

19/09/2023

Blossom Lower School and Upper House



Staff Code of Conduct and Whistleblowing Policy

EYFS, Adapted Curriculum, Primary, Secondary, Post 16

Motspur Park | Euston | Wimbledon

Last reviewed September 2023 by Fiona Roberts (DSL)

Next review due September 2024

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Staff Code of Conduct

For all permanent staff, peripatetic staff, supply staff, agency staff, students and volunteers

About This Policy

Blossom House School believes that it is essential for standards of conduct at work to be maintained to ensure delivery of quality services and also to protect the wellbeing of all its employees and pupils. School staff are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the pupils within the school. The following policy will ensure that all employees are committed to providing the safest possible learning and working environment which safeguards children, and reduces the risk of them being falsely accused of improper or unprofessional conduct.

Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Any member of staff suspected of committing a breach of this policy will be required to cooperate with our investigation.

This policy has been written with reference to the following documents:

[Keeping children safe in education September 2023](#)

[Working together to safeguard children March 2018](#)

[Guidance for Safer Working Practice February 2022](#)

Expectations

Blossom House School aims to:

- promote a culture of vigilance
- provide openness and support
- ensure that systems are in place for concerns to be raised
- ensure that adults are not placed in situations which render them particularly vulnerable
- ensure that all adults are aware of expectations, policies and procedures

Blossom House School expects its employees to:

- understand their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and always act in the best interests of the child
- understand the responsibilities which are part of their employment or role, and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached
- take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour and avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions
- work in an open and transparent way including self-reporting if their conduct falls short of these expectations

- apply the same professional standards regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and sexual orientation
- not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or any substance, including prescribed medication, which may affect their ability to care for children
- be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in disciplinary action being taken against them, including barring by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) and/or prohibition from teaching by the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA)

Blossom House Culture of Vigilance

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's** responsibility. Blossom House School actively promotes a culture of vigilance; everyone who comes into contact with children has a role to play in identifying concerns, encouraging children to talk about anything that is worrying them, providing help, and taking action to prevent concerns from escalating. We facilitate a whole school, child-centred approach to safeguarding, where staff consider, at all times, the best interests of the child. As part of their annual suitability form, all staff have signed to say they have read *part 1 of Keeping children safe in education (2023)* guidance for schools and colleges.

Declaration Policies

In order to ensure safe practice, all staff are asked to sign a declaration to say that they have read and understood the following:

- Safeguarding Children and Child Protection policy (including the school's safeguarding response to children who go missing from education, and the role of the DSL)
- Staff Code of Conduct and Whistleblowing policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- First Aid policy
- Fire Evacuation policy

Confidentiality

All staff are asked to sign a confidentiality agreement before starting at Blossom House School. All staff are likely to witness actions which need to be confidential, such as safeguarding concerns. These must not be discussed outside the school, nor with colleagues in the school who do not have the appropriate role and authority to deal with the matter. Staff must **never** promise a pupil or parent that they will not act on information shared.

Honesty and Integrity

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.

Conduct Outside of Work

Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community. In particular, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable.

Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school nor be to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance.

Staff must speak to the Principal before undertaking babysitting or other duties connected to pupils outside school. An *Additional Work with Pupils Disclaimer* must also be filled out and returned to HR (**see Appendix A**).

Dress Code (see Appendix B)

Our pupils are influenced by the role models around them. All staff form an important part of the modelling process so should think about how they present themselves, their appearance, body language, actions and use of language. All staff who work with pupils should ensure that they are dressed appropriately for the tasks and the work they undertake. As part of safeguarding for staff and pupils it is important staff do not dress in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate or could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations.

Infatuations and 'Crushes'

It is not uncommon for pupils to be attracted to a member of staff or develop an infatuation. Staff should make every effort to ensure that their own behaviour cannot be brought into question, does not appear to encourage this and be aware that there is a greater risk of their words or actions being misinterpreted. If staff have any concerns about a pupil becoming infatuated with themselves or a colleague, they should immediately report this to the DSL and Principal.

Gifts and Rewards

Staff must not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. There are occasions when pupils or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff e.g. at Christmas, which is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value. Similarly, it is inadvisable to give such personal gifts to pupils or their families. This could be interpreted as a gesture either to bribe or groom. It might also be perceived that a 'favour' of some kind is expected in return. Any reward given to a pupil should be in accordance with the Blossom House behaviour policies.

Working One-to-One

Staff working one-to-one with pupils, including visiting staff from external agencies, can be more vulnerable to allegations or complaints. To safeguard both pupils and staff, any staff member working one-to-one should ensure that wherever possible there is visual access and/or an open door. Risk assessments are carried out where necessary. Staff must report any situation where a pupil becomes distressed, anxious, or angry, as an incident log on Bromcom.

Transporting Pupils

In certain situations, staff may be required or offer to transport pupils as part of their work. A risk assessment must be carried and permission must be granted by the Principal. Wherever possible, it is advisable that transport is undertaken other than in private vehicles and with at least one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort. It is a legal requirement that all passengers wear seatbelts and the driver should ensure that they do so. They should also be aware of and adhere to current legislation regarding the use of car seats for younger children.

Preventing Exposure to Unsuitable Material

The school recognises its duty to prevent children from being exposed to unsuitable material, including adult material; strong or offensive language; sexualised entertainment or references; material containing violent/ aggressive images or sounds; and any material which promotes partisan political views, undermines fundamental British values or expresses prejudicial views relating to religion, gender, race, sexual orientation, or other topics of a sensitive nature. Staff will ensure that television, video, DVD or internet material is suitable and age appropriate before being shown to pupils. If films are exhibited, the classification restrictions relating to the film as set out by the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) should be adhered to (visit <http://www.bbfc.co.uk/>). Any incidents of exposure to unsuitable content are to be reported to the Principal.

Religious, Political and Other Sensitive Topics

Blossom House School is a secular, non-political institution. As part of our school's holistic curriculum, we actively promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils, and within this, fundamental British values. Where areas of the curriculum include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit or of a religious, political, or sensitive nature, care should be taken to ensure that resource materials clearly relate to the learning outcomes identified by the lesson plan. Staff must not attempt to influence or impose their personal values, attitudes or beliefs on pupils or staff; this includes entering into or encouraging discussion, or distributing material that promotes partisan political views, undermines fundamental British values or expresses prejudicial views relating to religion, gender, race, sexual orientation, or other topics of a sensitive nature.

Visiting Speakers

Visiting speakers, whether invited by staff or by the pupils themselves, must be suitable and appropriately supervised. Speakers must not engage in inappropriate discussions which may offend or harm others, undermine fundamental British values, express any prejudicial views, or attempt to influence or impose their personal values, attitudes or beliefs on pupils or staff.

Acceptable Use of Technologies

Staff must adhere to the Mobile Phone Policy for Staff when using their personal devices on the school premises (*see Appendix C*).

If parents, staff or outside agencies wish to record information (e.g. sessions with children or meetings) prior permission must be obtained by the Principal.

Social Media and Networking *Please also refer to the Staff Handbook*

Staff must exercise caution when using social networking sites, and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. If staff members have named their place of work as 'Blossom House School' on any social networking sites, they are to refrain from making any school-related comments. Staff should not discuss school matters; including those that may identify any pupils or staff by name, or the location of any events or trips.

Staff should ensure that all social media privacy settings are on the highest setting. Profile pictures, and any public posts or comments should be professional and appropriate, and should not contain any personal details including phone numbers or emails. Staff are reminded not to accept any previous or current pupils or parents as 'friends' on their account, and might choose to consider the way their name appears to prevent pupils from searching for them.

Social media apps (WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger etc.) should not be used for business communication between staff, as this goes against terms of use, and may breach GDPR. Social media apps can be used for informal or social communication between staff members. Staff should maintain professional conduct during any communication (whether business or social), with colleagues. This includes sharing comments, photos or videos. Any inappropriate conduct should be reported to HR. The School has a duty to provide a safe working environment free from bullying and harassment, including online.

Staff must not use their camera or video application to take photographs or videos anywhere in the school, unless this is deemed essential for work purposes. Photographs or videos must not contain footage of staff or pupils, or have any confidential information in the background (e.g. information on notice boards), for GDPR and safeguarding reasons. Staff members must not post any photos or videos of themselves and/or others in any workplace setting on social networking sites. In such circumstances, disciplinary action may be taken.

Safe Use of Pupils' Photographs and Videos

Parents and staff may take photographs and videos at school events, such as sports day, school plays and summer fete. Staff may also take photographs and videos during offsite school trips, which may then be shared with parents. All parents sign an agreement when their child starts at Blossom House to say that such photographs and videos are for "personal use" only, and any objections should be addressed to the Principal. Staff must ensure that any photographs or videos taken during school events or on school trips are not shared on any social media platforms. **Staff are not permitted to use personal devices to take photographs or videos of pupils at any other time.** In the event of the inappropriate use of photographs or videos, school disciplinary procedures will be followed, which may include referral to the LADO and/or Police involvement.

Blossom House School Instagram

We have a Blossom House School Instagram account for sharing pupils learning and achievements. Photos do not include images of pupils faces, and where this is unavoidable, faces are blurred out. Designated account holders are responsible for the sharing of any photos.

Staff-Pupil Relationships

Staff must maintain appropriate relationships with pupils at all times. If staff feel that this boundary is being crossed at any point, (receiving inappropriate content in emails, sharing of any personal or inappropriate photographs or videos, attempts to make contact via social media platforms, contact outside of usual working hours etc.), they must report to the DSL and Principal immediately. Staff are not permitted to use any social media platforms to communicate with pupils (Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat etc.) at any time.

As a result of their knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, all those working with children in a school or education setting are in a '**position of trust**'. Staff should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries, avoid behaviour which could be misinterpreted by others, and report any such incident. Where a person aged 18 or over is in a position of trust with a child under 18, it is an offence under the 2003 sexual offences act, 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.

Disqualification

If you have been disqualified from working with children under the Childcare Act 2006, it is your responsibility to declare this to HR during the recruitment stage, or during your employment if applicable.

Whistleblowing

For all permanent staff, peripatetic staff, supply staff, agency staff, students and volunteers

About This Policy

Blossom House School is committed to creating a culture of safety where the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability are maintained. We value reflective practice and we encourage staff working with us to raise any concerns they may have about any aspect of our work. It is recognised that whistleblowing may engender feelings of disloyalty to colleagues or that staff may fear harassment or victimisation; however, staff should feel free to 'speak up' and will be appropriately supported and valued for doing so. This procedure is separate from the school complaints procedure and other statutory reporting procedures. Don't think "what if I'm wrong"—think "what if I'm right."

This policy reflects the principles in [Sir Robert Francis' Freedom to Speak Up review \(2015\)](#).

Blossom House School Culture of Vigilance

Blossom House School promotes a culture of vigilance and staff must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of the Principal Joanna Burgess. This procedure encourages staff to raise serious concerns, including poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding regime; without fear of reprisal or victimisation, internally within school rather than overlooking a problem or raising the matter outside.

Reasons for whistleblowing

- Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour:-
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening.
- To protect or reduce risks to others.
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself.

What stops people from whistleblowing?

- Fears of starting a chain of events which spirals.
- Fear of disrupting the work or project.
- Fear of getting it wrong.
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers.
- Fear of not being believed.

Staff behaviours that should cause concern:-

- conduct which is, has been or is likely to be an offence or breach of law
- conduct that has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur as the result of which the school fails to comply with a legal obligation. For example, unauthorised use of public funds, possible fraud and corruption, or other unethical conduct discrimination of any kind and waste/frivolous expenditure
- past, current or likely miscarriages of justice
- past, current or likely health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees
- past, current or likely damage to the environment
- inappropriate discussions which may offend or harm others, undermine fundamental British values, express any prejudicial views, or attempt to influence or impose their personal values, attitudes or beliefs on pupils or staff
- bullying or any other oppressive behaviours
- ***where an allegation or concern is raised against a member of staff which relates to the safeguarding or welfare of a child or children, please follow safeguarding procedures on page 4 of this policy***

Other areas of concern:-

- poor or unsafe practice
- inaction following safeguarding reports
- repeat or escalating concerns which are not being addressed appropriately

How to raise a concern

- You should voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you feel you can with your line manager.
- The earlier a concern is expressed the easier and sooner action can be taken.
- Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning you and why.
- If your concern is about your immediate line manager approach the Principal
- If your concern is about the Principal, or you feel you need to take it to someone outside the School, contact the school's independent body which is set up to assist if needed in such a situation (*details are held in the staff office*).
- Make sure you get a satisfactory response – don't let matters rest.
- Ideally you should put your concerns in writing, outlining the background and history giving names, dates and places where you can.
- A member of staff is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation but you will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.

What happens next?

- You should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries.
- Your employer has a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimisation.
- No action will be taken against you if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith.
- Malicious allegations may be considered as a disciplinary offence.

Confidentiality

All concerns raised will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if this is your wish. However, in certain cases, it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality if you are required to come forward as a witness.

Anonymous Allegations

Whenever possible you should put your name to your allegation, as concerns that are expressed anonymously are much less powerful than those that are attributed to a named individual.

However anonymous allegations will be considered and investigated at the school's discretion.

In exercising the discretion, the factors to be taken into account would include:

- the seriousness of the issues raised
- the credibility of the concern; and
- the likelihood of being able to confirm the allegation from attributable sources.

Self-reporting

There may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty, perhaps a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff members have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with their Line Manager and/or HR so professional and personal support can be offered to the member of staff concerned. Whilst such reporting will remain confidential in most instances, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children.

Safeguarding Concerns and Allegations made about Staff (including Supply Teachers, Agency Staff, Volunteers and Contractors)

Any concerns or allegations raised against a member of staff which relates to the safeguarding or welfare of a child or children, must be **reported to the Principal immediately** *[as the Principal is also the sole proprietor of Blossom House Independent School, any allegation or concerns made about the Principal should be reported directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) 020 8545 3179; lado@merton.gov.uk].*

The Principal has to decide whether the concern is an allegation or low-level concern. The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold for referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Allegations that may meet the harms threshold

Allegations that indicate a person would pose a risk of harm if they continue to work in close contact with children include those who have:

- 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;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates that they may not be suitable to work with children (including outside the school setting)

If a child has been harmed, is at immediate risk of harm, or if the situation is an emergency, children's social care and/or the police may need to be contacted immediately.

Before contacting the LADO, the Principal will conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts to help them determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation, being careful not to jeopardise any future police investigation. The LADO's role is not to investigate the allegation, but to ensure that an appropriate investigation is carried out, whether that is by the police, children's social care, the school, or a combination of these.

For more information, please see [Part four of Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2023\)](#).

Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold (low level concerns)

Concerns may be graded low level if the concern does not meet the criteria for an allegation; and the person has acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work. Example behaviours include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

If the concern has been raised via a third party, the Principal should collect as much evidence as possible by speaking:

- directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously;
- to the individual involved and any witnesses.

Reports about supply staff and contractors should be notified to their employers, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

Staff are encouraged and feel confident to self-refer, where, for example, they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others,

and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.

All low-level concerns are recorded in writing, including:

- name of individual sharing their concerns (unless they wish to remain anonymous)
- details of the concern
- context in which the concern arose
- action taken

Records are kept confidential in a restricted office, and are reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified and managed accordingly. If a concerning pattern of behaviour is identified which meets the criteria for an allegation, then the matter should be referred to the LADO. The records' review might identify that there are wider cultural issues within the school or college that enabled the behaviour to occur. This might mean that policies or processes could be revised or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again.

The school has a Safeguarding Lead Member on the Advisory Body, who may be contacted for any minor concerns around the Proprietor or Senior Management Team. Please contact via the Office.

Referring to DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) and TRA (Teaching Regulation Agency)

Blossom House School is aware of their obligation to refer any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) to DBS if:

- They are dismissed because they have harmed someone;
- They are dismissed/removed from working in regulated activity because they might have harmed someone;
- They were going to be dismissed for either of these reasons, but they resigned first.

Allegations of serious misconduct against a teacher may be referred to the [TRA](#).

Whistleblowing advice line

If you have concerns over how child protection issues are being handled in your own or another organisation, you can call the NSPCC advice line anonymously on 0800 028 0285, or email help@nspcc.org.uk. More information can be found on the [NSPCC website](#).

Signed:

Joanna Burgess, Principal



01.09.23

Appendix A

**BLOSSOM HOUSE SCHOOL
Disclaimer for Additional Work with Pupils**

This disclaimer has been written with reference to any current employee of Blossom House School who wishes to undertake additional work with a pupil e.g. PA work, babysitting etc. Where this arrangement does not form part of the employee’s working contract, this is considered to be a **private arrangement** between parents and the employee, where parents accept full responsibility for the employee’s terms of work. Under such circumstances, Blossom House School is no longer liable for any agreements made between the parent and the employee in terms of working hours, pay, travel and food expenses, timekeeping, or conduct.

All employees of Blossom House School have undergone thorough safer recruitment checks and hold a current, enhanced DBS. In order to maintain safeguarding standards, employees will continue to adhere to the School’s Health and Safety, First Aid and Safeguarding & Child Protection policies (available on our website: www.blossomhouseschool.co.uk/school-policies).

Employees must ensure that any additional work undertaken does not conflict with the interests of the school nor be to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance. Whilst undertaking additional work, employees must uphold the School’s reputation and not undermine any of the School’s values, ethos, decision making, or management. Employees must not discuss how the pupil is progressing at school, or anything else related to their school provision. Any such questions must be directed to the pupil’s Specialist Advisor.

Employees are reminded of their contractual duty point 16: *You shall not either during or after your period of employment with the School divulge to any person any confidential information relating to the School or its affairs, or the affairs of pupils and their families which come to your notice or into your possession by virtue of your employment with the School, including names or personal details of any pupils.* Employees must not share any sensitive information including posts or images on social media platforms.

This is to confirm that I understand and agree to the above disclaimer.

Employee:

Signed..... Print name..... Date:.....

Parent:

Signed..... Print name..... Date:.....

Please return this form to HR before any work is undertaken, and give a copy to the parents.

HR/Senior Management (form received)

Signed..... Print name..... Date:.....

Appendix B

DRESS CODE

Our pupils are influenced by the role models around them. All staff form an important part of the modelling process so should think about how they present themselves, their appearance, body language, actions and use of language.

Whilst a person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression, staff should dress in ways which are appropriate to their professional role and this may need to be different to how they dress when not at work.

All staff who work with pupils should ensure that they are dressed appropriately for the tasks and the work they undertake. As part of safeguarding for staff and pupils it is important staff do not dress in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate or could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations.

This means that staff should wear clothing which:

- is professional and appropriate to their role. For example, smart clothing and footwear must be worn to work, clothing for PE should be appropriate such as sports clothing and footwear.
- is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative. Be particularly aware if you are likely to be bending in front of students, talking to students sitting on the floor, leaning across a table, delivering first aid etc.
- does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding.
- is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans.
- is not considered to be discriminatory and is culturally sensitive.

In consideration of the above our guidelines are:

- Smart trainers/plimsols are permitted these should be clean, no holes and not frayed.
- Blue jeans or combat/cargo trousers or trousers that are faded or frayed are not considered professional wear.
- To maintain a professional appearance, the wearing of sports clothing (unless for sports) should be avoided, this includes jogging trousers and hooded tops.
- Beach shoes/flip-flops should not be worn for health and safety reasons.
- No low cut or vest tops.
- Skirts and shorts should be of a suitable length taking into consideration teaching environments (carpet areas, low seating etc)
- Ensure leggings are not see-through.
- T-shirts must be plain, without logos or slogans and should be clean.
- No bare midribs and please make sure underwear isn't visible.
- Jewellery and piercings should be minimal and studs only. Anything which could catch or be caught by pupils should be avoided in the health and safety interests of both staff and pupils.
- Tattoos and body art are to be covered where possible and must be covered if they contain political or otherwise contentious slogans or anything that could be considered to be discriminatory and/or culturally sensitive.
- Hair (including facial hair) should be clean and tidy.

- The use of hair colourants is an individual choice, but all staff in should consider if that choice meets the expectations of a professional image. Staff considering use of hair colourants that are not of a natural hair colour i.e. non-natural vibrant colours pink, blue, green etc. should consider their professional image.
- Nails should be kept at a length where they are unlikely to amount to a risk or cause harm to pupils.
- Hats must not be worn inside but may be worn outside for functional reasons (such as shade from the sun and warmth in the winter). Hats must not prevent your face being seen clearly by the pupils.
- Appropriate protective clothing will be provided by the School for staff working with DT/Food Tech/Art.

If for any religious / cultural reasons you wish to wear another type of piercing, tattoo, clothing, please get in touch with the Principal.

All staff have a responsibility to familiarise themselves with this Dress Code and comply with it; the Principal has the final say in all circumstances. Serious or persistent breaches of the Dress Code may result in disciplinary action due to the risk factors to children.

Appendix C

Mobile Phone Policy for Staff

It is our intention to provide an environment in which children, parents and staff are safe from being recorded and mobile phones being inappropriately used, in turn eliminating the following concerns:

- Staff being distracted from their work
- The inappropriate use of mobile phones around children

Aims:

To have a clear policy on the acceptable use of mobile phones, that is understood and adhered to by all parties concerned without exception. In order to achieve this aim we operate the following acceptable use policy:

- Blossom House School accepts that employees will bring their mobile phones to work for their own personal use.
- Staff bringing mobile phones into the school must ensure their device is locked.
- Staff are not permitted to use their mobile phone whilst working with the pupils. Where staff members are required to have their mobile phone for specific behaviour/safeguarding reasons, or in order to carry out essential work around the school, this must be authorised by the DSL or Principal.
- If a staff member has a family emergency or similar and needs their phone at hand, they must seek their line manager's permission.
- Phone calls/texts should be made during staff members' own time, out of the view of pupils.
- Staff must not use their camera or video application to take photographs or videos anywhere in the school, unless this is deemed essential for work purposes. Photographs or videos must not contain footage of staff or pupils, or have any confidential information in the background (e.g. information on notice boards), for GDPR and safeguarding reasons.
- Parents are asked not to use their mobile phones on the premises. For school events such as sports day or the Christmas concert, parents will be asked to not share pictures or footage of children other than their own, on any social media platforms. All staff must be vigilant and report any concerns to the DSL or Principal.
- Staff members are permitted to take their mobile phones out on school trips. Photographs or videos taken during school trips must not be shared on any social media platforms.
- Staff are not permitted to use personal devices to take photographs or videos of pupils at any other time- these must be taken using a school device.
- The Principal reserves the right to check any staff member's mobile phone should there be cause for concern over the appropriate use of it.
- In the event of the inappropriate use of photographs or videos, school disciplinary procedures will be followed, which may include referral to the LADO and/or Police.

Appendix D

Communication Expectations

Communication between staff

- Staff should consider whether emails are relevant and necessary before sending. 'All staff' emails should only be sent where content is relevant to staff across the whole school. Where possible, group lists should be used to share information in an effective manner e.g. 'MP Upper Phase Teachers'.
- Staff may choose to send emails at varying times, however there is no expectation for staff to read or reply to these emails outside of their contracted hours.
- Any urgent messages will be sent via the school office to staff members' personal mobiles, and/or email addresses e.g. notification of school closure.
- Social media apps (WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger etc.) should not be used for business communication between staff, as this goes against terms of use, and may breach GDPR. Social media apps can of course be used for informal or social communication between staff members.
- Staff should ensure that all social media privacy settings are on the highest setting. Profile pictures, and any public posts or comments should be professional and appropriate, and should not contain any personal details including phone numbers or emails.
- Staff should maintain professional conduct during any communication (whether business or social), with colleagues. This includes sharing comments, photos or videos. Any inappropriate conduct should be reported to HR.

Communication with pupils and parents

- Phone calls should take place within usual school hours (Mon- Fri 8:30-5:00), where possible. Emails may be sent outside of these times if required.
- Staff should avoid contacting parents during school holidays unless absolutely necessary. When school is closed, staff will not have support from the multi-disciplinary team to follow up on any concerns that may be raised. It is also important for parents to utilise support from friends/family/outside agencies and not become reliant on school staff.
- Pupils attending our Post 16 provision may be contacted directly; this includes via school/personal email, mobile phone and the 'text' function on Microsoft Teams.
- Staff must always use their Blossom House email address to contact parents or pupils.
- Staff should withhold their phone number (or dial 141 first), when using personal phones to contact parents or pupils.
- Staff must maintain appropriate relationships with pupils and parents at all times. If staff feel that this boundary is being crossed at any point, (inappropriate content in emails, inappropriate phone conversations, sharing of any inappropriate photographs or videos,

repeated attempts to make contact, or contact outside of usual working hours etc.), they must report to the DSL and Principal immediately.

- Staff are not permitted to use any social media platforms to make contact with pupils or parents (Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok etc.) Any staff who receive social media contact from a parent or a pupil, must report to the DSL.

Guidelines for parents

- Blossom House School is committed to improving communication with parents. Regular communication is maintained through the Group Leader or Specialist Advisor, and other teachers or therapists where necessary. General communication is sent via the school office. We also provide up to date information on our website.
- As communication is a two-way process, we expect both parents and staff to respond to any communication in a timely manner. However, it is important for parents to acknowledge that as their child's learning and access to therapies is our priority, it may not be possible for staff to respond to communication during the school day. Staff will endeavour to return calls and emails as soon as they are able to. If any communication requires an urgent response, parents should notify the school office.
- Blossom House School has a 'zero-tolerance' approach towards any threatening or abusive communication. Any parent who wishes to make a complaint must follow the official complaints procedure. Our complaints policy is available on the school website.