

## OLD VICARAGE SCHOOL STAFF BEHAVIOUR POLICY (STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT)

*This policy, which applies to the whole school, is publicly available on the school website and upon request a copy (which can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required) may be obtained from school the Designated Safeguarding Lead.*

### Document Details

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<b>Responsible Area</b>	Head of School and Senior Leadership Team

**Availability:** All who work, volunteer or supply services to our school have an equal responsibility to understand and implement this policy and its procedures both within and outside of normal school hours, including activities away from school. All new employees and volunteers are required to state that they have read, understood and will abide by this policy and its procedural documents.

**Monitoring and Review:** This document will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Headteacher. This document was reviewed and agreed by the Proprietors in May 2023 and if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require, prior to May 2024 the policy will be reviewed accordingly.

Signed:

Date: May 2023

Mathew Adshead  
Proprietor

Jenny Adshead  
Proprietor

Mrs Kerry Wise  
Head of School

### Definitions used in this Code of Conduct are as follows:

- **‘Fundamental British values’** It includes ‘democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.
- **‘Parents’** is intended to include carers, guardians and other adults acting *in loco parentis*.
- **‘Pupils’** is used throughout the standards but should be taken to include references to children of all ages who are taught by qualified teachers, including those in post-16 education.
- **‘School’** means whatever educational setting the standards are applied in. The standards are required to be used by teachers in maintained schools and non-maintained special schools. Use of the standards in academies and free schools depends on the specific establishment arrangements of those schools. Independent schools are not required to use the standards but may do so if they wish.
- **‘staff’** means all adults, paid or unpaid working in our school – inclusive of volunteers.
- **‘Special educational needs and Disabilities’**, as defined by the Department for Education.
- **‘Statutory frameworks’** includes all legal requirements, including but not limited to the requirement to promote equal opportunities and to provide reasonable adjustments for those with disabilities, as provided for in the Equality Act 2010.

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## **Purpose and Application**

**Purpose:** Relationships with fellow staff, employees, directors, contractors, visitors, volunteers, pupils and their parents, guardians or carers must be reasonable and mutually respectful at all times. This Code has been produced to place the welfare of children at the centre of the school and its culture and to ensure that all those who work in the school and may have contact with children are clear on the rules of conduct and the expectations of the school. Children place trust in those connected to the school creating obligations which we must all meet to ensure the successful outcomes achieved by the children in our care. This *Staff Behaviour Policy and Code of Conduct* has regard to the school's Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy and procedures, which are available on the school website, and the following (collectively referred to in this Code as the **Guidance**) The purpose of the Code is to:

- confirm and reinforce the professional responsibilities of all staff;
- clarify the legal position in relation to sensitive aspects of staff pupil relationships and communication, including the use of social media;
- set out the expectations of standards and behaviour to be maintained within the school;
- help adults establish safe practices and reduce the risk of false accusations or improper conduct.

**Scope of application with other policies inclusive of the code on conduct outside school:** The Code must be read in conjunction with the school's policies, particularly the Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy and procedures and Whistleblowing policy. The same guidelines should be applied to after-school clubs, school trips, and especially trips that involve an overnight stay away from the school. There are separate, more detailed guidelines for school trips in the Educational Visits Policy. The principles of this guidance also apply to contact with children or young people who are pupils at another school.

**Preamble:** Teachers make the education of their pupils their first concern and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. Teachers act with honesty and integrity; have strong subject knowledge, keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up-to-date and are self-critical; forge positive professional relationships; and work with parents in the best interests of their pupils.

Discussion of the procedures set out in that document forms a vital part of our induction procedures. We make it clear in induction and other training, and in guidance provided for staff that they have a responsibility to speak up about safeguarding and welfare matters within the school and to external agencies where necessary. This is one part of our establishing a positive safeguarding culture in the school. The Safeguarding Child Protection Policy provides guidance for teachers and other members of staff when faced with handling any issue relating to child abuse. It is not intended to be a substitute for proper training. The Head of School should always be informed if a member of staff has any concerns in order to ensure the activation of appropriate procedures.

It is important that all adults working with pupils understand that the nature of their work and the responsibilities related to it, place them in a position of trust. This practice guidance provides clear advice on appropriate and safe behaviours for all adults working with our pupils in paid or unpaid capacities, in all settings and in all contexts. The guidance aims to:

- keep our pupils safe by clarifying which behaviours constitute safe practice and which behaviours should be avoided;
- assist adults working with pupils to work safely and responsibly and to monitor their own standards and practice;
- support managers and employers in setting clear expectations of behaviour and/or codes of practice relevant to the services being provided;
- support the school in giving a clear message that unlawful or unsafe behaviour is unacceptable and that, where appropriate, disciplinary or legal action will be taken;
- support safer recruitment practice;
- minimise the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations made against adults who work with pupils;
- reduce the incidence of positions of trust being abused or misused.

The school works with the Safeguarding children multi-agency partnership in its child protection and safeguarding procedures in managing allegations against staff.

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**Your duty:** It is the contractual duty of every member of staff to observe the rules and obligations in this Code. You must also make yourself familiar with and follow School Policies, Procedures and Processes and any related Guidance. The school also has a duty of care to its staff, parents, guardians or carers, and pupils and the implementation of the practices in this Code will help to discharge that duty.

**Wrongdoing:** All staff are required to report their own wrongdoing, or any wrongdoing or proposed wrongdoing of any other member of staff or any conduct which they may suspect to be inappropriate to the Head of School. The school operates a whistleblowing policy which is available on the policy page of the school website.

**Unsuitability:** The guidance contained in this document is an attempt to identify what behaviours are expected of adults who work with our pupils. Adults whose practice deviates from this guidance and/or their professional or employment-related code of conduct may bring into question their suitability to work with pupils in any capacity.

**This means that adults should:**

- *have a clear understanding about the nature and content of this document;*
- *discuss any uncertainties or confusion with the Head of School;*
- *understand what behaviours may call into question their suitability to continue to work with pupils and young people.*

**Responsibilities:** All staff at Old Vicarage School have an overriding responsibility to act and to conduct themselves at all times in a manner which makes a positive and active contribution to the education and welfare of the children in our school and in our care. All staff 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 presentation, attendance and punctuality. Also, they must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities. All staff have a responsibility to keep pupils safe and to protect them from abuse (sexual, physical and emotional), neglect and safeguarding concerns. Our Staff Code of Conduct covers staff behaviour, pupil relationships and communications including the use of social media.

**This means that staff should:**

- understand the responsibilities which are part of their employment or role, and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached;
- always act, and be seen to act, in the child's best interests;
- avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions;
- take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour.

**General conduct**

**School property:** Staff must take proper care when using school property and must not use school property for any unauthorised use or for private gain.

**Use of premises:** Staff must not carry out on school premises any work or activity other than pursuant to the terms and conditions of employment, without the prior permission of the Head of School.

**Behaviour of others:** Staff should be aware that their behaviour may raise concerns if deemed inappropriate. Such concerns will be given careful consideration as to whether they constitute a potential risk to pupils at the school.

**Alcohol and drugs:** No member of Staff should be on duty supervising pupils whilst under the influence of alcohol, drugs or any other substance which may impair judgment.

**Alcohol and drug testing:** The school reserves the right to ask members of Staff to undertake an appropriate test if there is reason to believe that they are under the influence of alcohol, drugs and/or any other substance which may impair judgment. Any unreasonable refusal by a member of Staff to undergo the appropriate test is likely to lead to disciplinary action.

**Whistleblowing:** (Also please refer to our Whistleblowing Policy) The term ‘whistleblowing’ is considered as the confidential raising of problems or concerns within an organisation by a member of staff. This is not “leaking” information but refers to matters of impropriety e.g. a breach of law, school procedures or ethics. Nor is whistleblowing the raising of a grievance within the school (which would be dealt with under the staff grievance procedures). All staff are required to report their own wrongdoing, or any wrongdoing or proposed wrongdoing of any other member of staff to the Head of School.

**Safeguarding:** This is the responsibility of all who work, volunteer or learn in our School and are required to report instances of actual or suspected child abuse or neglect to Mr Richard Crook who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Mrs. Kerry Wise who is Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Deputy DSL) or Mrs Sarah Grundy who is also Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. Old Vicarage School recognises it is an agent of referral and not of investigation. Any person may make a referral including whistleblowing) to external agencies such as the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership or Local Authority Designated Office (LADO).

We make it clear, both in induction and other training and in guidance provided for staff, that they have a responsibility to speak up about safeguarding and welfare matters within our school and to external agencies where necessary. This is one part of the way in which we establish in our school, a positive safeguarding culture. The school provides immunity from retribution or disciplinary action against such staff for “Whistleblowing” in good faith. Staff at all levels, including newly appointed and ancillary staff, have been given briefing or training on responding to suspicions or allegations of abuse and know what action they should take in response to such suspicions or allegations.

The staff and proprietors of the school seek to run all aspects of school business and activity with full regard for high standards of conduct and integrity. If members of school staff, parents, the proprietors or the school community at large become aware of activities which give cause for concern, the school has this whistleblowing policy, which acts as a framework to allow concerns to be raised confidentially and provides for a thorough and appropriate investigation of the matter to bring it to a satisfactory conclusion, under the school’s disciplinary procedure. The school is committed to tackling fraud and other forms of malpractice and treats these issues seriously. The school recognises that some concerns may be extremely sensitive and has therefore developed a system which allows for the confidential raising of concerns within the school environment but also has recourse to an external party outside the management structure of the school.

All Staff must raise any concerns relating to female genital mutilation (FGM) with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and involve children’s social care as appropriate in accordance with the school’s child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures. Teachers must also report to the police cases where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18. The report should be made orally by calling 101, the single non-emergency number. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they must not be examining pupils but those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions.

**Behaviour Management of Pupils including Physical Intervention (please see our Behaviour Management and Physical Intervention policies):** Where pupils display difficult or challenging behaviour, adults should follow the school behaviour and discipline policy using strategies appropriate to the circumstance and situation. A person will not be taken to have used corporal punishment if the action was taken for reasons that include averting an immediate danger of personal injury to, or an immediate danger of death of, any person including the child. The law and guidance for schools’ states that adults may reasonably intervene to prevent a child from:

- committing a criminal offence;
- injuring themselves or others;
- causing damage to property;
- engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline.

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**Physical Restraint:** All members of staff are aware of the regulations regarding the use of force by teachers, as set out in DfE Circular 10/98, relating to section 550A of the Education Act 1996: *The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Children*. Teachers in Old Vicarage School do not hit, push or slap children. Staff only intervene with physical restraint, such as holding, to prevent physical injury to the child, other children or adults and/or serious damage to property. The actions that we take are in line with government guidelines on the restraint of children. Details of such an event (what happened, what action was taken and by whom, and the names of witnesses) should be brought to the attention of the Head of School and recorded in the child's personal file. The child's parents are informed on the same day.

**Punishments that are humiliating or degrading must not be used.**

**The following sanctions / punishments will *never* be used: -**

- Any form of hitting of a child (including hitting a child in anger or retaliation)
- Deprivation of food or drink.
- Enforced eating or drinking.
- Prevention of contact to parents or any appropriate independent listener or helpline by telephone.
- Requirement to wear distinctive clothing or the wearing of nightclothes by day.
- Withholding of any aids or equipment needed by a child.

Staff should:

- *not use force as a form of punishment;*
- *try to defuse situations before they escalate;*
- *inform parents of any behaviour management techniques used;*
- *adhere to the school's behaviour management policy;*
- *be mindful of factors which may impact upon a child or young person's behaviour e.g., bullying, abuse, and where necessary take appropriate action.*

**Action taken in self-defense or in an emergency:** The law allows anyone to defend themselves against an attack provided they do not use more force than is necessary. Similarly, where a pupil is at risk of immediate injury or on the point of inflicting injury on someone else, any member of Staff (whether authorised or not) would be entitled to intervene.

**Physical Contact with Children:** 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;
- be mindful of and sensitive to factors both inside and outside of the school or setting which may impact on a pupil's behaviour;
- avoid shouting at children other than as a warning in an emergency/safety situation;
- always seek to defuse situations and avoid the use of physical intervention wherever possible;
- where physical intervention is necessary, only use minimum force and for the shortest time needed;
- not use physical intervention as a form of punishment;
- never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent;
- always be prepared to report and explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny;
- not indulge in horseplay;
- always encourage children, where possible, to undertake self-care tasks independently;
- work within Health and Safety regulations;
- be aware of cultural or religious views about touching and always be sensitive to issues of gender;
- understand that physical contact in some circumstances can be easily misinterpreted.
- when changing a child, 2 adults should be present.

As a school Old Vicarage School will:

- ensure the school has a compliant physical intervention policy which staff understand, detailing when and how physical interventions should be recorded and reported;
- ensure that staff are provided with appropriate training and support.

**Positions of Trust and Ethical Conduct:** As a result of our knowledge, position, and/or the authority invested in their role, all our staff are in positions of trust. A member of staff can be described as in a position of power or influence because of their role. It is vital for all staff to understand the power this can give them over those they care for and the responsibility they must exercise as a consequence of this relationship. Staff are expected to ensure that while there is an unequal balance of power, staff have a responsibility to ensure that this is not used for personal advantage or gratification. Staff will always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which could be misinterpreted by others. We expect all staff to report and record any incident with this potential. Staff should not:

- use their position to gain access to information for their own advantage and/or a pupil's or family's detriment;
- use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine pupils;
- use their status and standing to form or promote relationships with pupils which are of a sexual nature, or which may become so.

**Abuse of a position of trust and inappropriate relationships with school pupils:** Sexual relationships or sexual contact with any pupil, or encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which might lead to a sexual relationship, or any relationship just considered inappropriate with any pupil at the school, is a grave breach of trust that will usually lead to disciplinary action and may also lead to criminal prosecution. It is a criminal offence to have any sexual relationship with any school pupil under the age of 18. Whilst not a criminal offence, it is a breach of this Code and considered to be gross misconduct to have a sexual relationship with any pupil of this school, even if over the age of 18.

**Inappropriate relationships with pupils at another school:** Forming relationships with children or young people, who are pupils of this school or pupils at another school, will be a criminal offence if they are under 16 but may also be a criminal offence if under the age of 18 and will be regarded as gross misconduct. Such behaviour tends to bring the school into disrepute and gives rise to concern that the staff involved cannot be trusted to maintain professional boundaries with pupils at the school. Whilst not necessarily a criminal offence, the school considers it inappropriate for staff to form inappropriate relationships with a pupil of any school, irrespective of their age.

**Sexual Contact:** All adults should clearly understand the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their contacts with pupils. Intimate or sexual relationships between children/young people and the adults who work with them will be regarded as a grave breach of trust. Allowing or encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which might lead to a sexual relationship is also unacceptable. **Staff must not:**

- have sexual relationships with pupils;
- have any form of communication with a child or young person which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative i.e., verbal comments, letters, notes, electronic mail, phone calls, texts, physical contact;
- make sexual remarks to, or about, a child/young person;
- discuss their own sexual relationships with or in the presence of pupils.

Any sexual activity between an adult and the child or young person with whom they work may be regarded as a criminal offence and will always be a matter for disciplinary action. All children and young people are protected by specific legal provisions in this respect regardless of whether the child or young person consents or not. The sexual activity referred to does not just involve physical contact including penetrative and non-penetrative acts. It may also include non-contact activities, such as causing children to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of pornographic material. 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 and manipulate that relationship so sexual abuse can take place. Adults should be aware that consistently conferring inappropriate special attention and favour upon a child might be construed as being part of a 'grooming' process and as such will give rise to concerns about their behaviour. Staff

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should:

- ensure that their interactions with pupils clearly take place within the boundaries of a respectful professional relationship;
- take care that their language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanor and language all require care and thought, particularly when members of staff are dealing with adolescent boys and girls.

**Guidance for staff on conduct with pupils inclusive of working alone with pupils:** These guidelines are designed to encourage an atmosphere of trust in which all colleagues can conduct their professional lives with confidence. The school recognises the need for, and the desirability of, friendly and respectful social and professional rapport between staff and children. Happy relations in the school are essential. Staff must conduct themselves professionally in their relationships with pupils, parents and staff and must not behave in a way that could bring the school into disrepute or risk allegations being made. Working alone with pupils may include: musical instrument tuition, 1:1 coaching, pupil counselling, conveying a pupil by car etc.

To avoid misunderstandings the following should be adhered to carefully:

- Members of staff should exercise particular caution and sensitivity before visiting lavatories or changing areas. Male members of staff should never be in girls' changing areas unless accompanied by a female member of staff and likewise for female staff and boys changing rooms;
- No member of staff should ever be behind a locked door with a child;
- Ensure that unnecessary contact with children is avoided (e.g. children sitting on laps or hair stroking etc.) and that outward displays of affection are only appropriate in the case of comforting a distressed child, and should never occur unless there is another adult present;
  - Whilst it would be unrealistic and undesirable to preclude all physical contact between adults and children, staff are expected to exercise caution and avoid placing themselves in a position where their actions might be open to criticism or misinterpretation;
- Staff should take great care that relationships with individual children are kept on a professional level. It is important that all children are treated the same and that discipline is fair, consistent and impartial. Staff should take care that "joking comments" cannot be misconstrued to give offence;
- Staff must not be party to gossip about colleagues or children;
- Personal or academic information on children should be kept confidential and away from other children or parents;
- The highest level of confidentiality should always be maintained in relationships with both adults and children. Staff, however, should make it clear that there are certain circumstances (e.g. where a child is suffering or is likely to suffer harm) when other people will need to be told, so that the community or the child can be protected. If a child asks to tell a member of staff something in confidence, they should always be told that this will depend upon the circumstances and absolute confidence cannot be guaranteed;
- If a child behaves inappropriately or makes an inappropriate advance to a member of staff, it is essential that the child is immediately informed that the language or behaviour is unacceptable. The incident, and what has been done and said, should be recorded, and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately;
- One to one meetings should, wherever possible, take place in public or semi public places, such as classrooms or offices. If in classrooms, ensure you are seated so that you and the child can be seen through the visibility panel in the door;
- When in a private meeting with a child or one-to-one session, as occurs with Therapists, ensure furniture is positioned to allow easy access into or out of the room and that the glass panel in the door is not obscured so that you can be seen clearly;
- Staff will at no time travel unaccompanied outside of the school with children;
- Inform another adult of where the 1:1 teaching is taking place;
- Staff should ensure that a meeting is arranged during normal school hours when there are plenty of other people about;
- Do not continue a meeting for any longer than is necessary to achieve its purpose;
- Avoid sitting or standing in close proximity to a pupil, except as necessary to check work;
- Avoid using "engaged" or equivalent signs on doors or windows;
- Avoid idle discussion;
- Avoid all unnecessary physical contact and apologise straight away if there is accidental physical contact;

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- Avoid any conduct that could be taken as a sexual advance;
- Report any incident that causes you concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy, and make a written record (signed and dated);
- Report any situation where a pupil becomes distressed or angry to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

**Making professional judgements:** There will be rare occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or take action in the best interest of a pupil, which could contravene existing guidance or where no guidance exists. Individuals are expected to make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the pupils in their charge and, in so doing, will be seen to be acting reasonably. These judgements should always be recorded and shared with a member of the senior leadership team. Adults should always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably. Staff should:

- discuss the circumstances that informed their action, or their proposed action, with their line manager or, where appropriate, the school's designated safeguarding lead. This will help to ensure that the safest practices are employed and reduce the risk of actions being misinterpreted;
- always discuss any misunderstanding, accidents or threats with the Head of School or Designated Safeguarding Lead
- always record discussions and actions taken with their justifications;
- record any areas of disagreement and, if necessary, refer to another agency/the LA/Ofsted/TRA/other Regulatory Body.

**Gifts, Rewards or Favouritism:** All giving of gifts or rewards are part of our behaviour policy for supporting positive behaviour or recognising particular achievements. There may be specific occasions when staff may wish to give a child a personal gift. This is only acceptable practice where, in line with the agreed policy, senior manager and parent/carer(s) have discussed the reasons for it and the action is recorded. Any gift should be openly given and not based on favouritism. Staff remain alert at all times to the fact that the giving of gifts can be misconstrued as a gesture to either bribe or groom a child. Staff should apply the same professional standards, regardless of gender or sexuality or any other protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

Staff will take care in selecting children for specific activities or privileges to avoid perceptions of favouritism or unfairness. Methods and criteria for selection will always be transparent and subject to scrutiny. Care is taken to ensure that no member of staff accepts any gifts that might be construed as a bribe by others or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. There are always occasions in school when children or parents wish to pass on a small token of appreciation such as a thank you. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis, or of any significant value.

Staff must:

- *be aware of the school's policy on the giving and receiving of gifts;*
- *ensure that gifts received or given in situations which may be misconstrued are declared;*
- *generally, only give gifts to an individual young person as part of an agreed reward system;*
- *where giving gifts other than as above, ensure that these are of insignificant value;*
- *ensure that all selection processes which concern pupils are fair and that wherever practicable these are undertaken and agreed by more than one member of staff; and*
- *ensure that they do not behave in a manner which is either favourable or unfavourable to individual pupils.*

**Infatuations:** Any unplanned contact of this nature or suspected infatuations or "crushes" will be reported to the Head of School. Staff are not to disclose their personal telephone numbers, email address and so on to pupils. Occasionally a child or young person may develop an infatuation with a member of staff who works with them. Staff are required to deal sensitively with these situations and to maintain the dignity and safety of all concerned. Such situations carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and they must ensure that their own behaviour is beyond reproach. A member of staff who becomes aware that a child or young person is developing an infatuation must discuss this with their senior manager and alert the Head of School at the earliest opportunity so that appropriate action can be taken to avoid any hurt, distress or embarrassment from the child, family or staff's perspective. If staff have similar concerns regarding parents, then this should also be passed onto the Head of School. *Concerns about the welfare of colleagues or children should be communicated to the Head of School immediately.*

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Staff should:

- *report and record any incidents or indications (verbal, written or physical) that suggest a child or young person may have developed an infatuation with a member of staff;*
- *always acknowledge and maintain professional boundaries.*

**Appropriate Communications:** All staff should ensure not to use any language to the children which may be offensive. Absolutely no swear words or words with a sexual connotation may ever be used. Any incidents of this will be treated as a disciplinary matter and action will be taken. Staff should avoid the use of sarcasm or derogatory words towards children. Electronic communications should be carefully considered and kept to the school's selected programmes (e.g. email).

To each other as staff – staff should be polite and professional, supportive and co-operative to each other. We expect our staff to work as a team. This means we need staff to be able to share information and ideas, be ready to be thoughtful and reflective about the education we provide, and readily responsive to instruction from the senior staff. We expect staff to refrain from any actions which may undermine another staff member's confidence or professional abilities, including bullying one another. At all times, staff should remember that we are all working with the best interests of the children in mind. Staff should conduct themselves in public at all times as a professional, whether at a school social occasion outside school hours, or in school. At school social occasions, and at external school related functions, staff should be moderate in their behaviour, language and in their consumption of alcohol. They should act as if on duty at all times when in contact with school parents, pupils and staff. Whatever the occasion staff are expected to keep the academic and professional procedures and processes of the school confidential as required by the Head of School at all times unless given clear and unequivocal permission to do otherwise.

To the Parents – Staff must be polite to parents at all times. We expect staff to be ready to listen and help our parents and treat them as very important partners in our work of educating our pupils and their children. Parents must be treated with courtesy and respect, and we should expect that back from them. Parents should be spoken to quietly about their children, and given the opportunity to speak in private, especially when anything of a sensitive nature is to be discussed. Parents should not be treated as personal friends. This courtesy should be extended back to staff by the parents and anything else should be discouraged by example. They should not be told any professional confidences about the school, its staff or children.

Any incident of inappropriate behaviour by a parent should be responded to with a quiet statement to the parent that you will refer the issue to the Head of School for discussion. Staff should never engage in private or public heated discussion with parents, particularly if they are angry. In this case, remove yourself physically from the situation and state you will refer this to the Head of School.

**Dress and Appearance:** Staff should always be dressed appropriately and smartly and in line with the staff dress code. Those who dress or appear in a manner which could be viewed as offensive or inappropriate will render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegation. This means that staff should wear clothing which:

- promotes a positive and professional image;
- is appropriate to their role;
- is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative;
- is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans;
- is not considered to be discriminatory;
- is compliant with professional standards.

**Confidentiality:** The storing and processing of personal information is governed by the Data Protection Act 1998 and the school recognises its responsibilities with regards to the security of data kept regarding its pupils and staff. Members of staff may have access to confidential information about pupils in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities. In some circumstances staff may be given highly sensitive or private information. They should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil or her/his family for their own, or others' advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other schools). Information must

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never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the pupil. In circumstances where the pupil's identity does not need to be disclosed, the information should be used anonymously. If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential, he or she should seek guidance from the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to senior management. **This means that staff should:**

- be clear about when information can be shared and in what circumstances it is appropriate to do so;
- treat information they receive about pupils in a discreet and confidential manner;
- seek advice from a senior member of staff if they are in any doubt about sharing information they hold, or which has been requested of them;
- know who any concerns or allegations should be reported.

### **Use of Electronic Devices Including Personal Mobile Phones and Cameras**

The following points apply to all staff and volunteers at our school and apply to the use of all mobile devices to ensure the quality of supervision and care of the pupils, as well as the safeguarding of pupils, staff, parents and volunteers in the school.

Old Vicarage School allows staff to bring in mobile phones for their own personal use. They may be used during working hours in a designated break away from the pupils. Staff are permitted to use recording equipment on their personal devices to take photos or videos of pupils. These photos/ videos must be deleted immediately after they have been uploaded to Tapestry or OVS Social Media. During outings and off-campus activities, staff will be permitted to have access to their own mobile phones, which are to be used for emergency contact. Contact numbers for all members of staff accompanying the pupils must be left at the OVS office and a list of contact telephone numbers for all pupils should be with the leader of the off-site activity (although these must be kept confidential).

If staff need to make an emergency call, (such as summoning medical help or reporting an intruder on the premises) they must do so irrespective of where they are, via their own mobile phone or a school phone. Staff must ensure that there is no inappropriate or illegal content on their phones or mobile devices. Should any member of staff become aware of inappropriate use of a mobile phone, this should be reported to a member of the SLT, and may be subject to disciplinary action.

All teachers are responsible for the storage of mobile devices. Images taken and stored on devices should be uploaded to the school's secure network or shared to OVS Social Media or Tapestry and deleted from the device when no longer required. Under no circumstances must devices of any kind be taken into the pupil toilets (this includes any device with photographic or video capabilities).

**Inappropriate material:** staff must ensure pupils are not exposed to inappropriate or indecent images. Inappropriate material, such as pornography, should not be brought to work and staff must not use school property or the school network to access such material. You should not allow unauthorised access to school equipment and should keep your computer passwords safe. If you discover material on either staff or pupil electronic equipment that is potentially illegal or inappropriate, you must immediately isolate the equipment and contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy. Adults should not attempt to investigate the matter or evaluate the material themselves, as this may lead to evidence being contaminated which in itself can lead to a criminal prosecution. Pupils must not be exposed to unsuitable material on the internet and staff should ensure that any film or material shown is age appropriate. There are no circumstances that will justify adults possessing indecent images of children. Adults who access and possess links to such websites will be viewed as a significant and potential threat to children. Accessing, making and storing indecent images of children is illegal. This will lead to criminal investigation and the individual being barred from working with pupils, if proven.

Staff should:

- abide by the school's acceptable use and e-safety policy;
- ensure that children cannot be exposed to indecent or inappropriate images;
- ensure that any films or material shown to children are age appropriate.

### **Communication with Pupils (including the Use of Technology)**

Communication with pupils in both in the 'real' world and through web based and telecommunication interactions should take place within explicit professional boundaries. This includes the use of computers, tablets, phones, texts, e-mails, instant messages, social media such as Facebook and Twitter, chat-rooms, forums, blogs, websites, gaming sites, digital cameras, videos, web-cams and other hand-held devices.

Staff should not contact pupils or parents of pupils from their personal mobile phone or give their mobile phone number to pupils or parents of pupils. Instead, a school telephone should be used. Also, staff should avoid storing pupils' or parents of pupils' telephone numbers on their mobile phones, send to or accept from colleagues, pupils or parents of pupil's texts or images that could be viewed as inappropriate. The school staff should also be alert to the possible risks that might arise from social contact with pupils outside of Old Vicarage School.

**Social Networking Sites:** Staff must not have any images of school children or parents on their personal pages on social networking sites. Staff must not accept children as "friends" or "contacts" on these sites and must ensure the highest privacy controls are used at all times on their personal pages on such sites, checking regularly for updates. Staff should not make reference to the school on any personal electronic communications or social network including 'job status'. Staff should only engage in electronic communication via the school email network and not through other inappropriate methods such as networking sites, blogging, chat rooms and private email. Failure to do so is a disciplinary matter.

Staff should not request or respond to any personal information from children other than which may be necessary in their professional role. They should ensure that their communications are open and transparent and avoid any communication which could be interpreted as 'grooming behaviour'. Staff should not give their personal contact details to children for example, e-mail address, home or mobile telephone numbers, details of web-based identities. If children locate these by any other means and attempt to contact or correspond with the staff member, the adult should not respond and must report the matter to their manager. The child should be firmly and politely informed that this is not acceptable.

We advise all our staff to carefully restrict their Facebook profiles to ensure they cannot be contacted by parents and pupils. This could involve removing their last name from their page. We also advise staff not to accept friend requests from pupils until graduates have been out of school for three years. Inappropriate adult behaviour which must be avoided also includes:

- Talking about sex lives particularly in front of children which is not permitted;
- Being alone with children in a group setting for unusually long periods of time without good reason;
- Showing unusual interest in one specific child;
- Inappropriate use of mobile phones where phone calls or texts take attention away from supervising children;
- Staff should not use social networking pages at school on either school or personal devices.

**Physical Contact with Pupils:** There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. A 'no touch' approach is impractical for most staff and will in some circumstances be inappropriate. When physical contact is made with pupils this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be recorded as soon as possible in the school's incident book and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the child's file.

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 and/or form of communication which is acceptable to the child for the minimum time necessary. The general culture of 'limited touch' should be adapted, where appropriate, to the individual requirements of each pupil. Pupils with special needs may require more physical contact to assist their everyday learning. The arrangements should be understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the child's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny.

It is recognised that some pupils may seek inappropriate physical contact. It is the responsibility of the staff member to sensitively deter the pupil and help them understand the importance of personal boundaries. Such circumstances must always be reported and discussed with a senior manager and the parent/ carer.

Some staff working in certain settings, for example sports, drama or outdoor activities or teach specific subjects such as PE or music, will have to initiate some physical contact with pupils, for example to demonstrate technique in the use of a particular piece of equipment, adjust posture, or perhaps to support a pupil so they can perform an activity safely or prevent injury. Such activities should be carried out in accordance with existing codes of conduct, regulations and best practice. Physical contact should take place only when it is necessary in relation to a particular activity. It should take place in a safe and open environment i.e., one easily observed by others and last for the minimum time necessary. This means that staff should:

- *treat children with dignity and respect and avoid contact with intimate parts of the body;*
- *always explain to a child the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take;*
- *consider alternatives, where it is anticipated that a pupil might misinterpret any such contact;*
- *be familiar with and follow recommended guidance and protocols;*
- *conduct activities where they can be seen by others;*
- *be aware of gender, cultural or religious issues that may need to be considered prior to initiating physical contact.*
- *have up to date guidance and protocols on appropriate physical contact in place that promote safe practice and include clear expectations of behaviour and conduct;*
- *ensure that staff are made aware of this guidance and that safe practice is continually promoted through supervision and training.*

**Intimate Care:** Some job responsibilities with children may necessitate contact with children. For example assisting young children with toileting, or in the provision of medical care. The nature, circumstances and context of such contact should comply with professional codes of practice or guidance and/or be part of a formally agreed plan, which is regularly reviewed. Pupils should be encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their own personal care as is possible and practicable. When assistance is required, this should normally be undertaken by one member of staff, however, they should try to ensure that another appropriate adult is in the vicinity who is aware of the task to be undertaken and that, wherever possible, they are visible and/or audible. Intimate or personal care procedures should not involve more than one member of staff unless the pupil's care plan specifies the reason for this. Any vulnerability, including those that may arise from a physical or learning difficulty should be considered when formulating the individual pupil's care plan. The views of parents, carers and the pupil, regardless of their age and understanding, should be actively sought in formulating the plan and in the necessary regular reviews of these arrangements.

Pupils are entitled to respect and privacy at all times and especially when in a state of undress, including, for example, when changing, toileting and showering. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard pupils, 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 young people concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment. All children have a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of a physical or intimate nature is required.

Staff should:

- adhere to the school's intimate care guidelines or code of practice;
- make other staff aware of the task being undertaken;
- explain to the child what is happening before a care procedure begins;
- consult with colleagues where any variation from agreed procedure/care plan is necessary;
- record the justification for any variations to the agreed procedure/care plan and share this information with the pupil and their parents/carers;
- avoid any visually intrusive behaviour;
- where there are changing rooms announce their intention of entering;
- always consider the supervision needs of the pupils and only remain in the room where their needs require this.

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Staff should not:

- change or toilet in the presence or sight of pupils;
- shower with pupils;
- assist with intimate or personal care tasks which the pupil is able to undertake independently.

This means that Old Vicarage School will:

- have written care plans in place for any pupil who could be expected to require intimate care;
- ensure that pupils are actively consulted about their own care plan.

**Transporting Pupils:** In certain situations, e.g., out of school activities, staff or volunteers may agree to transport pupils. Old Vicarage School has a designated member of staff to plan and provide oversight of all transporting arrangements and respond to any difficulties that may arise. Wherever possible and practicable it is advisable that transport is undertaken other than in private vehicles, with at least one member of staff additional to the driver acting as an escort. Where adults transport children in a vehicle which requires a specialist license/insurance e.g., PCV or LGV, staff should ensure that they have an appropriate licence and insurance to drive such a vehicle. Staff should ensure that their behaviour is safe and that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. They should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and appropriately insured and that the maximum carrying capacity is not exceeded. 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. It is inappropriate for adults to offer lifts to a child or young person outside their normal working duties, unless this has been brought to the attention of the line manager and has been agreed with the parents/carers. There may be occasions where the child or young person requires transport in an emergency situation or where not to give a lift may place a child at risk. Such circumstances must always be recorded and reported to a senior manager and parents/carers.

This means that our staff should:

- *ensure they are fit to drive and free from any drugs, alcohol or medicine which is likely to impair judgement and/or ability to drive;*
- *be aware that the safety and welfare of the child is their responsibility until they are safely passed over to a parent/carer;*
- *record details of the journey in accordance with agreed procedures;*
- *ensure that their behaviour is appropriate at all times;*
- *ensure that there are proper arrangements in place to ensure vehicle, passenger and driver safety. This includes having proper and appropriate insurance for the type of vehicle being driven;*
- *ensure that any impromptu or emergency arrangements of lifts are recorded and can be justified if questioned.*

**First Aid and Administration of Medication:** Health and safety legislation places duties on all employers to ensure appropriate health and safety policies and equipment are in place and an appropriate person is appointed to take charge of first-aid arrangements. Any employee may volunteer to undertake this task, but it is not a contractual requirement and appropriate training should be given before an individual takes on a role which may require administering first aid or medication.

**This means that Old Vicarage School should:**

- *ensure staff understand the extent and limitations of their role in applying basic care and hygiene tasks for minor abrasions and understand where an injury requires more experienced intervention;*
- *ensure there are trained and named individuals to undertake first aid responsibilities;*
- *ensure training is regularly monitored and updated;*
- *always ensure that arrangements are in place to obtain parental consent for the administration of first aid or medication.*

In circumstances where children need medication regularly, a health care plan should be drawn up to ensure the safety and protection of pupils and staff. With the permission of parents, pupils should be encouraged to self-administer medication or treatment. If a member of staff is concerned or uncertain about the amount or type of medication being given to a pupil this should

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be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Parents should always be informed when first aid has been administered.

Staff must:

- *adhere to the school's policy for administering first aid or medication;*
- *comply with the necessary reporting requirements;*
- *make other adults aware of the task being undertaken;*
- *explain to the child what is happening;*
- *always act and be seen to act in the child's best interests;*
- *ensure that where staff are taking any medication, that they are fit to work with children if required;*
- *report and record any administration of first aid or medication;*
- *have regard to any health plan which is in place;*
- *always ensure that an appropriate health/risk assessment is undertaken prior to undertaking certain activities.*

**Home Visits:** When this instance occurs, the purpose of any visit must be discussed with a member of the senior leadership team and wherever possible, two members of school staff should visit. Ensure that the home visit is planned and discussed with the parent of the pupil so as to not arrive unannounced. Staff should inform another member of staff and keep a clear record of the time, location and expected duration of their visit, ensuring they are clear themselves on the location and, where deemed appropriate, inform a member of staff when the home visit is finished. Staff must ensure they have a mobile phone with them when making a home visit, so that they may contact a member of staff as required. Where any behaviour or situation gives rise to a concern, staff must ensure it is reported to the Head of School. If no adult is at home when staff arrive, do not enter the house. Instead consider whether there is a safeguarding concern and take appropriate action. Staff should, wherever possible, meet with parents at the school.

**Curriculum content:** Many areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit or of a political or sensitive nature. Responding to children's questions requires careful judgement and staff should take guidance in these circumstances from the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Care should be taken to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the learning outcomes identified by the lesson plan. This can be supported by developing ground rules with pupils to ensure sensitive topics can be discussed in a safe learning environment. This plan should highlight particular areas of risk and sensitivity and care should especially be taken in those areas of the curriculum where usual boundaries or rules are less rigorously applied e.g., drama. Care should also be taken to comply with the school's policy on spiritual, moral, social, cultural (SMSC), which promotes fundamental British values and be rigorously reviewed to ensure it is lawful and consistently applied. Staff should also comply at all times with the policy for Relations and Sex Education (RSE).

Staff should:

- take care when encouraging pupils to use self-expression, not to overstep personal/professional boundaries;
- have clear written lesson plans;
- be able to justify all curriculum materials and relate these to clearly identifiable lessons plan.

Staff should not:

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

**Political Influence:** All adults who work with children and young people must be alert to the position they are in to influence young people politically. However, they have an important and necessary responsibility to assist them to become politically aware and respect a set of attitudes which can be referred to as British values. Moreover, all adults who work with young people must consciously refrain from aiming to influence them in any particular political or religious ideology or mind set. This means that staff should:

- *avoid aiming to influence young people in any one political viewpoint;*
- *recognise, support and encourage young people to be aware of and respect British Values (see our curriculum planning*  
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document).

**The Prevent Initiative:** (Please refer to both our Child Protection Policy and our Prevent Duty Policy). All adults who work with children and young people must be familiar with the Prevent Initiative and with the terms intolerance, extremism, fundamentalism and radicalisation. All adults who work with children and young people must be alert to them displaying racial or religious intolerance, homophobia and misogyny, particularly when linked to expressions of religious belief. Staff must:

- *be aware of the governments Prevent Initiative;*
- *discuss with the Head of School if they are concerned in any way about an individual pupil showing signs of political or religious radicalisation or of being influenced by others in this way and*
- *discuss with the Head of School if they are concerned in any way about an individual pupil showing signs of religious or racial intolerance, misogyny or homophobic views.*

**Legal Status:**

- This policy complies with Regulation 3 paragraphs 7(a) and (b) and 8 (a) and (b) of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations currently in force and other relevant and current regulations and any other guidance concerning safeguarding children to which schools are obliged to have regard.
- *Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE)* (September 2021); which refers to the non-statutory advice for practitioners: What to do if you're worried a child is being abused;
- *Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006* (June 2018);
- *Working together to safeguard children* (July 2018) (**WTWT** refers to the non-statutory advice: *Information sharing* (July 2018);
- *Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales* (2015) (**Prevent**). Prevent is supplemented by: *The Prevent duty: Departmental advice for schools and childminders* (June 2015); *Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism* (2015); *The use of social media for online radicalisation* (July 2015);
- Guidance on female genital mutilation, to include: *multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation* (October 2018);
- Home Office statutory guidance *Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation: procedural information* (October 2015);
- Guidance published by the Department for Health which provides useful information and support for health professionals which will be taken into account by the school's medical staff.

### **Appendix 1 – Low Level Concerns**

As part of our whole school approach to safeguarding, we ensure that we promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns (including allegations that do not meet the harms threshold) about all adults working in or on behalf of the school (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are shared responsibly, with the right person. Concerns are recorded and dealt with appropriately, to enable the school to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour early; minimise the risk of abuse; and ensure that adults working in or on behalf of the school are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the ethos and values of the school. Ensuring they are dealt with effectively should also protect those working in or on behalf of schools and colleges from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.

This appendix sets out our response for dealing with concerns (including allegations) which do not meet the harm threshold set out in KCSIE (DfE: September 2022). Concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources. For example: suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken. We will ensure that we have procedures in place to manage and record any such concerns and take appropriate action to safeguard children.

**What is a 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 harm threshold, which is where it is alleged that anyone working in the school that provides education for children under 18 years of age, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors has:

- *behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child; and/or*

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- *possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; and/or*
- *behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or*
- *behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.*

A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a ‘nagging doubt’ - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the school’s staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- 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.

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

**Safeguarding Practices, including Staff Training and Development:** As part of our on-going staff safeguarding training (including at induction) we:

- ensure staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others.
- empower staff to share any low-level safeguarding concerns;
- address unprofessional behaviour and support the individual to correct it at an early stage;
- provide a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised;
- encourage staff to help identify any weakness in the school’s safeguarding procedures.

**Sharing low-level concerns:** Concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources. For example: suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.

**Low-level concerns about a member of staff, supply staff, volunteer or contractor should be reported to the Head of School.**

Reports about supply staff and contractors should be notified to their employers (by the Head of School), so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified. The Head of School may meet with the DSL to discuss the concern and decide if in fact the concern does meet the harm threshold and if a referral to the LADO is required, or if the matter can be dealt with by the school. . If the school was in any doubt as to whether the information which has been shared about a member of staff in fact meets the harm threshold, the school will consult with the LADO.

The school will ensure we create an environment where 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 breaches our Staff Behaviour Policy or they consider falls below the expected professional standards.

**Recording low-level concerns:** All low-level concerns should be recorded in writing. The record should include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, and action taken. The name of the individual sharing their concerns should also be noted, if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible.

These records will be kept confidential, held securely and will comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR)



Our school will review all records of low-level concerns so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, the school will decide on a course of action, either through its disciplinary procedures or where a pattern of behaviour moves from a concern to meeting the harms threshold, in which case it will be referred to the LADO. The school will also give consideration to whether there are wider cultural issues within the school that enabled the behaviour to occur and where appropriate policies could be revised, or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again. All records of low-level concerns will be (in-line with KCSIE Guidance) retained at least until the individual leaves the school's employment.

**References:** In line with KCSIE guidance, the school will only provide substantiated safeguarding allegations in references. Low level concerns will not be included in references unless they relate to issues which would normally be included in a reference, for example, misconduct or poor performance. It follows that a low-level concern which relates exclusively to safeguarding (and not to misconduct or poor performance) should not be referred to in a reference. However, where a low-level concern (or group of concerns) has met the threshold for referral to the LADO and found to be substantiated, it will be referred to in a reference.

### **Responding to low-level concerns**

In responding to reports of low-level concerns, the Head of School will 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. The pupil of whom the concern is related to may also be spoken with. The information collected will help them to categorise the type of behaviour and determine what further action may need to be taken. This evidence collected will be recorded along with the rationale for their decisions and action taken. Depending on the nature of the low-level concern and the specific circumstances the following actions could include:

- a verbal warning;
- a written warning;
- dismissal from the school (this would likely be in conjunction with a referral to the LADO and Children's Social Care);

**Malicious or False Allegations:** Any low-level concerns which are found to be malicious or false will be dealt with under our Safeguarding – Child Protection Procedures

## **Appendix 2 – Social contact with parents and pupils outside of the workplace**

It is acknowledged that staff may have genuine friendships and social contact with parents of pupils, independent of the professional relationship. Staff should, however remember that their discussions with friends parents or non-parents of the school must ensure confidentiality and not discuss matters relating to the school or pupils. Staff must not post anything onto social networking sites such as Facebook that could be construed to have any impact on the organisation's reputation. (We advise all our staff to carefully restrict their Facebook profiles to ensure they cannot be contacted by parents and pupils; this could involve removing their last name from their page). We explain to staff that although they are able to accept friendship requests from friends who may also be parents of pupils at the school, staff must be aware of the potential issues this could cause. Staff must not post anything onto social networking sites that would offend any other member of staff or parent using the setting. If any of the above points are found to be happening, then the member of staff involved will face disciplinary action, which could result in dismissal. We also advise staff not to accept friend requests from pupils until graduates have been out of school for three years.

Staff should also be aware that professionals who sexually harm children often seek to establish relationships and contact outside of the workplace with both the child and their parents, in order to 'groom' the adult and the child and/or create opportunities for sexual abuse. It is also important to recognise that social contact may provide opportunities for other types of grooming such as for the purpose of sexual exploitation or radicalisation. Staff should recognise that some types of social contact with pupils or their families could be perceived as harmful or exerting inappropriate influence on children and may bring the setting into disrepute (e.g., attending a political protest, circulating propaganda).

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If a pupil or parent seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise her/his professional judgement. This also applies to social contacts made through outside interests or the staff member's own family. 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 senior management and where necessary referrals made to the appropriate support agency.

**Staff should:**

- always approve any planned social contact with pupils or parents with senior colleagues, for example when it is part of a reward scheme;
- advise senior management of any regular social contact they have with a pupil which could give rise to concern;
- refrain from sending personal communication to pupils or parents unless agreed with senior managers;
- inform senior management of any relationship with a parent where this extends beyond the usual parent/professional relationship;
- inform senior management of any requests or arrangements where parents wish to use their services outside of the workplace e.g., tutoring.

### **Appendix 3 – Teachers Standards**

**Code of Conduct: To the pupils**– be clear in our instructions, information, grammar, politeness and being authoritative within the school rules and the school behaviour and discipline policies. We have a duty to be supportive of the children and promote their welfare. We must offer support to vulnerable children while at all times maintaining an appropriate professional relationship and distance from them. At all times staff must be aware of and act within the professional boundaries that are normal for teachers and staff working in schools in the UK and which are detailed within this document. Specifically, staff should at all times recognise that self-restraint and checking with the Head of School should be the norm if you are uncertain how to act. We must listen to children's concerns and worries especially when they are upset and hurt. Staff must all be aware of the school's Child Protection Policy and act in accordance with it, especially if a child discloses something of relevance in this regard.

The following Teachers Standards outline the minimum standards expected of teachers at Old Vicarage School and as such, form part of our Code of Conduct, which all teaching staff must meet.

**Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils:**

- establish a safe and stimulating environment for pupils, rooted in mutual respect;
- set goals that stretch and challenge pupils of all backgrounds, abilities and dispositions;
- demonstrate consistently the positive attitudes, values and behaviour which are expected of pupils.

**Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils:**

- be accountable for pupils' attainment, progress and outcomes;
- be aware of pupils' capabilities and their prior knowledge, and plan teaching to build on these;
- guide pupils to reflect on the progress they have made and their emerging needs;
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn and how this impacts on teaching;
- encourage pupils to take a responsible and conscientious attitude to their own work and study.

**Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge:**

- have a secure knowledge of the relevant subject(s) and curriculum areas, foster and maintain pupils' interest in the subject, and address misunderstandings;
- demonstrate a critical understanding of developments in the subject and curriculum areas, and promote the value of scholarship;

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- demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of standard English, whatever the teacher's specialist subject;
- if teaching early reading, demonstrate a clear understanding of systematic synthetic phonics;
- if teaching early mathematics, demonstrate a clear understanding of appropriate teaching strategies.

**Plan and teach well-structured lessons:**

- impart knowledge and develop understanding through effective use of lesson time;
- promote a love of learning and children's intellectual curiosity;
- set homework and plan other out-of-class activities to consolidate and extend the knowledge and understanding pupils have acquired;
- reflect systematically on the effectiveness of lessons and approaches to teaching;
- contribute to the design and provision of an engaging curriculum within the relevant subject area(s).

**Adapt the teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils:**

- know when and how to differentiate appropriately, using approaches which enable pupils to be taught effectively;
- have a secure understanding of how a range of factors can inhibit pupils' ability to learn, and how best to overcome these;
- demonstrate an awareness of the physical, social and intellectual development of children, and know how to adapt teaching to support pupils' education at different stages of development;
- have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including: those with special educational needs and disabilities; those of high ability; those with English as an additional language; those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them.

**Make accurate and productive use of assessment:**

- knowing and understanding how to assess the relevant subject, therapy and curriculum areas, including statutory assessment requirements;
- making use of formative and summative assessment to secure pupils' progress;
- using relevant data to monitor progress, set targets, and plan subsequent lessons;
- giving pupils regular feedback, both orally and through accurate marking, and encourage pupils to respond to the feedback.

**Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment:**

- having clear rules and routines for behaviour in classrooms, and take responsibility for promoting good and courteous behaviour both in classrooms and around the school, in accordance with the school's behaviour policy; praise, sanction and reward consistently and fairly;
- managing classes effectively, using approaches which are appropriate to pupils' needs in order to involve and motivate them;
- maintaining good relationships with pupils, exercise appropriate authority, and act decisively when necessary.

**Fulfil wider professional responsibilities**

- make a positive contribution to the wider life and ethos of the school;
- develop effective professional relationships with colleagues, knowing how and when to draw on advice and specialist support;
- deploy support staff effectively;
- take responsibility for improving teaching through appropriate professional development, responding to advice and feedback from colleagues;
- communicate effectively with parents regarding pupils' achievements and well-being.

**Personal and Professional Conduct including Standards of Behaviour for all teaching and support staff**

At Old Vicarage School it is incumbent on all staff including volunteers to comply with the following Professional Code of Conduct inclusive of implementing the anti-bullying, supervision of children and behavioural policies inclusive of their associated documents. All staff are required to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct throughout their time at Old Vicarage

*Old Vicarage School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our pupils and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all pupils fulfil their potential.*

School . We have a duty to uphold public trust in us as professionals and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:

- treating pupils 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 pupils' 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 pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.

There may be times where an individual's actions in their personal life come under scrutiny from the community, the media or public authorities, including with regard to their own children, or children or adults in the community. Staff should be aware that their behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, could compromise their position within the school in relation to the protection of children, loss of trust and confidence, or bringing the employer into disrepute. Such behaviour may also result in, prohibition from teaching by the TRA, a bar from engaging in regulated activity, or action by another relevant regulatory body.

**This means that staff should not:**

- behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or to act as an appropriate role model;
- make, or encourage others to make sexual remarks to, or about, a pupil;
- use inappropriate language to or in the presence of pupils;
- discuss their personal or sexual relationships with or in the presence of pupils;
- make (or encourage others to make) unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate, or might be interpreted as such.

**This means that staff should:**

- be aware that behaviour by themselves, those with whom they share a household, or others in their personal lives, may impact on their work with children.