

# THOMAS MILLS HIGH SCHOOL



POLICY DOCUMENT 80 – APPROVED 21/10/2021

# CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

## Vision Statement

*We, the staff and governors, aspire  
to ensure that all our students,  
irrespective of ability  
and regardless of anyone's doubts,  
achieve their potential in full;  
and we aspire in this way to make Thomas Mills High School  
the best in the country.*

# Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Disciplinary, Capability, Harassment and Grievance Policy

## **A Charter of Values**

A love of learning for its own sake

Vigour and optimism in embracing the future

The intrinsic virtue of persistent hard work

Acceptance of personal responsibility

Equal value accorded to all persons

Courtesy, self-discipline and respect for others

A determination to achieve excellence in all we do

Honesty, moral courage and integrity

Good fellowship

Service to others

Leadership and enterprise

Respect for the traditions and the achievements of the school

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This Code of Conduct sets out standards of conduct which staff and trustees are expected to follow when within or representing the School. This code is not exhaustive but is written to assist staff and it is important that staff should take advice and guidance if necessary, from the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher.

1.2 The underlying purpose is to ensure that the School serves its community well and promotes public confidence in the integrity of the School. School staff have an influential position and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

1.3 All staff are strongly advised to read this Code carefully and consider the issues which it raises.

1.4 It is expected that staff adhere to all policies as well as any professional standards which relate to their role. Staff must also adhere to any obligations expected from outside bodies such as the Teacher Regulation Agency, ESFA, Examination Boards and Statutory authorities for example.

1.5 Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action as set out in our Disciplinary Policy.

1.6 This code is not exhaustive. The best interests of the school and its pupils should guide staff actions.

## **2. CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **2.1 Exclusivity of Service**

2.1.1 Each individual's off-duty hours are their personal concern, but they should avoid a position where duty and private interests' conflict:

- Staff must not make private online associations/friendships with current pupils (or pupils who have left school in the last three years) via any social networking sites. Communication via staff email and the Alumni Association is acceptable.
- Staff must not communicate with current pupils using personal contact details including private email accounts, personal telephone numbers or addresses

If unsure – staff should seek advice from the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher

2.1.2 The School does not seek to preclude staff unreasonably from undertaking additional employment, but you are required to devote your attention and abilities to your duties during your contracted working hours and to act in the best interests of the School at all times.

2.1.3 It follows that, regardless of whether you are employed on a full-time or part-time contract, you are required to notify the Headteacher of any employment or engagement which you intend to undertake whilst in the employment of the School. (Including any such employment or engagement which commenced before your employment began with the School).

2.1.4 Teaching staff should not engage in additional tutoring activities outside school hours for any pupils they teach in school. This is to avoid issues of potential conflicts of interest and equality for all. If unsure – staff should seek advice from the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher.

### **2.2 Safeguarding**

2.2.1 Safeguarding: All staff in school are required to be professional in all their dealings with young people at all times. All staff are to abide by School Policies, being particularly mindful of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

2.2.2 Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect.

Staff will familiarise themselves with our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures, and the Prevent initiative, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

2.2.3 A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harms threshold, is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt'. For example, this may include:

- Being over-friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on a personal device
- Engaging in one-to-one activities where they can't easily be seen
- Using inappropriate language

Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy. We also encourage staff to self-refer if they find

themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage staff to report it.

All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way.

Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed, and the staff member supported to correct it, at an early stage.

This creates and embeds a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff, while minimising the risk of abuse.

## **2.3 Other Specific Aspects**

**2.3.1 Health and Safety:** Staff must take care of their personal hygiene, safety and welfare; and that of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions. All staff must comply with the requirements of the School Health and Safety policy, relevant legislation and regulations, and ensure that pupils do likewise.

**2.3.2 Fire:** Staff must familiarise themselves with the fire precautions, procedures and drill routines. They must regard practice fire drills or building evacuations in a positive and professional manner, and ensure they are perceived by pupils as an essential precaution to prevent risk of injury or fatality.

**2.3.3 Business Practice:** All staff must maintain an impeccable standard of integrity in all their professional relationships.

**2.3.4 Media:** Other than on matters of authorised publicity, only the Headteacher is authorised to speak or send any communication on behalf of the School to members of the press or broadcast media. This authorisation may be extended by the Headteacher to other staff.

**2.3.5 Copyright:** Staff shall observe copyright laws on computer software, audio-visual and printed material. Further advice is available from the Business Manager.

### **2.3.6 Data Protection Act and GDPR and Confidentiality**

It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure the School's compliance with the Data Protection Act. Personal data must only be used to assist you to carry out your work; it must not be given to people who have no right to see it. All staff should maintain the security of all computerized databases of information on individuals, whether they are staff, pupils or members of the general public. Further advice is available from the Business Manager or IT Manager. Staff must not disclose confidential information unless required by law or with the appropriate consents.

### **2.3.7 Photography and video recording**

The recording of pupils or students (still images or video) can take place for display, publicity, to celebrate achievement and to provide records of evidence of an activity. Only school equipment should generally be used for this purpose. Mobile phones should not be used. However, staff may use their own equipment if prearranged and agreed with a member of SMT. In such circumstances a school-owned SD card (or equivalent) should be used and all images/recordings will be uploaded to the school server. No recordings should be kept by staff on any other device or location.

### **2.3.8 Staff – Pupil relationships**

Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so.

If staff members and pupils must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

This takes place in a public place that others can access

Others can see into the room

A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of school hours if possible.

Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes social media profiles.

While we are aware many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to pupils are not acceptable.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, or if a staff member is concerned at any point about a fellow staff member and a pupil, this should be reported in line with the procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

## **2.4 General Points**

2.4.1 Staff should display the highest possible standards of professional behaviour.

2.4.2 Staff should wear smart business dress (including suitable footwear) avoiding cords, canvas and denim. Dress and general presentation should be appropriate to a professional workplace and staff should be mindful of the responsibility of working with children and adolescents.

2.4.3 Staff should seek to co-operate with their colleagues, providing support, help and guidance as required by them and their line manager, and enable effective communication throughout the School. The use of emails to raise points of dispute between employees is not acceptable.

2.4.4 Staff should avoid words and deeds that might bring the School into disrepute or might undermine staff in the perception of others (staff/pupils/parents/community).

2.4.5 Staff must avoid the promotion of political and personal beliefs or bias. Other opinions and beliefs should be respected with tolerance and understanding shown.

2.4.6 Staff should be aware of, and should follow School policies, systems and procedures.

2.4.7 Staff should attend their place of work punctually in accordance with their conditions of service and at the times agreed with their line manager. Those unable to avoid being late or absent should follow the procedure set out in the staff handbook and, whenever possible, give as much notice so that alternative cover arrangements may be made. Staff needing to leave the school site during the working day (Including for lunch) should sign out beforehand.

2.4.8 Working relationships between staff are exactly that. They should be courteous and professional, so the work of the school continues to move forward. Personal and social relationships are different and whilst they may take place outside of school hours should not impact on good working relationships as well as the day to day business of the school. Staff are entitled to a life outside of school but should always be mindful of not blurring professional and private boundaries including with online conduct.

2.4.9 Staff should be mindful of the need to have respectful communication at all times both during and beyond the school day. Excessive communication whether through phone, email or social media can be overwhelming and affect staff working and wellbeing.

2.4.10 Staff should feel confident in raising concerns with a relevant line (or senior) manager. Signposts to other relevant policies can be given.

## **2.5 Administrative Duties**

2.5.1 Teaching staff shall maintain and properly complete a register for all classes.

2.5.2 In order to ensure safeguards both for staff and pupils, staff must follow the school procedures as outlined in the staff handbook before: -

- taking pupils off the School premises;
- giving lifts to pupils and students (insurance and parental consent permitting)
- arranging for any visiting speakers;
- incurring any expenditure on behalf of the School.

## **2.6 Confidentiality**

Staff shall maintain appropriately high levels of confidentiality with respect to student and staff records and other sensitive matters. They should take care not to discuss issues of particularly sensitive matters which could cause distress to School staff, pupils, parents or members of the wider community.

## **2.7 When in doubt, ask.**

If any member of staff is in any doubt with regard to the guidelines of this Code, and how they apply in any situation, they must consult the Headteacher.

## **2.8 Links with other Policies and Guidance**

- Whistleblowing Procedure;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Bullying and Harassment;
- Grievances;
- Disciplinary Policy;
- Equality and Diversity Policy;
- Guidance for staff on the use of Email;
- Information, Records and Copyright Policy.

Useful guidance can be found in published documents:

- Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings;
- Academy Trust Handbook.

## **2.9 Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually but can be revised as needed. The Board of Trustees will ensure this Code of Conduct is implemented effectively and will ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to Safeguard Children and deal with any concerns. It is expected that the Headteacher will share details of any substantial breaches, in confidence, to the Chair of Trustees. Any significant breaches by trustees will be managed by the Board of Trustees. Trustees should have understanding of the Handbook of Governance, Internal Systems of Delegation and Articles of Association. The Nolan Principles should underpin their work.

## **2.10 Acknowledgement**

All staff and trustees are required to sign an acknowledgement slip which confirms that they have read, understood and abide by this Code of Conduct.