



Highfields Independent School and Day Nursery

Code of Conduct Policy (Staff)

Last Reviewed:	October 2019	Updated	September 2021
Committee Responsible:	P&P		
Approved by:	Full Govs	Next Review:	Autumn 2023

Code of Conduct

Principles

Employees represent the school and are trusted to present themselves and act in a way, which promotes the school's interests and protects its reputation.

Employees are role models and are in a unique position of influence. As a prestigious independent school, Highfields expects the highest standards of conduct from all employees.

This Code of Conduct is not exhaustive and does not override standards required by the Department of Education; it attempts to define required behaviours and levels of professionalism to ensure the wellbeing of the School, its staff, pupils and stakeholders. It applies to all employees; external consultants will be required to follow the principles of this code.

It is the employee's responsibility to follow this code and to take advice and guidance if they require clarification on any aspect of it.

Policy

To ensure Highfields provides the highest quality service to its pupils and stakeholders and promotes public confidence in our integrity, our Code of Conduct aims to protect the reputation of both employees and the school.

Breach of this code of conduct may lead to disciplinary action, which could result in dismissal.

Practices

Conflict of Interests

Employees should ensure that their activities outside work do not conflict with their duty to the school, the school's interests or have the potential to bring the school into disrepute.

Employees may not set up a business, or accept a job with a business, which is in direct competition with the school, nor should employees have an involvement with businesses, which have existing or proposed contracts with the school.

Employees must assess if a member of the public may think that they or their family would benefit from the connection between their personal interest and their employment with the school and declare any such interest to the head teacher in writing. Individuals are free to take part in activities organised and authorised by Trade Unions without declaring an interest.

All staff should inform the head teacher before engaging in any other business or accepting additional employment.

Outside commitments

If an employee works for another organisation they may not act as a messenger between that organisation and the school. Formal channels of communication must be maintained.

Any secondary employment must not be carried out during an employee's contracted school working hours, nor whilst on standby for official call out purposes unless such employment can be undertaken from their home.

It is an employee's responsibility to monitor the number of hours they work and to ensure that they are rested and refreshed and able to carry out their role. On average employees should not work more than 48 hours in total each week unless they have opted out of the Working Time Regulations.

Professional Integrity

It is essential that employees inform the head teacher of any police investigation, charge, caution, reprimand, fine or conviction immediately. All such disclosures will be handled in confidence but this may result in a suspension from duties while an investigation takes place.

Serious misconduct and/or criminal offences committed during or outside of working hours which bring employees or the school into disrepute will be the subject of disciplinary action which could lead to summary dismissal.

Employees may campaign on behalf of a political party; however, when engaged on school business they must remain politically neutral and not allow their personal or political views to interfere with their duties.

Professional behaviour

Employees must display the highest possible standards of professional behaviour.

To ensure pupils receive a coherent and comprehensive educational service and enable effective communication throughout the School, employees will co-operate with their colleagues, providing support, help and guidance as required by them and their line manager.

Employees should act in a fair, courteous and mature manner to pupils, colleagues and other stakeholders and avoid words and deeds that bring the School into disrepute or undermine colleagues in the perception of others.

Employees should be aware of and follow School policies systems and procedures. They should normally communicate through the line management structure, and should ensure pupils do likewise.

Employees will be familiar with job requirements (e.g. proper preparation, use of suitable methods/systems, maintenance of appropriate/required records, etc.), actively engage in continuing professional development and attend training activities as required.

Employees will endeavour to assist the School achieve its corporate and strategic objectives; engaging in wider school activities, adopting a positive attitude to marketing and promotion and the achievement of a quality education offering.

Employees must attend work punctually in accordance with their conditions of service and at the times agreed with their line manager. Employees must be fit for work and not adversely influenced by drugs, alcohol, etc. Those unable to avoid being late or absent should, whenever possible, give as much notice to the head teacher so that alternative cover arrangements may be made.

Social Media

Employees must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites, which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute.

Employees must not make online associations/friendships with pupils via social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok etc. Nor should employees use text or email to contact existing pupils unless they are using school email addresses for the purpose of online learning.

Confidential information

Information belonging to the school, including pupil data should not be disclosed to any person not authorised to receive it. Employees are required to maintain the appropriate levels of confidentiality with respect to pupil and staff records and other sensitive matters and take care not to discuss issues of particularly sensitive matters within the School community, which could cause distress to employees, pupils or parents.

Personal or financial information about any pupil or other member of staff must not be disclosed without the express consent of that individual or authorisation from the head teacher.

Data Protection

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 computerised databases of information on individuals, whether they are staff, pupils or members of the general public.

Copyright

Employees who wish to publish any material, which they have written in connection with their duties or in which they describe themselves as holding a position within the school, must first gain the consent of the head teacher.

If, in the course of their work, an employee creates a copyright work (for example a procedures manual); patentable invention; design capable of registration; this would become the property of the school and, if appropriate, they would be required to cooperate in the registration formalities.

Gifts, Hospitality and Fees

It is an offence for employees to accept gifts, loans, fees or rewards as an inducement to act in a certain way in their official capacity.

Employees should never accept significant gifts or hospitality from pupils, parents, carers, existing or potential contractors or outside suppliers.

A customary "end of term" or one off low value gift (of less than £25) such as flowers, chocolates or a small personal gift is acceptable.

Employees may only accept an offer of a more significant gift (worth more than £25) or hospitality (e.g. visits, meals, sporting events etc.) if there is a genuine need to do so in order to represent the school in the community and it has been agreed with the head teacher.

Gifts, benefits and hospitality offered to employees or members of their family as a consequence of their employment must be declared to the head teacher who will give guidance as to the appropriateness of accepting such offers.

Employees may only retain fees for any lectures or services delivered during working hours with the express written agreement of the head teacher

Dress Code

Highfields employees have a responsibility to dress in a professional manner which projects a positive image to pupils and stakeholders and meets the high expectations of an independent school.

Employees should be neat, clean, smart and tidy, wearing clothes, including shoes, which are appropriate with their post in the school. The dress code is smart rather than casual; denim, flip-flops, extreme hairstyles and excessive jewellery are to be avoided. Whilst we do not impose a formal dress code, we ask that clothes for both male and female staff should be clean, well pressed and smart in appearance. Items of clothing should not be faded or excessively worn, revealing or tight fitting; clothes which display slogans, sentiments or adornments which may be perceived as offensive, sectarian or discriminatory or compromise our commitment to equality and diversity are not permitted. Visible body art (such as permanent tattoos and henna paint tattoos) and hairstyles such as flamboyant artificial hair colouring or shaved styles are not prohibited, but as we are promoting the professional image of the school, we expect that any adornments are kept discreet, set a good example to our pupils and are generally in keeping with the profile expected of public-facing staff working with young children and their parents/guardians.

All employees must wear ID badges.

Any personal protective equipment issued must be worn as directed.

Highfields is committed to promoting diversity and within the bounds of this dress code will respect individual preference in terms of customs, culture, religion and tradition.

Use of School Property

Employees may not make personal use of the school's property or facilities (stationery, photocopiers, car parks etc.) unless authorised to do so by the head teacher.

Computers and software must only be used in line with school policies. (eSafeguarding)
Employees may only use the school telephones to make or receive private calls in exceptional circumstances, and with the permission of the head teacher.

Equality & Diversity

The school is firmly committed to the principles of equality and diversity.

Employees must treat colleagues, pupils, parents, carers, governors and members of the public and the local community with respect and must not discriminate unlawfully against any person.

Employees involved in making appointments will ensure that decisions are based only on the ability of the candidate to undertake the duties of the post. If any applicant is a close personal friend or relative this must be declared to the head teacher.

Employees will not be involved in any decisions relating to discipline, pay or promotion of close personal friends or relatives.

Speaking to the media

Any approaches from the press or broadcast media must be directed to the headteacher or their nominated deputy who are authorised to speak or send any communication on behalf of the school. The head teacher may extend this authorisation to other employees where appropriate.

Breaching this Code of Conduct

Employees must inform the head teacher if they believe they have inadvertently breached this Code of Conduct.

If an employee believes a colleague is breaching this code of conduct they should inform the head teacher so appropriate investigation can be undertaken. Employees will suffer no detriment for raising concerns in good faith.

Queries about this Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct is not exhaustive and does not replace the general requirements of the law, common sense and good conduct. If employees are uncertain about what to do in a particular situation or require further information or guidance on the appropriate course of action they should contact the head teacher for advice.

Implementation, monitoring and review of this policy

This policy will be reviewed biennially and updated to ensure compliance with statutory requirements. Any queries regarding this policy, or comments, should be addressed to the Head Teacher.