording beyond branding.
- 3.3 Staff should dress safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake.

## **4.0 Smoking, alcohol and other substances**

- 4.1 Open Box Education Centre is a non-smoking site. Staff must not smoke on school premises or outside the school entrance. Any member of staff wishing to smoke must leave the school grounds.
- 4.2 Staff must not smoke whilst working with or supervising students offsite.

- 4.3 Staff must not consume or be under the influence of alcohol, illicit drugs or other substances, including other non-prescribed medication, on or near school premises.
- 4.4 Staff must refrain from the consumption of alcohol and other substances at school/student events (i.e. Year 11 leaving events, residential visits) both within the school premises and outside the school setting.

## **5.0 Relationships with Students**

- 5.1 Staff must maintain professional boundaries with students appropriate to their position and must always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably. Staff should act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to question their actions or intent. Staff should think carefully about their conduct so that misinterpretations are minimised.
- 5.2 Staff must not establish or seek to establish social contact with students for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. If a young person seeks to establish social contact staff should exercise their professional judgement in making a response and be aware that such social contact could be misconstrued. Any such contact should be disclosed to the Principal.
- 5.3 Staff must not develop personal or sexual relationships with students and should not engage in any sexual activity with a student. Sexual activity does not just involve physical contact including penetrative and non-penetrative acts.
- 5.4 Working Together to Safeguard Children<sup>1</sup> defines sexual abuse as ... ‘forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).
- 5.5 Staff should be mindful of section 16 of The Sexual Offences Act 2003<sup>2</sup>.
- 5.6 Staff must not make sexual remarks to a student, discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of, students or discuss a student’s sexual relationships in an inappropriate setting or context. However it may be appropriate for a staff member, at their discretion, to give an honest and appropriate answer to an appropriate question from a student in the context of SMSC learning or within PSE sex and relationship learning. If a staff member is unsure of the appropriateness they should seek clarification from the Principal.

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<sup>1</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/729914/Working\\_Together\\_to\\_Safeguard\\_Children-2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/729914/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children-2018.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Section 16 of The Sexual Offences Act 2003 provides that it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over (e.g. teacher, youth worker) to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual. A situation where a person is in a position of trust could arise where the child is in full-time education and the person looks after children under 18 in the same establishment as the child, even if s/he does not teach the child.

- 5.7 Contact with students should be through Open Box Education Centre’s authorised mechanisms only. Personal phone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via all social media platforms should not be used and staff should not share their home address with students. If contacted via an inappropriate route the member of staff must inform the Principal immediately.
- 5.8 Open Box Education Centre staff must not accept friend invitations or become friends with any student of Open Box Education Centre on any social media platform. Staff should also refrain from following the Twitter or other similar social media accounts of students or their parents. Staff must read the school’s e-safety policy carefully and follow all advice and guidance contained within it.

## **6.0 Infatuations**

- 6.1 It is not unusual for students or, sometimes, their parents to develop infatuations towards members of staff. All such situations must be responded to sensitively to maintain the dignity of those concerned.
- 6.2 Staff should also be aware that such circumstances carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against staff. Any indications of an infatuation towards yourself or another member of staff must be reported to the Principal.

## **7.0 Gifts/Hospitality**

- 7.1 Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift/offer of hospitality that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. However, there may be occasions where students or parents wish to give a small token of appreciation to staff, for example at religious festivities or at the end of the year.
- 7.2 It is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or to suggest to students that gifts are appropriate or desired. Money must not be accepted as a gift. If you are unsure whether to accept a gift you should consult the Principal.
- 7.3 Staff must not accept significant gifts or hospitality from students, parents, carers, actual or potential contractors or outside suppliers. All such gifts/offers of hospitality should be reported to the Principal and recorded.
- 7.4 Personal gifts must not be given by staff to students and any reward to students should be in accordance with Open Box Education Centre’s Relationships and Behaviour policy, recorded and not based on favouritism.

## **8.0 Physical Contact with Students**

- 8.1 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. A ‘no touch’ approach is advisable but not always practical and physical contact may in some circumstances be appropriate. When physical contact is made with students it should be in response to their needs at that time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.

- 8.2 Where feasible, staff should seek the child's permission before initiating contact. Staff should listen, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and, so far as is possible, use a level of contact which is acceptable to the child for the minimum time necessary.
- 8.3 It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. Staff should, therefore, use their professional judgement at all times.
- 8.4 Staff should be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described. Staff should never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent. Always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny. Staff must not engage in rough play, tickling or fun fights with students.
- 8.5 Extra caution should be exercised where a child is known to have suffered previous abuse or neglect. Such experiences may sometimes make a child exceptionally needy and demanding of physical contact and staff should respond sensitively by deterring the child through helping them to understand the importance of personal boundaries.
- 8.6 Staff supervising PE and games or providing musical tuition should demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument on another member of staff if possible. However, they may be required to initiate physical contact with students to support a child to perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument or to assist them with an exercise. Contact under these circumstances should be done with the student's agreement, for the minimum time necessary and in an open environment. Staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the student.
- 8.7 Physical contact must never be secretive, for the gratification of the adult or represent a misuse of authority.
- 8.8 If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported to the Principal, recorded and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the child's file.

## **9.0 Child in distress**

- 9.1 There may be occasions when a student is in distress and in need of comfort as a reassurance. This may include age appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.
- 9.2 Such incidents should always be recorded and shared with the Principal. If you have a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance you should seek further advice from the Principal.

## **10.0 Showers and changing**

- 10.0 Students are entitled to respect and privacy whilst they are changing or showering after sports activities or swimming. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard young people, meet health and safety

requirements and to ensure that bullying does not take place. The supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the students and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

- 10.1 Staff should be vigilant about their own behaviour and announce their intention of entering a changing room. Staff must not change or shower in the same place as students.

### **11.0 One to one situations**

- 11.1 Staff working individually with students should be aware of the potential vulnerability of students and staff in such situations. Staff should manage these situations with regard to the safety of the student and to themselves.
- 11.2 Individual work with students should not be undertaken in isolated areas or rooms where there is no external viewing panel. Where it is necessary to close doors for reasons of confidentiality a colleague should be made aware of this and asked to remain vigilant.

### **12.0 Transporting students**

- 12.1 In certain circumstances it may be appropriate for staff to transport students offsite, for example sports activities, swimming lessons or other out of school activities. A designated member of staff should be appointed to plan and provide oversight of all transport arrangements and to respond to any difficulties that may arise, in accordance with the policy for transporting students.
- 12.2 Staff should ensure that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. Staff should ensure that the driver has the appropriate licence for the vehicle, that the vehicle is roadworthy, has a valid MOT certificate and is appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.
- 12.3 Staff should ensure that the driver is not distracted while the vehicle is in motion for any reason other than an emergency and should also ensure all passengers are wearing correctly fastened seatbelts. Staff should never transport students while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- 12.4 Prior to transporting students offsite consent must be obtained from students' parent/guardian and staff should be aware that the safety and welfare of the students is their responsibility until this is safely passed back to their parent/carer. Consent for local, regular trips is included within the initial parental agreement.

### **13.0 E-Safety**

- 13.1 Staff should follow Open Box Education Centre's E-Safety policy at all times.
- 13.2 Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school or the school community into disrepute. Staff should adopt the highest security settings on any personal profiles they have.
- 13.3 Staff should remain mindful of their digital footprint and exercise caution in all their use of social media or any other web based presence they have. This includes written content, videos or photographs and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts or following certain individuals or groups. Staff should exercise care when using dating websites where staff could encounter students.

- 13.4 Staff must not make contact with students, must not accept or initiate friend requests nor follow students accounts on any social media platform. Staff must not communicate with students via social media, websites, instant messenger accounts or text message. The only acceptable method of contact is via the use of school email accounts or telephone equipment, with the exception of the Principal and the Administrator who may use text message contact for appropriate purposes only.
- 13.5 Staff should not make contact with students' family members, accept or initiate friend requests or follow students' family member's account on any social media platform.
- 13.6 However, Open Box Education Centre acknowledges that staff who are also parents may wish to make contact with other parents, who are friends, over social media. Staff must exercise caution and professional judgement in these circumstances and should not have any contact with students' family members via social media if that contact is likely to constitute a conflict of interest or call into question their objectivity.
- 13.7 Mobile phones should be switched off (or silent) at all times while a member of staff is actively teaching or interacting with students. If a member of staff needs to make or accept a call then this should be done discretely and without disturbing the learning environment.
- 13.8 Mobile phones and personally-owned mobile devices brought in to school are the responsibility of the device owner. Open Box Education Centre accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of personally-owned mobile phones or mobile devices.

#### **14.0 Photography, video and images of children**

- 14.1 Many school activities involve recording images as part of the curriculum, extra school activities, publicity or to celebrate an achievement. In accordance with The Data Protection Act 1998 the image of a student is personal data. Therefore, it is a requirement under the Act for consent to be obtained from the parent/guardian of a student for any images made. It is also important to take into account the wishes of the student, remembering that some students do not wish to have their photograph taken or be filmed.
- 14.2 Using images for publicity purposes will require the age-appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their parent/guardian. Images should not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without their consent. Staff should also be clear about the purpose of the activity and what will happen to the photographs/images/video footage when the lesson or activity is concluded.
- 14.3 Photographs/stills or video footage of students should only be taken using the **Microsoft Office Lens App** which, if installed on a staff member's own mobile phone, allows them to save images directly to a school One Drive storage area. This ensures that no photos of students are stored either locally on a staff member's mobile phone or in their personal cloud storage. No images should be stored by members of staff either locally on a mobile phone or in a staff member's personal cloud storage. No staff member should share photos of students or other confidential information via social media, even if only intended to be shared with other staff members. It is the responsibility of all staff members to seek the support of the IT Manager to install,

configure and operate the **Microsoft Office Lens App** if they are unable to do so without guidance.

- 14.4 Staff should ensure that the Principal is aware of the proposed use of photographic/video equipment and that this is recorded in lesson plans. All photographs/stills and video footage should be available for scrutiny and staff should be able to justify all images/video footage made.
- 14.5 Staff should remain aware of the potential for images of students to be misused to create indecent images of children and/or for grooming purposes. Therefore, careful consideration should be given to how activities which are being filmed or photographed are organised and undertaken. Particular care should be given when filming or photographing young or vulnerable students who may be unable to question how or why the activities are taking place. Staff should also be mindful that students who have been abused through the use of video or photography may feel threatened by its use in a teaching environment.

## **15.0 Confidentiality**

- 15.1 Confidential information can take various forms and be held and transmitted in various ways e.g. manual records (files, reports and notes), verbal discussions and electronic records. As a general rule, all information received in the course of employment or whilst volunteering/being engaged by the school, no matter how it is received, held or transmitted, should be regarded as sensitive and confidential and must not be disclosed or divulged within or outside the school other than in accordance with the requirement of the role and/or where specific permission has been provided.

**NOTE:** All workers must be aware that they are obliged to disclose information relating to child protection issues and should make it clear to the individual either that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed and/or decline to receive the information and direct them to a more appropriate person e.g. the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

- 15.2 The school is committed to being transparent about how it collects and uses the personal data of its workforce, and to meeting its data protection obligations. The Data Protection Policy sets out the school's commitment to data protection, and individual rights and obligations in relation to personal data.
- 15.3 Any actual or suspected/potential breach of data protection must be reported immediately to the school's Data Protection Officer.
- 15.4 Staff should be aware that it is their responsibility to ensure that any personal device, eg. mobile phone, which is used to access the school's network and Microsoft 365 environment is appropriately, securely and consistently protected with a passcode.
- 15.5 Staff members are responsible for the safe and secure use, transport and storage of their allocated school laptop. Under no circumstance should anyone other than the allocated member of staff make use of the staff laptop.
- 15.4 Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a student or her/his family for their own, or others' advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other organisations). Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the student.

- 15.5 All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a student is bullied by another student, this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate school procedure. It must not be discussed outside the school, including with the student's parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the school except in the appropriate forum and with the Principal in order to deal with the matter.
- 15.6 Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the Principal and only approved staff and governors should communicate to the media about the school.

**16.0 Whistleblowing**

- 16.1 Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, without fear of repercussion.
- 16.2 All school staff have a duty to report any behaviour by a colleague which raises concern. Staff should refer to Open Box Education Centre's whistleblowing guidance within the Child Protection Policy and Whistleblowing Policy for further guidance. This is particularly important where the welfare of students may be at risk.

**17.0 Compliance**

- 17.1 All staff, as defined in section 1.4, must complete the form on the next page to confirm they have read, understood and agree to comply with this policy. This should be signed and dated and a copy retained on the member of staff's file.

**Approved by:** ..... (Principal)..... (date)

**Authorised by:**..... (Chair of Governors) ..... (date)

**To be reviewed every:** 2 Years

**Next review date:** July 2022



## Staff Code of Conduct Policy Confirmation of Compliance

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with Open Box Education Centre's Staff Code of Conduct Policy.

Name .....

Position/Post Held .....

Signed .....

Date .....

**Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Principal**