

**Statutory Policy**

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Key Person: MLL

WILDERN ACADEMY TRUST

Code of Conduct for Staff

Purpose and application

Purpose

Relationships with fellow staff, employees, Members, Trustees, Local Governors, visitors, volunteers, students and their parents or guardians should be reasonable and mutually respectful at all times. This Code has been formulated in order to maintain this balance. This Code takes into account the DfE Guidance - *Guidance for safer working practice for adults who work with children and young people in education settings* (October 2015), which can be found at <https://www.safeguardingschools.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Guidance-for-Safer-Working-Practices-2015-final1.pdf>

The purpose of the Code is to:

- Confirm and reinforce the professional responsibilities of Staff (both teaching and non-teaching).
- Clarify the legal position in relation to sensitive aspects of Staff / student relationships.
- Set out the expectations of standards and behaviour to be maintained within the Trust.
- Help adults establish safe practices and reduce the risk of false accusations or improper conduct.

Application

The Code of Conduct (**Code**) applies to all Staff working in Wildern Academy Trust (**School**), whether paid or unpaid, whatever their position, role or responsibilities.

We also expect others, such as Members, Trustees, Local Governors and volunteers to be aware of this policy and those code of conduct documents specifically produced for their roles and responsibilities. We expect all those involved in those roles with Wildern Academy Trust to act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

This policy also complies with our Funding Agreement and Articles of Association.

There is a separate document titled 'Contractor Induction Brief' provided by the Facilities Manager to ensure contractors are aware of the conduct required of them.

Your duty

It is the contractual duty of every member of Staff to observe the rules and obligations in this Code. You should also follow the guidance unless there is a good reason not to follow it in a particular case. The School also has a duty of care to its Staff, parents and students and the implementation of the practices in this Code will help to discharge that duty.

Guiding principles

Principles for all staff

All Staff should put the wellbeing, development and progress of all students first by:

- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students under their supervision;
- Using professional expertise and judgment for the best interests of students in their care;
- Demonstrating self-awareness and taking responsibility for their own actions and for providing help and support to students;
- Raising concerns about the practices of teachers or other professionals where these may have a negative impact on students' learning or progress, or may put students at risk;
- Being familiar with the School's safeguarding procedures;

- Being aware that they are in a position of trust (i.e. the adult is in a position of power or influence over the student due to his or her work); that the relationship is not a relationship between equals and that this position must never be used to intimidate, bully, humiliate, coerce or threaten students.

All Staff should demonstrate respect for diversity and take steps to promote equality by:

- Acting appropriately and in accordance with this Code of Conduct, towards all students, parents, guardians and colleagues;
- Complying with the School's anti-bullying, Equal Opportunities policies and this Code of Conduct;
- Addressing issues of discrimination and bullying whenever they arise;
- Helping to create a fair and inclusive School environment.

All Staff should work as part of a unified staff body by:

- Developing productive and supportive relationships with colleagues;
- Exercising any management responsibilities in a respectful, inclusive and fair manner;
- Complying with all School policies and procedures;
- Participating in the School's development and improvement activities;
- Recognising the role of the School in the life of the local community;
- Upholding the School's reputation and standing within the local community and building trust and confidence in it.

Additional principles for teachers

Teachers should take responsibility for maintaining the quality of their teaching practice by:

- Meeting the professional standards for teaching applicable to their role and position within the School;
- Reflecting on their current practice and seeking out opportunities to develop knowledge, understanding and skills;
- Helping students to become confident and successful learners;
- Establishing productive relationships with parents and guardians by: providing accessible and accurate information about their child's progress; involving them in important decisions about their child's education; complying with this Code.

Teachers should maintain public trust and confidence in the School by:

- Demonstrating honesty and integrity; understanding and upholding their duty to safeguard the welfare of children and young people;
- Maintaining reasonable standards of behaviour whether inside or outside of normal School hours and whether on or off the School's site;
- Maintaining an effective learning environment.

Guidance on staff / student relationships

Application

Allegations of unprofessional conduct or improper contact or words can arise at any time. Professionalism and vigilance are required so as to ensure the safety of children in our care, and to reduce the risk of an allegation of impropriety against a member of staff.

This guidance applies to all adults working in this School, and not just teachers. Forming inappropriate relationships with children or young people who are students at Wildern Academy Trust or students at another school may 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 students at the School.

General guidance

You should be aware of the general guidance that will apply in all cases. In particular you:

- Need to exercise professional judgment but always act within the spirit of these guidelines. If you are involved in a situation where no specific guidance exists, you should discuss the

circumstances with a senior colleague. A written record should be kept that includes justification for any action taken.

- Must be familiar with procedures for handling allegations against staff.
- Must be aware of the School's child protection/safeguarding procedures.
- Must seek guidance from a senior colleague if you are in any doubt about appropriate conduct.
- Must report to a senior colleague any actions which could be misinterpreted, any misunderstandings, accidents or threats involving you and a student or a group of students to a senior colleague.

Behaviour giving particular cause for concern

You should take particular care when dealing with a student who:

- Appears to be emotionally distressed, or generally vulnerable and / or who is seeking expressions of affection.
- Appears to hold a grudge against you.
- Acts in a sexually provocative way, or who is inclined to make exaggerated claims about themselves and others, or to fantasise, or one whose manner with adults is over-familiar.
- May have reason to make up an allegation to cover the fact that he or she has not worked hard enough for public examinations.

Procedure to be followed in these cases

Some of these behaviours may be indications that a child has been, or is currently being, abused and should therefore be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Designated Safeguarding Leads under the School's safeguarding procedures.

Record keeping

Comprehensive records are essential. Any incident involving children that could give cause for concern, whether contemplated in these guidelines or not, should be recorded, immediately or as soon as practicable, with justifications for any action taken. In addition, any incident should be reported promptly to a senior colleague.

Good order and discipline

Teaching staff and other staff in charge or control of students must maintain good order and discipline at all times when students are present on School premises and whenever students are engaged in authorised school activities, whether on School premises or elsewhere.

General conduct

School property You must take proper care when using School property and you must not use School property for any unauthorised use or for private gain.

Use of premises You must not carry out on School premises any work or activity other than pursuant to your terms and conditions of employment without the prior permission of the Headteacher.

Behaviour of others You should be aware that the behaviour of your partner or other family members may raise concerns. Such concerns will be given careful consideration as to whether they constitute a potential risk to children at the School.

Meetings with students

One-to-one meetings

If you are teaching one student, or conducting a one-to-one meeting or teaching session with a student, you should take particular care in the following ways:

- When working alone with a student is an integral part of your role, conduct and agree full risk assessments with a senior colleague.
- Use a room that has sufficient windows onto a corridor so the occupants can be seen, keep the door open and inform a colleague that the lesson / meeting is taking place.

- Arrange the meeting during normal school hours when there are plenty of other people about.
- Do not continue the meeting for any longer than is necessary to achieve its purposes.
- Avoid sitting or standing in close proximity to the student, 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.
- Avoid any conduct that could be taken as a sexual advance.
- Report any incident that causes you concern to the DSL under the School's safeguarding procedures, and make a written record (signed and dated).
- Report any situation where a student becomes distressed or angry to a senior colleague.

Pre-arranged meetings

Pre-arranged meetings with students outside school should not be permitted unless approval is obtained from their parents and a senior colleague. If you are holding such a meeting, you should inform colleagues before the meeting.

The use of personal living space

Students should not be in or invited into the personal living space of any member of Staff, unless agreed with the parents /guardians and senior management/ the Headteacher. Students should not be asked to assist with chores or tasks in the personal living space. Personal living spaces should not be used as an additional resource for the School.

Video Conferencing Meetings

- Meetings should be conducted with the same professional manner as those held face to face, ensuring adherence to the required dress code and appropriate location. Parents/guardians and students/pupils should be made aware of the same requirements.

Language and appearance

Language

You should use appropriate language at all times. You should:

- Avoid words or expressions that have any unnecessary sexual content or innuendo; avoid displays of affection either personally or in writing (e.g. messages in birthday cards, text messages, e-mails etc.).
- Avoid any form of aggressive or threatening words.
- Avoid any words or actions that are over-familiar.
- Avoid use of words relating to ethnic or racial references.
- Not swear, blaspheme or use any sort of offensive language in front of students.
- Avoid the use of sarcasm or derogatory words when punishing or disciplining students and avoid making unprofessional personal comments about anyone. Any sanctions should be in accordance with the School's behaviour policy.
- Be aware that some parts of the curriculum may raise sexually explicit subject matters. Care should be taken in subjects where rules / boundaries are relaxed (e.g. drama or art). Staff should have clear lesson plans and should take care to avoid overstepping personal and professional boundaries.

Smoking, Alcohol and Drugs

Staff will not consume or be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or smoke (including e-cigarettes) while on duty or on school premises. The school will take all reasonable steps to prevent a member of staff carrying out work-related activities if they are considered to be unfit/unsafe to undertake the work as a result of alcohol consumption or substance abuse.

Alcohol may be consumed responsibly on the school premises when the Headteacher has given express permission, such as during an evening or weekend social function or a celebration event.

Dress

You should dress appropriately and in a professional manner. Staff will wear appropriate standard of dress to fulfil cultural, religious and ethnic needs. Dress must not be offensive, distracting, revealing, or sexually provocative, embarrassing, discriminatory or culturally sensitive. Political or other contentious slogans or badges are not allowed. Staff should consider the appropriate wearing of any piercings as well as any tattoos that can be observed.

Denim or jean wear i.e. Jeans, skirts, flip flops and shoe string vest tops should not be worn.

Staff will be informed if their choice of dress falls outside the spirit of the code.

Please note staff must ensure that where provided, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is worn as required.

Social Networking

At no point should social media be used to bring the name of the school, students, parents or colleagues into disrepute.

The use of force or physical restraint

Physical restraint

All forms of corporal punishment are unlawful and the use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence. The use of physical intervention should be avoided if possible. However, by law, teaching staff, and other staff who are authorised by the Headteacher to have control or charge of students, may use such force or physical contact as is reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances to prevent a student from doing, or continuing to do any of the following:

- Committing a criminal offence
- Injuring themselves or others
- Causing damage to property, including their own
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to good order and discipline at the School or among any of its students, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom or elsewhere.

Application of code of restraint

This applies when a teacher, or other authorised person, is on School premises and when he or she is in control or charge of the student elsewhere, for example on a field trip or other authorised out of school activity. It only applies where no other form of control is available and where it is necessary to intervene.

Before intervening

Before intervening physically, you should, wherever practicable, tell the student to stop and what will happen if he or she does not. You should continue attempting to communicate with the student throughout the incident and should make it clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary. You should always avoid touching or holding a student in a way that might be considered indecent. You should also avoid any form of aggressive contact such as holding, pushing, pulling or hitting which could amount to a criminal assault, nor act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury.

Inform senior staff

You should inform the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher immediately following an incident, except the most minor or trivial, where force has been used. This is to help prevent any misunderstanding or misrepresentation of the incident, and it will be helpful in the event of a complaint. You should provide a written report as soon as possible afterwards. This should include written and signed accounts of those involved, including the student. The parents/guardians should be informed the same day.

Action taken in self-defence 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 student 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.

Using reasonable force

There is no legal definition of "reasonable force". It will always depend on the circumstances. Note that:

- Any use of force should be proportionate to the behaviour of the student involved and the seriousness of the harm prevented.
- Physical force could not be justified to prevent a student from committing a trivial misdemeanour
- Any force should always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.
- Whether it is reasonable to use force and the degree of force that could be reasonably employed might also depend on the age, understanding and sex of the student.

Physical contact in other circumstances

When physical contact may be appropriate

Physical contact with a student may be necessary and beneficial in order to demonstrate a required action, or a correct technique in, for example, singing and other music lessons or during PE, sports and games. Any physical contact should be in response to the student's needs, of limited duration and appropriate to the student's age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Physical contact can be easily misinterpreted and should be limited. Staff should use professional judgement.

Guidance on using physical contact

You should observe the following guidelines (where applicable):

- Explain the intended action to the student.
- Do not proceed with the action if the student appears to be apprehensive or reluctant, or if you have other concerns about the student's likely reaction.
- Ensure that the door is open and if you are in any doubt, ask a colleague or another student to be present during the demonstration.
- Consider alternatives if it appears likely that the student might misinterpret the contact.

Report concerns

If you are at all concerned about any instance of physical contact, inform a senior colleague or the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher without delay, and make a written record in the incident book and on the student's file if necessary.

Offering comfort to distressed students

Touching may be appropriate where a student is in distress and needs comforting. You should use your own professional judgement when you feel a student needs this kind of support and should be aware of any special circumstances relating to the student. For example, a child who has been abused may find physical contact particularly difficult. You should always notify a senior colleague when comfort has been offered, record the action and should seek guidance if unsure whether it would be appropriate in a particular case.

Administering first aid

When administering first aid you should explain to the child what is happening and ensure that another adult is present or is aware of the action being taken. The treatment must meet the School's health and safety at work rules and intimate care guidelines, and parents should be informed. Staff should:

- Adhere to the School's policy on administering first aid / medication.
- Comply with the necessary reporting requirements.
- Make other adults aware of the task that is being undertaken.
- Explain what is happening.
- Report and record the administration of first aid.
- Have regard to any health plans.
- Ensure that an appropriate health / risk assessment is undertaken prior to undertaking certain activities.

Students' entitlement to privacy

Children are entitled to privacy when changing or showering. However there still must be an appropriate level of supervision to ensure safety. You should:

- Avoid physical contact or visually intrusive behaviour when children are undressed.
- Announce yourself when entering changing rooms and avoid remaining unless required.
- Not shower or change in the same place as children.
- Not assist with any personal care task which a student can undertake themselves.

Intimate care

Sometimes intimate care is required, for example when assisting with toileting or removing wet clothes. You should:

- Comply with the School's intimate care guidelines.
- Advise other staff of the task being undertaken and consult where there is any change from the agreed procedure. A record should be kept of the justification for any variations and this information should be shared with parents.
- Explain to the child what is happening.
- Comply with applicable professional codes of practice, as appropriate.
- Comply with regularly reviewed, formally agreed plans, as appropriate.

Where a child has been abused

Where a child has previously been abused, staff should be informed on a 'need to know' basis, and should be extra cautious when considering the necessity of physical contact. Some children may seek inappropriate physical contact. Staff should sensitively deter the student and help them understand the importance of personal boundaries. Such incidents should be reported and discussed with senior colleagues / the Executive Headteacher / the Headteacher and parents/guardians.

Children with special educational needs or disabilities

Some children may need more physical contact to assist their everyday learning, which should be agreed and understood by all concerned, justified, openly applied and open to scrutiny.

Code of conduct for contact outside school

Contact outside school

You should avoid unnecessary contact with students outside school. You must:

- Not give students your home address, home telephone number, mobile telephone number or personal e-mail address.
- Not send personal communications (such as birthday cards or faith cards, text messages etc.) to children unless agreed with a senior colleague.
- Not make arrangements to meet students, individually or in groups, outside school other than on school trips authorised by the Headteacher.
- Avoid contacting students at home unless this is strictly necessary, and you should keep a record of any such occasion.
- Not give a student a lift in your own vehicle other than on School business and with permission from the Headteacher or another person present.
- Not invite students (groups or individuals) to your home.
- Report and record any situation which may place a child at risk or which may compromise the School's or your professional standing.
- Never engage in secretive social contact with students or their parents.

Social contact

You should be aware that where you meet children or parents socially, such contact could be misinterpreted as grooming. Any social contact that could give rise to concern should be reported to a senior colleague.

Friendships with parents and students

Members of staff who are friends with parents of students or who, for example, are voluntary workers in youth organisations attended by students, will of course have contact with those students outside school. However, members of staff should still respect the above advice.

Scope of application of code on contact outside school

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 Offsite Activities Policy. The principles of this guidance also apply to contact with children or young people who are students at another school.

Transporting students

There may be some situations when Staff are required to transport students. You should:

- Ensure that you are fit to drive and free from any substances that may impair your judgement or ability to drive.
- Be aware that until the student is passed over to a parent/guardian, you have responsibility for that student's health and safety.
- Record the details of the journey.
- Record and be able to justify impromptu or emergency lifts.
- Ensure that there are proper arrangements in place to ensure vehicle, passenger and driver safety, including appropriate insurance, seat belts, adherence to maximum capacity guidelines etc.
- Wherever practicable, you should avoid using private vehicles and should try and have one adult additional to the driver to act as an escort.

After school activities

When taking part in after school activities, you should:

- Be accompanied by another adult unless otherwise agreed with a senior colleague.
- Undertake a risk assessment.
- Obtain parental consent.

Educational visits

When taking part in educational visits, you should:

- Follow the School's Offsite Activities Policy.
- Be accompanied by another adult unless otherwise agreed with a senior colleague.
- Undertake a risk assessment.
- Obtain parental consent.
- Never share bedrooms unless in a dormitory situation and arrangements have been discussed previously with senior colleagues, parents and students.

Overnight supervision

Where overnight supervision is required to preserve the integrity of the examination process:

- You should ensure that a risk assessment has been undertaken and that all members of the household have had the appropriate checks.
- Arrangements should be made with and agreed by parents /guardians and the student.
- One to one supervision should be avoided where possible.
- Choice, flexibility and contact with "the outside world" should be incorporated, so far as it is consistent with appropriate supervision and the School's guidelines.
- Whenever possible, independent oversight of the arrangements should be made and any misinterpretation, misunderstanding or complaint should be reported.

Communication with students (including the use of technology)

Communicating with children and parents

All communication with children or parents should conform to School policy and be limited to professional matters. Except in an emergency communication should only be made using School property. It is not acceptable to have current students, past students or parents as friends on social networking sites.

All communication with parents/guardians and students should still follow General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) training, e.g. Bcc, email sent via Management Information Systems (MIS).

Application

These rules apply to any form of communication including new technologies such as mobile telephones, web-cameras, social networking websites and blogs.

Dealing with "crushes"

Crushes, fixations or infatuations are part of normal adolescent development. However, they need sensitive handling to avoid allegations of exploitation. Such crushes carry a high risk of words, actions and expressions being misinterpreted, therefore, the highest levels of professionalism are required. If you suspect that a student has a crush on you or on another colleague, you should bring it to the attention of senior colleagues at the earliest opportunity. Suggestions that a student may have developed a crush should be recorded. Staff should avoid being alone with students who have developed a crush on them and if the student sends personal communications to the member of Staff, this should be reported to a senior colleague and recorded.

Acceptable use

Adults must establish safe and responsible online behaviours and must be familiar with the acceptable use policy. Adults should report to senior colleagues, any new and emerging technologies which may have a bearing on School practices and on the review of the Acceptable Use Policy. Local and national guidelines on acceptable user policies should be followed.

Staff should also:

- Ensure that your own personal social networking sites are set as private and ensure that students are not approved contacts.
- Never use or access social networking sites of students and do not use internet or web based communication channels to send personal messages to students.
- Not use your own equipment (e.g. mobile telephones) to communicate with students.
- Use IT systems provided by the School.
- Only make contact with students for professional reasons.
- Recognise that text messaging should only be used as part of an agreed protocol and only when other forms of communication are not possible.

Personal details

Adults must not give their personal contact details to students, including personal e-mail addresses, home or mobile telephone numbers, unless the need to do so is agreed with senior colleagues and parents /guardians.

Communicating outside the agreed protocols

E-mail or text communications between an adult and a student outside agreed protocols may lead to disciplinary and / or criminal investigations. This also includes communications through internet based websites.

Code of conduct for photographs and videos

Permission required

You should follow the school's policy for taking photographs or video camera footage of any students in class, at any school events or on a trip. You should also seek permission before displaying these

photographs. You must not take images of children using personal mobile telephones. Appropriate consents for taking and displaying photographs should be obtained from parents where appropriate.

Guidance where permission obtained

Where permission has been obtained, the following should be considered:

- The purpose of the activity should be clear as should what will happen to the photographs or videos. You must be able to justify images in your possession.
- All images should be made available in order to determine acceptability.
- Images should not be made during one-to-one situations.
- Ensure that the student is appropriately dressed.
- Ensure that the student understands why the images are being taken and has agreed to the activity.
- Only use equipment provided or authorised by the School.
- If an image is to be displayed in a place to which the public have access it should not display the student's name. Similarly, where a student is named (in a school prospectus, for example) the name should not be accompanied by a photograph or video.
- All images of children should be stored securely and only accessed by those.
- Unless authorised to do so images must not be taken secretly.

Appropriate material

You must ensure children are not exposed to inappropriate or indecent images. Inappropriate material, such as pornography, must not be brought to work and you must not use School property to access such material. You must not allow unauthorised access to School equipment and must keep your computer passwords safe. If you discover material that is potentially illegal, you must isolate the equipment and contact the Designated Person under the School's safeguarding procedures immediately. Students must not be exposed to unsuitable material on the internet and Staff must ensure that any film or material shown is age appropriate.

Gifts and rewards

If a gift is received

If you receive a gift from a student or parent, you should:

- Declare the gift where there is a possibility it could be misconstrued, or in any event where the gift is of a value of more than £25 (twenty-five pounds). The Executive Headteacher may in his / her absolute discretion require you to decline the gift.
- Decline outright gifts that could be perceived as a bribe or that have created an expectation of preferential treatment. Although it is accepted for parents or children to make small gifts to show appreciation, you must not receive gifts on a regular basis or receive anything of significant value.

Giving gifts and rewards

Where you are thinking of giving a gift or reward:

- It should only be provided as part of an agreed reward system.
- In all cases except the above, the gift or reward should be of little monetary value and should be discussed and agreed with the Executive Headteacher, senior management and the parent or guardian.
- Selection processes should be fair and where possible should be agreed by more than one member of staff.
- Gifts should be given openly and not based on favouritism.

Allocation of gifts and rewards

Decisions regarding entitlement to benefits or privileges such as admission to school trips, activities or classroom tasks must avoid perceptions of bias, grooming or favouritism. The selection process must be based on transparent criteria.

Sexual contact

Sexual contact

Staff must not:

- Have any type of sexual relationship with a student.
- Have sexually suggestive or provocative communications with a student.
- Make sexual remarks to or about a student.
- Discuss their own sexual relationships in the presence of students.
- Have sexual relationships or contact with students, or encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which might lead to a sexual relationship is a grave breach of trust that will usually lead to disciplinary action and may also lead to criminal prosecution.

Safeguarding staff and pupils during remote learning:

Staff and pupils/students are reminded of the processes and procedures to stay safe when conducting remote learning and can refer to the guidance as set out by school and the DFE

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-and-remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>.

Staff are reminded that when teaching remotely the principles as set out in this code of conduct still apply. All reporting of safeguarding follows the Schools' procedures in line with the child protection and safeguarding policies and as set out in KCSIE.

Staff are expected to follow a set of guidance that relates to the environment, dress code, use of relevant technologies and managing behaviour or matters of safeguarding whilst on line. Students/pupils and parents/guardians receive guidance on how to take part in remote learning and remain safeguarded.

Consequences of breaching this policy

The Academy Trust's position

It is in your interests to follow this policy so as to maintain standards of behaviour and your own professional reputation. A breach of this policy may be treated as misconduct and will render you liable to disciplinary action including in serious cases, dismissal.

Linked Policies: All