



WORKING PRACTICES POLICY

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Dawn Laverick-Brown".

Signed – Governor

Dawn Laverick-Brown

Print Name

Date reviewed: February 2024

Next review due: February 2025

1. Introduction

The staff at Batchwood School are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for both Pupils and their colleagues. This document provides a brief summary on what is expected and is considered essential working practices for all staff.

A lot of situations are covered in these guidelines but it would be impossible to cover all eventualities; staff should consult their line manager or a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). This summary does highlight behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable. It also gives clear advice on our expected protocols for staff conduct.

2. Underpinning Principles

- The welfare of the child is paramount (Children Act 1989);
- Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions;
- Staff should work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way;
- Staff should discuss and or take advice promptly from their line manager or another senior member of staff over any incident, which may give rise to concern;
- Records should be made of any such incident and/or decisions made/further actions agreed. Records to be stored confidentially in the personnel files;
- Staff should apply the same professional standards regardless of gender or sexuality;
- All staff should know the name of their designated senior person for child protection, be familiar with local child protection arrangements and understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children and young people;
- Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.

3. Power and Positions of Trust

All staff working with young people are in positions of trust, a relationship between a member of staff and a student cannot be a relationship of equals.

4. Confidentiality

Staff may have access to confidential information about Pupils in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities – in some circumstances they may be given additional highly sensitive or private information. All such information should only be shared on a “need to know” basis and never used casually in conversation.

In situations where a student has shared information that puts that child or another child at risk or harm this information should be shared immediately with the designated senior person for child protection. If in doubt about whether to share the information seek guidance from a member of SLT.

5. Propriety & Behaviour

All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of Pupils and young people. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their peers, Pupils and the public in general. An individual’s behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, should not compromise her/his position within the work setting or risk bringing the School into disrepute.

Staff should be particularly careful when socialising in public areas where Pupils and/or parents may be present. For example, being seen under the influence of alcohol, being seen in the company of Pupils (however innocent your motives) or being overheard discussing Pupils, their families or staff can lead to accusations of unprofessional conduct. There is also the risk that inappropriate images of staff could be placed on the internet.

Staff must ensure that their professional behaviour extends to school trips at all times.

5.1 Social Contact

Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with Pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship.

Staff should never give their personal details such as home/mobile phone number; home or private email address to student(s), without the permission of the Headteacher.

5.2 Sexual Contact with Young People

Do not pursue sexual relationships with Pupils and young people either in or out of school.

Avoid any form of communication with a child or young person which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative – including verbal comments, letters, notes, email, phone calls, texts, physical contact, watching inappropriate material.

Because of “grooming” allegations staff should be aware that conferring special attention and favour upon a child might be construed as being part of a grooming process which is an offence.

5.3 Infatuations

Staff need to be aware that it is not uncommon for Pupils to be strongly attracted to a member of staff and/or develop a heterosexual or homosexual infatuation. A member of staff who becomes aware that a student may be infatuated with themselves or a colleague should discuss this at the earliest opportunity with a senior member of staff.

5.4 Dress and Appearance

Principles:

All members of staff at Batchwood School are expected to follow this professional dress code and to exhibit high personal standards of behaviour at all times to ensure they are outstanding role models for Pupils. The formal standard of dress required of Pupils has implications for how we as staff dress.

Practice:

Dress should be commensurate with the high standards the School has set for Pupils. Male staff are expected to wear a jacket/suit and tie. Similarly, whilst business suits are not essential for female staff, appropriate jackets/cardigans are strongly preferred.

Extremes of fashion in clothes, hairstyle and jewellery should be avoided (including facial piercings). Staff with tattoos should ensure that these are not visible whilst at work. In warmer weather staff should ensure they are still suitably attired in smart professional dress. Flip-flops, short skirts and cropped tops, vests or shorts should not be worn (shoulders must be covered). Open toed-shoes are acceptable as long as they have backs to them and staff are fully aware of potential health and safety issues of having toes exposed.

5.5 Internet/Electronic Communication (i.e. Text Messages etc.)

Under no circumstances should staff using school ICT equipment access inappropriate images or indecent material in or out of school.

Staff should not make social contact with pupils on social networking sites – email contact should always be conducted through the member of staff’s school email address.

Any staff using social networking sites such as Facebook should ensure their privacy settings are set to the highest level. It is never appropriate to be ‘friends’ with a current student at the School that isn’t a member of your immediate family. If staff are ‘friends’ with ex pupils, they must be aware of their professional conduct and not make themselves vulnerable by sharing content that will then be in the public domain

The pleasures and perils of email: -

- Staff should be aware that email can be used in a defamation claim as emails are data and, therefore, fall under the Data Protection Act and a person is entitled to see what data is held on him or her;
- Staff should be mindful that what seems to one staff member as a bit of banter may seem to another a gross and harassing intrusion into their private space or cause possible alarm and or distress;
- Staff should be aware that there can be no expectation of privacy in using school equipment – internet use, email use, etc;
- Emails are treated in the same manner as paper communication;
- It is important that no communication with a student may in any way take advantage of a position of trust or breach their duty of care;
- Staff wellbeing – we work in what is sometimes a stressful profession and anything we can do as a “stress-buster” should be welcomed. Staff should use their measured professional judgement when deciding on the recipient field for an email. With this in mind please be aware that in-boxes constantly fill up with messages that are meant for a specific audience, but sent to “all” can create unnecessary irritation/stress. Please use “All Staff” email for essential items of information only, not as a discussion forum or to sell items.

Any member of staff aware of an inappropriate message or film that could lead to hurt, distress for a student or colleague or bring the School into disrepute in the public domain should report the matter, at the earliest convenience, to a senior member of staff.

More guidance is available in the Schools Online Safety and IT Users Policy (LM6).

Staff must use passwords on smartphones particularly if using their phone to access work email and sensitive information.

6. Physical Contact

Staff need to be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom the action is described.

Never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent. Always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact can be open to scrutiny. Never indulge in horseplay, tickling, arm wrestling, fun fights, etc. or encourage Pupils to do so.

If you believe you have been involved in physical contact that could be misinterpreted it needs to be reported to a member of SLT at the earliest convenience.

6.1 PE and Other Activities Which Require Physical Contact – Showers and Changing

Those who teach PE or who offer music tuition, for example will, on occasions, have to initiate physical contact with Pupils in order to support a child so they can perform a task safely, demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument, etc. This should be done with the student's consent, for the minimum time necessary and take place in an open environment. Staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the student.

Young people are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes or taking a shower. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision. The supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the young people concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

6.2 Care, Control and Physical Intervention

Staff may legitimately intervene to prevent a student 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; under no circumstance should physical force be used as a form of punishment.

In all incidences where physical intervention is deemed necessary the incident and subsequent actions should be documented and reported.

6.3 Pupils in Distress

Staff need to consider the way in which they offer comfort to a distressed student and always tell a colleague when and how they offered comfort. Report and record any situations which may give rise to concern to a senior member of staff.

7. Behaviour Management

Try to defuse the situation before it escalates and use the Consequences system/Behaviour Policy consistently. The use of demeaning or insensitive comments towards Pupils is not acceptable in any situation. More guidance is available in the School's Behaviour Management Policy (EA2).

8. One-to-One Situations

Avoid meetings with Pupils in remote secluded areas of the School. Ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in one-to-one situations. Inform other staff of the meeting beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by. Avoid use of "Engaged" or equivalent signs wherever possible. Always report any situation where a child becomes distressed or angry to a senior colleague. Prearranged meetings with Pupils away from the School are not permitted without the approval of a member of the SLT.

9. Transporting Pupils

Wherever practical when transporting an individual child in a private vehicle there should be an additional adult acting as an escort. A school vehicle should be used whenever possible.

10. Educational Visits

Staff should take particular care when supervising Pupils in a less formal atmosphere. Staff are reminded they are in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour cannot be interpreted as seeking to establish an inappropriate relationship or friendship. Staff should read the School visits procedures and guidelines before embarking on any school visit. More guidance is available in the School's School Trips and Offsite Visits Policy (LM4).

11. First Aid and Administering Medication

Only appropriately trained staff should administer first aid or medication. When administering first aid wherever possible staff should ensure that another adult is present or aware of the action being taken.

12. Curriculum

Many areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit or of an otherwise sensitive nature. Care should be taken to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the learning outcomes identified by the lesson plan. Responding to student questions can require careful judgement and staff may wish to take guidance in these circumstances from a senior member of staff.

12.1 Photography, Videos and Other Creative Arts

Be clear about the purpose of the activity and about what will happen to the photographs when the lesson/activity is concluded. Ensure that a senior member of staff is aware that photography/image equipment is being used and for what purpose. Avoid taking images in one-to-one situations.

Do not take, display or distribute images of children in a public place unless consent has been received from their parents/carers.

A reminder - DVDs or other videos/films shown to Pupils should be age appropriate with staff following the Censor's guidelines, i.e. "15" film should only be shown to a class where every student is over 15 years old and obviously the material is deemed suitable within an educational environment.

13. Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. It is a member of staff's responsibility to report any behaviour by colleagues that raises concern. Staff should report concerns to a member of the SLT or in the case of a complaint about the Headteacher to the Chair of Governors. More guidance is available in the School's Whistleblowing Policy (HR6).

13.1 Sharing Concerns & Recording Incidents

All staff should be aware of the child protection procedures at Batchwood School and, as a minimum, attend compulsory Child Protection training every three years. All staff have a duty to report any child protection concerns to one of the designated senior persons.

Staff who are the subject of allegations are advised to contact their professional association.

14. Gifts

All gifts from suppliers or associates of the School need to be declared to the Headteacher, with the exception of "one-off" small token gifts from Pupils or parents. Personal gifts to Pupils could be misinterpreted so should be agreed by your line manager and be in line with the School's Rewards Policy.

15. Staff Recruitment

Batchwood School has adopted new guidelines for safer recruitment. All new posts/vacancies within the School will be subject to increased scrutiny and DBS checks.

Interview panels will include a fully trained member in safer recruitment. Interview and appointment procedures have all been updated.

*Pupils/young people in the context of this document are all Pupils in Years 7 to 11, i.e. 11 to 16 year olds.

Reply Slip

To:

Re: Safe Working Practices Guidance

I have read and understood the above guidance (please tick): (.....)

Having read the document, I would have liked more guidance on the following issues:

If you have any query or concern about these guidelines, please do not hesitate to see any member of SLT who will happily deal with your enquiry.

This slip needs to be signed and returned to the Office and HR Manager.

Signed:

Print Name:

Date: