ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT AND PERSONAL BEHAVIOUR

Date of Latest Review:	September 2026
Next Review Date:	September 2027
Policy Available for Staff at:	Website /TEAMS
Policy Available for Parents at:	Website /TEAMS
Headteacher:	Mrs C Slattery

This policy links with our policies on:

- Staff disciplinary procedures, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct. It also sets out examples of what we will deem as misconduct and gross misconduct
- Staff grievance procedures
- Safeguarding: child protection
- Safeguarding: safer recruitment
- Safeguarding: Online Safety and Social Media Policy
- Acceptable Use of ICT Agreement
- Gifts and hospitality
- Whistleblowing
- Data protection and GDPR statements

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1. Aims, scope and principles

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

Many of the principles in this code of conduct are based on the Teachers' Standards.

School staff have an influential position in the school and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards

We expect all support staff, governors and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

St Joseph's College believes that it is essential for standards of conduct to be maintained to ensure delivery of quality services, to protect the well-being of all its employees and pupils and to promote the philosophy of an Edmund Rice school. The following policy will ensure that all employees are aware of the standards expected by St Joseph's College.

Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in our staff disciplinary procedures.

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils.

2. Legislation and guidance

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping Children Safe Education, we should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistle-blowing, as well as acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. General obligations

Staff set an example to pupils. They will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school
- Treat pupils and others with dignity and respect
- Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others
- Take a zero-tolerance approach to any form of sexism, racism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and derogatory behaviour
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Uphold the Catholic values and ethos of the school
- Not express personal beliefs in a way that exploits pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within
- Adhere to the Teachers' Standards

4. Safeguarding

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes:

- Physical, emotional and sexual abuse
- Bullying, cyberbullying or discriminatory bullying

- Sexual violence or sexual harassment
- Online harm
- Neglect
- Domestic abuse affecting the child
- Mental health concerns that may also be safeguarding concerns
- Female genital mutilation (FGM) concerns, and
- All forms of exploitation and modern slavery

Staff must read our Child Protection policy and procedures, and the Prevent duty, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have any concerns about a child.

Our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures are available on TEAMS

All staff will read at least part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) in full and make sure they understand their roles and responsibilities as set out in the guidance. If any staff have any concerns or questions about the contents of part 1 of KCSIE, these must be raised as soon as possible to the headteacher / DSL.

4.1 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that anyone working in the school, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they 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 – this includes behaviour taking place inside or outside of school

We will deal with any such allegation quickly and in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A ‘case manager’ will lead any investigation. This will be the headteacher, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the chair of governors where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation.

4.2 Low-level concerns about members of staff

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, contrary to school policy
- Engaging in one-to-one activities where they can’t easily be seen
- Humiliating pupils
- 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. We will refer to our disciplinary procedures where appropriate. This creates and embeds a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our school values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff, while minimising the risk of abuse.

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Reporting and responding to low-level concerns is covered in more detail in our child protection and safeguarding policy. This is available from the school office, and in the policies section of our school website.

4.3 Whistle-blowing

Whistle-blowing reports wrongdoing that it is "in the public interest" to report. Examples linked to safeguarding include:

- Pupils' or staff's health and safety being put in danger
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement
- Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest

Staff are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. Their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and their confidentiality will be respected.

Staff should consider the examples above when deciding whether their concern is of a whistle-blowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or school procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

Staff should report their concern to the headteacher. If the concern is about the headteacher, or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the chair of the governing board.

5. Sexual harassment amongst staff

Sexual harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature that has a purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. It also includes treating someone less favourably because they've submitted or refused to submit to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature in the past, or harassment related to sex or gender reassignment. When this behaviour is unwanted, it includes (but isn't limited to):

- Unwanted physical conduct or 'horseplay' including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing
- Continued suggestions for sexual activity after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome
- Sending or displaying material that is pornographic, or that some people might find offensive
- Unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless)
- Offensive emails, text messages or social media content
- Comments and jokes of a sexual nature
- Sexually suggestive looks and staring
- Sexual propositions and advances
- Promising things in return for sexual favours
- Physical contact such as massaging, hugging or kissing
- Sexual contact on social media

Staff will help create a positive environment that works to prevent sexual harassment. This includes calling out sexual harassment that they witness.

All witnesses will be provided with appropriate support and will be protected from victimisation.

If a staff member is concerned at any point about incidents of sexual harassment (either directed at them or someone else), they should report their concern to the headteacher. If the concern is about the headteacher or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the chair of the governing board. The school will investigate any complaints in a timely, respectful and confidential manner.

All staff will receive training on recognising and responding to incidents of sexual harassment. The school will monitor by the best of their ability the treatment and outcomes of any complaints of sexual harassment or victimisation received to make sure that they are reasonably investigated, those who report or act as witnesses are not victimised, repeat offenders are dealt with appropriately, cultural clashes are identified and resolved and workforce training is targeted where needed.

6. 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 in to the room
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

Staff should avoid personal 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.

Any inappropriate relationship between staff and a pupil will be investigated and the staff member may be subject to the school's disciplinary policy. Their actions may be considered as gross misconduct, which could lead to summary dismissal and referral to professional regulatory bodies. In suspected cases of an abuse of position of trust, the school may report those concerned to the police.

7. Communication and social media

School staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should consider the wisdom of using their full name, as pupils may be able to find them. Staff may wish to consider using a first and middle name instead, and should always set public profiles to private.

Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship. They will not make any efforts to find pupils' or parents' social media profiles.

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at the school without their consent.

Staff should be aware of the school's Safeguarding: Online Safety and Social Media Policy available from the main office. The Acceptable Use of ICT appendix is reissued annually for staff to sign.

8. Acceptable use of technology

Staff will not use technology in school to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.

Staff will not use personal mobile phones, laptops, or school equipment for personal use, in front of pupils. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils without school permission or on school business. All personal use must comply with the standards and restrictions set out in this code of conduct, mobile phone policy and acceptable use of IT policy.

Use of informal messaging groups/forums, e.g. WhatsApp, should maintain the same professional standards as formal communications.

It is a criminal offence to take and share nude or semi-nude images, including those generated by AI, of anyone under the age of 18.

We have the right to monitor school emails and internet use on the school IT system.

Any misuse of IT systems, either during work-related duties, working hours or outside of working hours will be a breach of the code of conduct and may result in disciplinary action being taken in line with the school disciplinary policy.

9. Confidentiality

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the school, staff, pupils and their parents.

This information should never be:

- Stored or handled in a way that breaches data protection laws, including the UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025
- Disclosed to anyone unless required by law or with consent from the relevant party or parties
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, as detailed further in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

Employees must not use information obtained in the course of their employment for personal gain or benefit, nor should they pass it on to others who might use it in such a way. This applies equally to information relating to patents and intellectual property.

Information on pupils may not be disclosed without the consent of the child's parent, or where a child is of reasonable understanding, the child. The only exceptions to this are:

- To safeguard the welfare of the child, information may be disclosed in accordance with St Joseph's College's child protection policy
- Where information is requested by the Police to detect or prevent offending
- Where otherwise allowed to be disclosed by a legal obligation (for example, to give information to a child protection case conference), or an Order of a Court

It may not be appropriate to agree to maintain confidentiality, where to do so would cause harm or allow unacceptable practices to persist. For further information see the Whistleblowing Policy.

Many employees have access to personal information relating to other employees, pupils and other members of the public. All employees must treat this information in a discreet and confidential manner (Data Protection Act 2018) and adhere to the following guidelines:

- Written records and correspondence should be kept securely at all times
- Information relating to staff/pupils/public must not be disclosed either orally or in writing unless it is confirmed that the recipient is authorised to receive such information
- Information relating to pupils/public must not be given over the telephone unless the caller has given details of their right to ask for such information. Employees should check on the caller's right to information by obtaining their telephone number and calling back to check their identity or by asking for a written request for information
- Confidential matters relating to staff/pupils/public should not be discussed in areas where they may be overheard by passers-by, e.g. corridors, reception, lifts, staff room, etc
- Any breach of confidentiality may be regarded as misconduct and be subject to disciplinary action
- As a general rule employees should not make statements or write letters to the media, if in doubt they should refer such matters to the Headteacher.

10. Honesty and integrity

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities.

Staff will not accept bribes. Gifts that are worth more than £30 must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register. (See Gifts and Hospitality Policy available from the school office)

Staff will ensure that all information given to the school is correct. This should include:

- Background information (including any past or current investigations/cautions related to conduct outside of school)
- Qualifications

- Professional experience

Where there are any updates to the information provided to the school, the member of staff will advise the school as such as soon as reasonably practicable. Consideration will then be given to the nature and circumstances of the matter and whether this may have an impact on the member of staff's employment.

- Where an employee believes he or she is being required to act in a way which is illegal, improper, unethical, or in breach of St Joseph's College's conventions, which may involve possible maladministration, or which is otherwise inconsistent with the Policy for Conduct he or she should refer to the Headteacher or to the Whistleblowing Policy and record the incident
- Where an employee is aware, or has evidence of illegal, improper or abusive behaviour of another employee he or she should refer to their line manager or the Equal Opportunities Policy
- Where an employee is aware, or has evidence of illegal, improper or abusive behaviour of another employee towards a pupil, he or she has a duty of care to notify immediately the head teacher, unless the allegation is against the head teacher, when he or she should bring it to the attention of the Chair of Governors
- Where an employee fails to report such concerns, this may be construed as misconduct and lead to disciplinary action.

11. Dress code

It is an expectation that all staff look smart and professional at all times.

- All staff, apart from technicians, are to wear a smart jacket (ie a suit jacket) which may be removed in classrooms/offices, but please ensure that you are wearing it as you move around school.
- Men - jackets, shirts and ties.
- Women - tops should be smart and professional looking, no t-shirts or low-cut tops. Trousers - full length and smart (as per a suit). Dresses and skirts should be smart and professional and of an appropriate length for a school. Footwear – closed toe shoes.
- Outfits will not be overly revealing, and we ask that staff use their professional judgement regarding showing tattoos. Neck, face and hand tattoos are not allowed.
- Staff will not display any offensive or political slogans

12. Conduct outside of work

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school, or the teaching profession, into disrepute. This covers conduct including but not limited to relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school on social media and / or expressions of extreme political views. For further details, please refer to part 2 of the Teacher Standards. There is a duty for staff to report to school any incident outside of school which is likely to be linked to police cautions, reprimands or final warning and any arrests or prosecutions.

- The policy will still apply e.g. regarding drug/ alcohol abuse, harassment and discrimination
- Consideration and respect for others should be observed at all times
- Those in a position of management/supervision should not behave in any way that could be interpreted as undermining their position
- St Joseph's College should always be represented in a positive way to the public, including on social media and networking sites

13. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually but can be revised as needed. It will be approved by the local governing board

Our governing board 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.