



Tolworth Girls' School & Sixth Form

Staff Code of Conduct

Governing Body Committee: Human Resources (HRC)

Date approved: November 2023

Next review: November 2024

As a high performing academy, we have high expectations of our students and staff. Appraisal and safeguarding procedures ensure that these standards are maintained. It is also important that staff adhere to the highest standards of professional behaviour.

Further guidance on expectations can also be found in the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education Policy' and the Acceptable Use of ICT (staff) policy. All staff should also read the [Guidance on Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings\(2019\)](#) and Part 1 of the ' Keeping Children Safe in Education document (DfESept2023).

All staff at Tolworth Girls' School & Sixth Form are expected to be consistent role models for young people. The following guidelines make clear the expectations at Tolworth Girls' School & Sixth Form and must be adhered to by all staff.

Staff Wellbeing

At Tolworth Girls' School & Sixth Form, we support the wellbeing of all staff to avoid negative impacts on their mental and physical health. We aim to provide a supportive work environment for all staff that acknowledge the needs of staff, and how these change over time. We create an environment, which allows staff to balance their working lives with their personal needs and responsibilities. We strive to support staff with any specific wellbeing issues they experience.

All staff are expected to:

- Treat each other with empathy and respect
- Keep in mind the workload and wellbeing of other members of staff
- Support other members of staff if they become stressed, such as by providing practical assistance or emotional reassurance
- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let other members of staff know when they need support
- Follow the academy's guidance on when it is and isn't reasonable to respond to communications
- Contribute positively towards morale and team spirit
- Use shared areas respectfully, such as the staff room and offices
- Take part in training and CPD opportunities that promote their wellbeing

Line managers are expected to:

- Maintain positive relationships with their staff and value them for their skills
- Provide a non-judgemental and confidential support system to their staff
- Take any complaints or concerns seriously and deal with them appropriately using the academy's policies
- Monitor workloads and be alert to signs of stress, and regularly talk to staff about their work/life balance
- Make sure new staff are properly and thoroughly inducted and feel able to ask for help
- Keep in touch with staff if they're absent for long periods
- Conduct return to work interviews to support staff back into work
- Produce calendars of meetings, deadlines and events so that staff can plan ahead and manage their workload

EAP

Our Employee Assistant Programme is via Workplace Options. All colleagues have free access to this resource, which can assist across all aspect of your life. You can also self-refer for up to 6 sessions of counselling, which is available to staff, and their immediate family members in their household, along with coaching as appropriate.

Employees contact:

Phone number: 0800 028 0199

Online Information Portal <https://healthassuredeap.co.uk/>

Planning and Preparation

- Staff should ensure they are up to date with information and should check emails, Arbor information, pigeonholes and briefing notices daily to ensure they are aware of situations and events that will affect them.
- Form Tutors must ensure that notices in registers are read out to students.
- All staff must take a register for all lessons and must ensure that they are accurate.

Punctuality

- All staff whose contracted hours permit should attend relevant briefings on Mondays and the pastoral briefing on Thursdays at 8.20am.
- Teaching staff are expected to be on the school site by no later than 08:15am and are advised to leave no earlier than 3.30pm (if staff have appointments they may leave after tutorial once their Line Manager has been informed). Due to the early finish on a Friday all teaching staff can leave at the end of the academic day from 3.00pm.
- Support staff have their own contracted hours including compulsory break times as agreed with their Line Manager.
- Staff need to be on time for changeover of lessons and all duties. Lateness can result in health and safety risks.
- Staff **must** inform the cover co-ordinator in advance if they are going to be absent or late for their duty. Where possible they should arrange a swap with another colleague.

Participation

Like in all organisations, the more staff put in the more they get out and therefore being engaged fully in all activities is an essential part of school life. In accordance with directed time, staff are required to attend:

- all relevant meetings including Parental Consultation evenings and Open Evenings. (Part-time staff must attend all of the Parents Evenings that are relevant and all other meetings on a Pro-rata basis).

The Appraisal policy clearly states that teaching staff are also expected to play their part in the wider professional life of the academy. Support staff are also encouraged to participate fully in school life.

Professionalism

Staff are expected to behave professionally at all times. This includes both in and out of school. There are now explicitly stated expectations of personal and professional conduct that make up [Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards](#). Staff are expected to:

- Maintain professional boundaries with students;
 - Use appropriate channels to raise concerns about students or other staff (See detail in Keeping Children Safe in Education (Safeguarding) Policy);
 - Follow E-safety guidelines (also refer to Acceptable Use of ICT Policy - Staff);
 - Take responsibility for accessing help and support should it be needed;
 - Meet the requirements as specified by relevant examination bodies;
 - Avoid actions which undermine the academy, staff, students or parents/carers (this includes outside the workplace);
 - Follow the correct procedures for dealing with all matters relating to finance;
- We strongly recommend that all staff become a member of a Professional Association.

Time off for dependants

A dependant is a close family member or someone who depends on you. This can include your child, partner or parent. Staff can take time off if they need to help a dependant, when there is an unexpected problem or emergency. This could be to care for them when they are unwell or to provide care when it is disrupted. Staff should request the absence in the usual way when known in advance or report as absence in an emergency. This is usually unpaid. On some occasions this may be paid, please refer to the staff Managing Health & Attendance policy for further details.

Tolworth Girls' School & Sixth Form does not permit staff to bring their dependants into school on a working day.

Bullying & Harassment

We are committed to ensuring that all colleagues work in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. If bullying does occur, all staff should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Students & Staff

Staff who have been bullied will be supported by:

- offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff of their choice
- providing reassurance that the bullying will be addressed
- offering continuous support
- restoring self-esteem and confidence

- the use of specialist interventions and/or referrals to other agencies e.g. educational psychology, where appropriate
- help and advice on how to remove online material

Staff & Staff

Every member of staff has a responsibility to treat colleagues with dignity and respect.

Procedure for dealing with incidents of bullying staff on staff:

- The incident or behaviour will be investigated by the Head or a senior member of staff. (The school are committed to investigate any incident or behaviour, which is deemed unacceptable by the recipient. It is the perception of the recipient as to whether any incident or behaviour can be viewed as harassment or bullying.)
- Every effort will be made to resolve issues as quickly and informally as practicable.
- The investigation will follow the guidelines as set out in the Disciplinary policy.

Further details can be found in the academy's Anti-Bullying Policy.

Gifts & Hospitality

For many of our employees there will be a limited opportunity to accept gifts and hospitality, but all staff must be aware that it is not acceptable for staff to accept bribes. Therefore, any gift, promotional offer or hospitality, intended either for the employee or Tolworth Girls' School & Sixth Form that exceeds a nominal value of £40 must be declared to the Headteacher and permission must be obtained before accepting. If an employee is ever unsure, then the best course of action is to decline the offer politely.

It is traditional for students and their parents/carers to give gifts as a small token of appreciation or as a thank you to members of staff at certain times throughout the academic year. This Code of Conduct is not designed to stop that practice. Staff may accept gifts from students and their parents/carers provided that they meet this definition. Staff should make the Headteacher aware of any student who is giving the gifts on a regular basis, or any student or parent/carer who expects something in return for a gift, as this would not be acceptable.

Staff should not give gifts to students unless this is part of a recognised practice in line with the academy's Behaviour policy.

Safeguarding

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

Staff will familiarise themselves with our Keeping Children Safe in Education (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.

Staff are required to read the Keeping Children Safe in Education (Safeguarding) policy and follow the guidance outlined in this. All staff are required to undergo safeguarding training a minimum of every three years. All staff are required to sign a declaration confirming that they have read and understood Par1 of the DfE 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' guidance.

Our Keeping Children Safe in Education (Safeguarding) policy and procedures are available here: [\\tgnets\Common Drive\Staff Only\Whole School\Policies\Safeguarding & Child Protection Policies \(Statutory\)\SAFEGUARDING](\\tgnets\Common Drive\Staff Only\Whole School\Policies\Safeguarding & Child Protection Policies (Statutory)\SAFEGUARDING)

Day to day dealings with students

In day-to-day dealings with students, all staff must be careful to avoid putting themselves at risk. The following are examples:

- Staff should work in an open environment where possible. If staff are in a one to one meeting or interview with a student, they should keep the door open where possible or ensure that there is clear visual access. A colleague or line manager should be aware this is taking place
- Staff will observe proper boundaries with students that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to assume they are not reasonably doing so.
- Staff should avoid contact with students outside of school hours if possible.
- If a student is to be searched, a member of staff of the same sex of the student should do this in the presence of a senior member of staff or Leadership Team
- Staff should maintain a professional distance with students and should not allow students to become over familiar. Staff are not allowed to communicate with students on social network sites other than those approved by the school. No 'friending', 'linking', 'joining' or 'following' must take place until a student is over 18 and no longer on roll as a student at Tolworth Girls' School & Sixth Form
- If a student or ex-student attempts to contact a member of staff via social media, this must be ignored/refused and the Headteacher and Child Protection Officer made aware immediately.
- Staff are discouraged from using social media, where this is not possible accounts must be private restricted at all times.
- It is an offence to have a sexual relationship with any student up to the age of 18 and will be seen as a serious breach of conduct leading to dismissal, and even though technically legal beyond 18, such a relationship may well be viewed as a serious breach of professional trust.
- Staff should avoid confrontation with students and always try to diffuse the situation. They should not shout in a rude manner in order to humiliate a student and should be firm and calm. They should be careful to criticise the behaviour rather than the student.
- Private tutoring should not be carried out on the school premises. It is also recommended that staff who privately tutor students should inform the Headteacher of the names of any students who are on roll at the school in case there are any pertinent issues of which they need to be aware.
- Staff who are examiners should not mark papers on the school premises.
- Staff should never photograph or film students using their personal devices or mobile phones. School cameras must be used on all school trips.
- Staff should never give out their personal contact details to students or parents/carers. School mobiles should be used to contact parents/carers during trips and emergency contact numbers should be school mobile numbers only. If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a student may be misinterpreted, or if a staff member is concerned at any point about a fellow staff member and a student, this should be reported in line with the procedures set out in our Keeping Children Safe in Education (Safeguarding) policy.

Positive Touch

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with students. Employees must ensure that they only do so in ways that are appropriate to their professional role and in response to the student's needs at the time.

- This should be of limited duration and appropriate to the age, stage of development, gender and background of the student.
- Employees should always be able to explain why they have made physical contact with a student.
- There may also be occasions where a student is in distress and needs comfort and reassurance, which may include age appropriate physical contact.
- If an employee is in this position then they should consider the way in which they offer comfort, ensuring that it is not open to misinterpretation and is always reported to their line manager.
- Staff may legally, physically intervene with students to prevent them from committing a crime, injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property, engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline.
- Physical force should never be used as a form of punishment.
- Sexual contact, including grooming patterns of behaviour, with students is unlawful and unacceptable in all circumstances.

If, in exceptional circumstances, staff are required to drive a student in their car, they must:

- Ensure that their insurance covers them for business use
- Obtain parental permission in written form if possible
- Take more than one person unless there is an emergency
- Keep conversation professional
- Seat students in the back of the car where possible

Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that anyone working in the academy 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.

An 'investigating officer' (IO) will lead any investigation.

Low-level concerns about members of staff

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a student by a member of staff that does not meet the harm 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 a student
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of students on a personal device
- Engaging in 1-to-1 activities where they can't easily be seen
- Humiliating students

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.

Reporting and responding to low-level concerns is covered in more detail in our Keeping Children Safe in Education (Safeguarding) policy. This is available [here](#):

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

Confidentiality

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

This information should never be:

- 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 Keeping Children Safe in Education (Safeguarding) policy.

Presentation

How staff present themselves, their appearance, body language, actions and use of language sets an example to the students. We have high expectations of staff and for this reason request that staff when in front of the students should not:

- Chew gum
- Use mobile phones for personal use (unless essential) or use their mobile phones in corridors
- Use inappropriate language in either oral or written form
- Eat or drink in the corridors (unless on break duty).

Staff should ensure they wear their TGS lanyard at all times

The lanyard is used to sign in and out when entering/ leaving the building every day. All staff are expected to sign in and out every day without exception.

Tolworth Girls' School & Sixth Form employees are role models to our students and how they present themselves is important. Our expectation is that staff are decently, appropriately and professionally dressed in work at all times.

Clothing

Suitable business attire consists of relaxed yet smart, professional, presentable clothing. Any doubts as to what is appropriate business attire should be raised with your Line Manager.

Items unacceptable include:

- Trainers (except when agreed in advance for medical reasons)
- Beach-style flip-flops
- Sportswear (unless teaching PE or Dance)
- Vest-tops
- Denim
- Leggings may be worn under mid-thigh (or longer) tunic-style tops or blouses.

Jewellery

Jewellery, generally speaking, should be kept to a minimum.

- Jewellery must be in keeping with smart business attire.
- All piercings should be suitable for a professional environment bearing in mind that staff are role models for students.
- Rings and/or a watch may be worn unless safety reasons prevent this from being possible
- Items of personal jewellery worn at work and subsequently lost or damaged will not be replaced or repaired by the Academy. As some items hold immense personal value to those wearing them, it may be advisable that they are not worn at work in order to safeguard their existence.

Hairstyle

Hair should be of a natural colour and style and kept clean, tidy and away from the face. Colours and style should not be extreme.

Facial Hair

A clean-shaven appearance should be maintained, save where an established beard or moustache exists, maintained in a neat, tidy and consistent fashion.

A member of staff choosing to grow a beard or moustache should do so during a holiday period in order to comply with the above.

Tattoos

Tattoos do not have to be covered where they appear on areas of the body, which would not ordinarily be covered by business attire (on forearms, for example).

However, any tattoos that students, parents/carers or colleagues may find offensive must be masked appropriately. Tattoos considered offensive include those of a sexual nature, swear words, and patriotic or racist content.

If in doubt, your line manager or a member of the HR team can advise of acceptable images, words and symbols.

Shoes

Footwear must be kept clean and smart at all times. Footwear to avoid includes:

- Trainers,
- Flip-flops
- Excessively high heels that present a high risk to personal safety on work premises
- Platform shoes that present a high risk to personal safety when on work premises

Training Courses & Meetings

Any member of staff attending a training course or meeting at an external venue continues

to be a representative of our Academy and therefore should wear business attire, unless specifically guided otherwise.

Staff attending a training course(s) should be reminded that they are still “at work” and therefore conduct themselves appropriately at all times as ambassadors of Tolworth Girls' School & Sixth Form.

Whistleblowing

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

- Students’ 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.

Concerns should be made in writing wherever possible. They should include names of those committing wrongdoing, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter.

For our academy’s detailed whistle-blowing process, please refer to our whistle-blowing policy which can be found [here](#):

Links with other policies

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
- Keeping Children Safe In Education (Safeguarding)
- Gifts and hospitality
- Online e-Safety
- Whistle-blowing
- Anti-Bullying

Full Name	
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Job Title	
Faculty/ Department	
Declaration	I confirm that I have read the Tolworth Girls' School & Sixth Form Staff Code of Conduct (Updated November 23). I understand what is expected of me and I agree to abide by this document.

Signed		Date:	
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This page will be kept on your staff file as a record of training and understanding.