



# Code of Conduct

September 2021

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Policy review dates and changes

Review date	By whom	Summary of changes made	Date implemented

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## Introduction

At Prospect School we believe in creating a whole school culture that is safe and inclusive. A Staff Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school staff are expected to observe. School staff are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that models the highest possible standards for all the students within the school. As a member of a school community, each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside of working hours.

Our aims underpin the school culture: to develop a happy, safe and secure learning environment where all students' needs are met, where progress, achievements and success are recognised and praised, where strong, supportive, caring and respectful relationships between all adults and students are developed, within an atmosphere of trust and understanding.

## Purpose

This Code of Conduct aims to establish a set of principles which underpin the expected conduct of staff at Prospect School with the intention of encouraging staff to achieve the highest standards of conduct at work and of minimising the risk of improper conduct occurring.

The school requires that all staff have read and comply with the Code of Conduct. Where clarification is needed on any aspect of this document, this should be sought from the Headteacher.

Breach or failure to observe the provisions of this document may lead to action being taken under the school disciplinary procedure which can be located in the staff room.

This document is available to all staff from the staffroom or school office as well as being provided on induction to all new members of staff.

The Code of Conduct is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of conduct and behaviour and in circumstances where guidance does not exist individuals are expected to use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its students.

## Scope

The Code of Conduct applies to:

- all members of staff, including teaching and support staff;
- volunteers, including governors;
- casual workers;
- temporary and supply staff, either from agencies or engaged directly;
- student placements, including those undertaking initial teacher training, and apprentices.

References to 'staff' throughout the Code of Conduct refer to all of the above groups.

The Code of Conduct exists in addition to Hampshire County Council's Local Government Code of Conduct.

## Professional Standards at Work

Staff are expected to demonstrate the highest possible standards of personal and professional conduct and behaviour and consistently act with honesty and integrity. The school expects staff to treat each other, students, parents/carers and the wider school community with dignity and respect at all times.

Furthermore, staff must have regard for the ethos and values of the school as well as its policies and procedures and act in accordance with these at all times, including in their dealings with those who come into contact with the school e.g. visitors.

Staff must act in accordance with their duty of care to students and ensure that the safety and welfare of students at the school are accorded the highest priority. In this and other ways staff should always maintain standards of conduct and behaviour which sustain their professional standing and that of the school.

## Safeguarding

Prospect School recognises its statutory and moral duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of students and understands that staff play a vital role in meeting these responsibilities. Staff must be aware of their individual safeguarding responsibilities, including to provide a safe environment in which students can learn, to be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect, to identify students who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm and to take appropriate action in such cases to prevent concerns from escalating.

All members of staff must be aware of the school's systems for supporting child safeguarding, including the role of the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

The DSLs at Prospect School are: Dr Michèle Aldridge – Headteacher, Colin Piper – Assistant Headteacher and Deb McComb – Operational DSL

Staff have a professional duty to report concerns about the welfare of a student. Any such concerns must be raised without delay to the school's DSL in the first instance or to a member of SLT if the DSL cannot be located. In the event that none of the above are available (Hampshire County Council's Safeguarding team - 01962 876364). There should be no delay in reporting a concern if there is risk of immediate serious harm to a student.

Staff are reminded of their duty to report safeguarding concerns about staff. Any concerns or allegations must be raised without delay to the school's DSL in the first instance or to a member of SLT if the DSL cannot be located.

Staff should be familiar with the school's *Child Protection Policy*, which can be located in the staff room or on the school website. All staff will receive appropriate child protection training and will be provided with guidance on child safeguarding as part of their induction to the school.

## Appropriate Relationships

Individuals who work or volunteer in a school environment are in a position of trust. Staff should be mindful of the need to maintain professional boundaries 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.

Staff must avoid unnecessary physical contact with students. Where physical contact is essential, e.g. for safety reasons, the student's permission must be gained for that contact wherever possible. If physical contact is made to remove a student from a dangerous situation or an object from a student to prevent either harm to themselves or others, then this should be recorded and reported to using the file note system in place at Prospect School. In cases where accidental physical contact was made, it should also be reported to using the case note system if appropriate. In all cases staff should act in accordance with the school's restraint policy which can be located in the staff room or on the school website.

Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a student, child or young person whether inside or outside of work is unacceptable. Staff are reminded that under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is a criminal offence for a person aged 18 or over 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. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 defines a child as everyone under the age of 18.

Staff are expected to interact with parents in a polite and respectful manner and recognise parents'/carers' entitlement to express any concerns they may have about their child's learning, safety or wellbeing. Staff should avoid discussing school matters with parents/carers outside school if approached and should instead refer the parent to the normal school communication channels.

### Use of IT including Social Media

Internal e-mail and internet systems must be used only in accordance with the school's acceptable use of *ICT Policy* found on the Prospect School website or in the staffroom.

Social networking sites offer the opportunity for communication with children, young people and their parents/carers outside normal professional boundaries. School staff must take care to protect their privacy and protect themselves from risk of allegations in relation to inappropriate relationships and cyberbullying. Staff must not have any unauthorised contact or accept 'friend' requests through social media with any student (including former students and/or those who attend other schools) unless they are family members. Staff must exercise caution when having contact online through social media with parents/carers so as not to compromise the school's reputation or school information.

### Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information

Staff must ensure that they do not disclose confidential information to anyone who does not have the right to receive it. Where information is disclosed this should be in line with the principles of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2016 and the Data Protection Act 2018. Equally staff should not prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law. If there is doubt about whether or not to share information, advice must be sought from a member of SLT.

Information obtained during the course of an individual's work should never be used for personal gain or benefit, nor should it be passed onto others who might use it in such a way.

### **Dress and Appearance**

At Prospect School we believe that students are influenced by role models around them. All staff form an important part of that modelling process and as professionals it is important that we provide the best example of appropriate clothing for the task in hand.

At Prospect School staff dress professionally appropriately to their role so that they are seen to be acting as role models and can inspire confidence in students and staff.

The school recognises the diversity of cultures and religions of its staff and will take a sensitive approach when this affects dress requirements. Staff of particular faiths or religions, which are required to wear specific types of clothing will be respected subject to where this may pose a hazard to the health and safety of anyone or where this impacts on teaching and learning.

The dress code may be altered for individual staff based on medical circumstances or by agreement with their line manager for a particular role or duty, for example different footwear following an injury may be required.

The dress code is available to read in the staff room (see Appendix 1). The guidelines provided are not an exhaustive list in defining acceptable and non-acceptable standards of dress and appearance and staff should use common sense in adhering to the principles contained in the code. The school reserves the right to highlight any inappropriate clothing and may require employees to address this matter if considered necessary.

### **Equal Opportunities**

The Governing Body of the school is committed to equality for all in the appointment, development, training and promotion of staff, and in all dealings with students and parents of the school. It also recognises that all members of staff have the right to work in a safe environment without fear of discrimination, harassment or abuse.

All students, colleagues, parents/carers, members of the public and wider school community have the right to be treated with fairness and equality and must not be discriminated against. The school expects staff to uphold these principles.

Please refer to the school's *Equalities Policy* for further guidance, which can be found on the Prospect School website or in the staffroom.

### **Conduct Outside Work**

Care must be taken by staff to avoid any conflict of interest between activities undertaken outside school and responsibilities within school. In no case should actions or activities undertaken outside of work (including but not limited to relationships and social media contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults) bring the school into disrepute.

Staff must disclose any misconduct or alleged misconduct made against them, including any incidents arising from alternative or additional employment outside of this school. Disclosure must be made to the Headteacher without delay, after which consideration will be given to the relevance or otherwise of the misconduct to their role in the school.

Teachers are reminded that the Teachers' Standards, and specifically Part Two: Personal and Professional Conduct, set out their responsibilities in relation to upholding public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school. Where staff are in doubt as to whether there is a conflict of interest advice must be sought from the Headteacher.

### Declaration of Interests

Staff should consider carefully whether they need to declare to the school any relationship with an individual where this might cause a conflict with the school's activities, e.g., a relationship with a Governor, another staff member or a contractor who provides services to the school. Where such a declaration is necessary this should be made to the Headteacher.

Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided it does not conflict with the interests of the school nor be at a level which may contravene the Working Time Regulations, or affect an individual's performance at work.

### Whistleblowing

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (as amended) gives protection to people who disclose reasonable concerns about serious misconduct or malpractice at work. This is sometimes known as Whistleblowing. The Governing Body of the school will treat all matters of malpractice very seriously and allegations about such matters will be dealt with quickly and with appropriate confidentiality.

Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibilities in bringing matters of concern to the attention of senior leadership in the school. This is particularly important where the welfare of students may be at risk.

A clear procedure is provided for staff to raise issues with the purpose of assisting in reducing the risk of serious concerns being mishandled, whether by the individual or by the school. Please refer to the school's *Whistleblowing Policy* for further information located in the staff room.

### Health and Safety

Staff must adhere to the school's *Health and Safety Policy* and should ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and others in the school environment safe.

Please refer to the school's *Health and Safety Policy* for further information located on the website and in the staff room.

### Gifts and Hospitality

There may be occasions where students or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff, for example as an end of year 'thank-you', and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value or to suggest to pupils that gifts would be appropriate or desired. Money should never be accepted as a gift.

It is not acceptable for staff to give gifts to students and any rewards given to students must be given in agreement with the declared reward practice of the school.

Staff should not solicit or accept any gift, hospitality or other reward from external parties which influences the way in which they carry out their duties or leads the giver to expect preferential treatment.

### Use of School Resources and Funds

The use of school resources, property and equipment is for school-related activities only, except where otherwise agreed.

All members of staff must use any public or school funds entrusted or handled by them in a responsible and lawful manner.

### Conclusion

All staff are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. By adhering to this code of conduct staff can be assured they are playing their part in safeguarding students and protecting themselves. It is our expectation that all staff should sign a copy of this code of conduct.

## Appendix 1: Dress and Appearance

### Personal appearance and dress code

At Prospect School we believe that pupils are influenced by role models around them. All staff form an important part of that modelling process and as professionals it is important that we provide the best example of appropriate clothing for the task in hand.

#### Guidelines

At Prospect School staff dress professionally appropriately to their role so that they are seen to be acting as role model and can inspire confidence in students and staff.

- All should dress with a level of formality and smartness appropriate to their role. Staff should avoid clothing which is too informal e.g. ripped clothing, strappy tops, or tops which are low cut, front or back. Also be mindful of skirt length.
- Dresses and tops should not be revealing - be particularly aware if you are likely to be bending in front of pupils, talking to pupils sitting on the floor, leaning across a table, administering first aid etc.
- Clothing should not over expose parts of the body (e.g. stomach or chest) or be transparent. Tight or revealing clothes, including short skirts, low cut tops or waistlines are not considered appropriate.
- Informal leisure clothing, which includes leggings, shorts, tracksuit bottoms, hoodies should not be worn except by PE staff and those leading outdoor activities who dress appropriately for their work.
- Cargo style trousers are suitable for outdoor activities, but not appropriate for classroom based activities.
- Leggings may be worn under a dress, skirt or long top.
- Appropriate clothing should be worn for the occasion e.g. changing into sports clothing before P.E. and back into 'professional' dress afterwards.
- Staff may choose to wear a Prospect School polo shirt (not navy). Round neck t-shirts are not allowed. Otherwise a collared shirt (long or short sleeved) or blouse is required.
- Tops can include jumpers, cardigans and jackets. Fleece, sweatshirts and hoodies are not considered appropriate.
- Clothing with pictures or slogans should not be worn.
- All staff must be aware of Health and Safety with regard to their own choice of footwear, clothing and jewellery. Jewellery should be kept to a minimum. No facial piercings (including tongue piercings) or tattoos are allowed. Staff should only wear stud type earrings, not hooped. Finger nails should be kept short.
- All tattoos should be covered where possible.
- Excessively high heeled shoes or boots, Ugg style boots or open toed sandals/flip flops should not be worn to work.
- Denim should not be worn - this includes black denim and jean style trousers (except on non-uniform days and staff training days).
- Trainers should only be worn when involved in PE/sports activities or when appropriate for the role or specific duties.
- Hair (including facial hair) should be neat and tidy at all times and hair should always be tied back when handling food or when there may be a health and risk.

- During out of school visits the dress code applies, however if students are required to wear alternative clothing then the same will apply for staff

### **Suitable clothing for Physical Education**

All staff must change into suitable clothing and footwear for PE acting as role models for the pupils in what is appropriate to wear. Guidelines for PE staff include: tracksuit or jogging bottoms, sports shorts of a suitable length, polo shirt (no slogans and no round neck), sport jacket, fleece, sweatshirt or hoodie, footwear suitable for the activity and long hair to be tied back.

For single lessons, staff must change their footwear in line with student expectation. For PE, health and safety issues are paramount and override any other consideration and staff must be able to move freely without being hampered by unsuitable clothing or footwear.

All jewellery should be removed other than simple wedding rings. However, for safety reason, if they are sharp or have protruding edges they should be taped.

### **Non uniform and dress up days**

Non uniform days and staff training days should follow the ethos of the dress code with a 'casual' twist. Therefore, denim, trainers, hoodies, t-shirts and fashion boots are acceptable.

On 'themed' dress days such as 'Wear it Pink' and 'Christmas Jumper Day', the dress code is to be applied with the exception of the coloured or themed item/s. Denim, trainers, hoodies, t-shirts and fashion boots are not acceptable unless they reflect the colour/theme.

The school recognises the diversity of cultures and religions of its staff and will take a sensitive approach when this affects dress requirements. Staff of particular faiths or religions, which are required to wear specific types of clothing will be respected subject to where this may pose a hazard to the health and safety of anyone or where this impacts on teaching and learning.

The dress code may be altered for individual staff based on medical circumstances or by agreement with their line manager for a particular role or duty, for example different footwear following an injury may be required.

The above guidelines are not an exhaustive list in defining acceptable and non-acceptable standards of dress and appearance and staff should use common sense in adhering to the principles listed above. The school reserves the right to highlight any inappropriate clothing and may require employees to address this matter if considered necessary.

Failure to adhere to the guidelines could constitute misconduct and may result in disciplinary action.