

KWS Educational

Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers

Version 7 Sep 2021

Approved by the Trustees

Review 2 years from date of approval.

# Safe Working Practices for the Protection of Students and Staff at KWS

## **1. Overview**

KWS seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment, which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for its students. This document should clarify what is expected in terms of professional behaviour; it gives clear advice about what constitutes illegal actions and what behaviours should be avoided.

If a member of staff does not follow this code of conduct it may lead to disciplinary procedures and/or criminal investigation and potential prosecution.

There may be times when professional judgements are made in situations not covered in this document, or which directly contravene the guidance given by their employer. It is expected that in these circumstances staff will always advise their senior colleagues of their justification for any such action taken or proposed.

## **2. Core Principles**

The welfare of students is paramount.

- Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviours and should avoid any conduct which would lead any responsible person to question their motivation and intentions.
- Staff should work and be seen to be working in a way that is transparent and open.
- Staff should be aware of the impact of their own actions and choices, both direct and indirect
- Staff should discuss and take prompt advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead, their line manager or other senior staff over any incidents, which may give rise to concern.
- Records of such incidents should be made and records of further actions made.
- All staff should know the name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Susannah King)
- All staff should be familiar with safeguarding arrangements and understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect ALL students.
- Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal and or disciplinary action being taken and being reported to LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer)

## **3. Introduction**

This guidance has been produced in order to establish the safest possible environments. The aim is to ensure staff and students are safeguarded whilst reducing the risk of staff being falsely accused of unprofessional conduct. This applies to all staff and volunteers at KWS.

## **4. Duty of Care**

All staff have a duty of care this is a moral or legal obligation to ensure the safety or well-being of others. Within the school context all staff have a duty to protect students from harm and discrimination, manage risk and resources.

KWS has a duty of care towards its staff to provide a safe environment as guidance regarding safe working practice.

**Staff should-**

- Understand their role and responsibilities and be aware that sanctions can be imposed where these are breached.
- Always act in the students' best interests.
- Always avoid any conduct which would lead anyone to question their motivation and intentions.
- Accept responsibility for their own actions and behaviours.

**KWS should-**

- Ensure safeguarding procedures are in place.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the expectations, and possible consequences if not met.
- Have systems in place for staff to raise concerns.

## **5. Exercise of Professional Judgement**

This guidance does not provide a complete checklist of all eventualities however does highlight behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate and inadvisable. There will be occasions where you will have to exercise professional judgements and take actions in order to secure the best interests of the student.

**Staff Should-**

- Discuss circumstances that informed their action.
- Discuss any misleading accidents or threats with the DSL
- Always record these discussions.

## **6. Positions of Trust**

All adults working in an education setting are in apposition of trust in relation to the students. Relationships between staff and students are not equal which can lead to exploitation and harm to students; as staff have the unequal share of power it is their responsibility to not use this for gratification. All staff are to maintain professionalism and avoid behaviour that can be misinterpreted.

**Staff should Not-**

- Use their position to gain access to information for their own advantage, or that of a student.
- Use their position to gain access to information to the detriment of a student.
- Use power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine students.
- Use status to promote a relationship with a student, including that of a sexual nature.
- Attempt to initiate a relationship with a current or ex-pupil, including that of a sexual nature.

## **7. Confidentiality**

Members of staff may have access to confidential information about students in order to undertake their responsibilities; this may include highly sensitive and private information. This information must never be used for their own advantage or to intimidate, humiliate or embarrass a student. Confidential information about

students must not be casually used in conversation and as much as possible when discussing, or writing about a confidential issue then the information should be anonymised. Staff also need to be aware in the case of listening to students that they must not promise confidentiality. In these cases the conversation must be discussed with the DSL and recorded as soon as is possible.

**Staff must-**

- Be expected to treat all information they receive about students in a discrete and confidential manner.
- Only discuss confidential information about a student or their family with the appropriate member of staff, and to necessary purposes.
- Take into account that KWS is registered with the Data Protection Commissioner.
- Seek advice when they are in doubt regarding information sharing.
- Use anonymity where possible when discussing or recording.
- Adopt similar principles in interactions between staff members.

## **8. Behaviour**

All staff have a responsibility to maintain and adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the respect of their peers, students and the public. An individual's behaviour both in and out of the workplace should not compromise their position. This includes modelling expected behaviours from students and as such the use of personal mobile devices should be limited to non-contact times with students.

**Staff must-**

- Refer to the behaviour management policy.
- Be aware that when working with vulnerable students that their actions have an impact upon them.
- Ensure that all conversations held are respectful of all students and staff, and model kindness and tolerance.
- Be aware of the proximity of students when discussing issues with other staff members, delaying sensitive conversations until the end of the school day
- Work in a pro-social manner and lead by example.
- Only use their own mobile devices when on a personal break or at the end of the school day, not during lunch and breaktimes where they are on "duty".

**Staff must not-**

- Behave in a way which would lead anyone to question their suitability to act as a role model.
- Smoke or drink alcohol either with students or whilst in charge of students, this also includes attending work under the influence of alcohol, drugs or smoking.
- Make inappropriate remarks to a student or about a student either verbally or in written form.
- Discuss sexual relationships or sexuality of a student in inappropriate settings.
- Discuss their own sexual relationships.
- Make or encourage to make unprofessional and personal comments in any form.
- Share any personal information about themselves or others, for example addresses, where they shop, their political views...

## 9. Dress and Appearance

Staff should consider the manner of dress and appearance appropriate for their role. We want our students to be smart in appearance and staff need to adopt this principal at all times. Staff need to be dressed decently, safely and appropriately for their job role, this includes the correct PPE in workshop areas.

**Staff must** ensure that their appearance, belongings and clothing-

- Adhere to the safeguarding policy
- Promote positive and professional image.
- Is appropriate to their role.
- Is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually inappropriate.
- Does not contain slogans or excessive branding.
- Does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding.
- Is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans or pictures.
- Allows their ID card to be visible at all times in school (unless it is not safe or practical).
- In vocational areas, adheres to all health and safety procedures and the correct PPE clothing is worn for the task – toe protective footwear must be worn in the motor vehicle and workshop areas.

## 10. Gifts

Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gifts that might be construed as a bribe, by others or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. There are occasions when students or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff, such as Christmas and end of year; this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis. Members of staff may not give personal gifts to students, unless this is in the form of small prizes for tasks.

**Staff should-**

- Ensure that gifts given and received are declared to senior staff.
- Only give gifts to students as a reward.

## 11. Home Addresses

No student should be in or invited into the home of any adult who works with them. Information should also not be shared by staff, which indicates to the students where they may live, the area they frequent.

**Staff should-**

- Refer to safeguarding policy
- Be mindful about maintaining privacy and not place themselves in vulnerable situations.
- Be mindful that some students live near the vicinity of the school and this may mean that they are also located near staff.
- Maintain professional boundaries.
- Report to management if a student does arrive at your home address.

## **12. Communication with students**

Communication between students and adults by whatever method should take place within clear boundaries and on school systems; this includes any communication that uses technology. Staff should be aware that their interactions may be misinterpreted by students. Staff should also be aware that the giving out of personal details may not only be construed as “grooming” but is also a breach of confidentiality and professional judgement, and could lead to disciplinary action and/or criminal proceedings. There have been a number of cases highlighted in the press recently. The same principles apply to ex-students under the age of 18, and members of their family however communication with ex-students over the age of 18 members of their family is at the staffs’ discretion. However, it must be stated that these students may still have contact with current students, and so could bring greater risk and exposure for the member of staff and the school – again professional judgement needs to be considered.

### **Staff should-**

- Refer to safeguarding policy.
- Not give out personal contact details such as mobile number, address, or personal e mail address to any student or their family.
- Communicate with students in an appropriate and professional manner.
- Only make contact with a student for professional reasons, and during school hours.
- Not use internet or web-based channels to send or receive messages to and from students.
- Not take images of students on their personal phones, in the case of outings, photos may be taken on the school digital camera and downloaded once back in school.
- Be cautious in their contact with ex-pupils and still maintain professional boundaries.
- Not use their personal telephones during the school day unless done privately during break and lunch times, where there is a non-contact break.
- Be cautious of the information they share with students and how this can be used or construed.

## **13. Social Contact**

Staff should not establish or seek to establish contact with students or their families, for any reason. If this occurs coincidentally the staff member should exercise professional judgement in making a response and discuss with a senior. Again, staff need to be mindful that social contact in some circumstances can be misconstrued as grooming. In addition, in their own social contact, staff should be respectful of confidentiality and not refer to students or staff in any settings outside of school, that may cause concern.

### **Staff should-**

- Refer to safeguarding policy.
- Not have secret contact with students in any form.
- Consider the appropriateness of social contact outside of school.
- Advise of any regular social contact you may have with a parent or student.
- Report and record any situation you feel may compromise your own professional position
- Keep all ‘school talk’ to professional environments.

## **14. Social Networking Sites & Mobile Devices**

Mobile phones should not be seen during contact time with the students. Staff personal phones contain their own and their friends and families’ personal data which should not be visible or accessible to students. Mobile devices should not be used as a form of communication between staff during the school day unless it is an

utmost emergency, in which case a phone call could be made to the office. In addition, personal mobile phones and devices should not be used to fulfil any administrative and communicative requirements linked to school – this includes accessing and using SchoolPod and accessing and using work emails. In order to maintain safe working practice and to ensure confidentiality, all electronic school communication is to be done during school working hours and on school devices. Each member of staff has time in their day to fulfil their responsibilities with regard to adding information onto SchoolPod and reading, sending and responding to emails. These tasks are linked to students and are part of the working day.

The majority of the staff use social networking for their own personal use such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Whats App, Kik, You Tube to make a few but by no means an exhaustive list. However, KWS requires that profiles are “locked down” as private so that students or parents do not have access to private data and images. Staff must also carefully consider viewing via “friends of friends” as this can sometimes result in students and parents viewing profile by proxy. Staff should also be aware that they leave themselves open to a charge of professional misconduct if either:

- (i) Images of a member of staff (past or present) in a compromising situation are made available on a public profile by anyone.
- (ii) Images of students (past or present) are made available on a staff member’s profile.
- (iii) Comments on a staff member’s social media page name a student (past or present) or other staff members (past or present) in reference to KWS
- (iv) Comments on a staff member’s social media page are deemed as unprofessional, for example they promote a negative view of KWS or its staff or students (past or present)

If it is known that students have gained access to the profile of a member of staff then they must report this to the DSL and evidence it immediately (screen shot if possible).

#### **Staff must-**

- Refer to the safeguarding policy
- Keep their mobile phones away from student view during student contact time (9am-2pm)
- Not use personal mobile phones in school unless it is an emergency.
- Lock down all profiles to ensure data and images are not freely available.
- Not allow current or recent students or their families access to their profiles.
- Not accept friend requests from present or recent students or parents.
- Be aware of students and their parents viewing by proxy.
- Be aware that images of others must be protected and treated as if their own.
- Not seek out students.
- Ensure that all comments and images linked to KWS are positive and do not name any past or present students, their families or staff members.
- Not allow students access to their personal mobile device.
- Actively block students and their families once discussed with the DSL, where there is an issue.

## **15. Physical Contact**

There are some circumstances where it is entirely appropriate for staff to have physical contact with a student, however it is crucial to do so in a way that is appropriate to their professional role. A “no touch” approach is impractical and, in some circumstances, inappropriate. When physical contact is made this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate. This should also be recorded in the daily diary of that student and or in the ABC. Physical contact should never be secretive, for the gratification of

the adult or represent a misuse of power. Physical contact that occurs regularly is likely to raise questions unless this is formally agreed upon as part of a plan; thinking more specifically students with SEND. However, this must be subject to review and agreed upon.

**Staff should-**

- Refer to the Safeguarding policy and Physical intervention policy.
- Be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by students, an observer or anyone to whom has the situation described to them.
- Record the event on an incident report, safeguarding slip on SchoolPod and/or hard bound physical contact book where appropriate.
- Never touch a student in a way that may be considered indecent.
- Always be prepared to explain actions and accept all physical contact is open to scrutiny.

## **16. Behaviour Management**

All students have the right to be treated with respect and dignity. Staff should not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a student. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards students is not acceptable in any situation. In all cases, admonishment should be at an appropriate time and in an appropriate environment, and certainly not carried out publicly.

**Staff should-**

- Refer to the Behaviour Management policy for fuller details.
- Not use force as a form of punishment.
- Try to de-escalate situations before they escalate.
- Not seek to embarrass students when dealing with behaviours that need to be addressed.

## **17. Physical Intervention**

At KWS we work to avoid physical intervention as a behaviour management tool. However, we accept that in some circumstances it may be a necessary to use de-escalation strategies, for example in situations where a student is committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property, engaging in behaviour that is prejudicial or to help maintain good order and discipline. Staff need to have high regard for the health and safety of themselves and others around them. Under no circumstance should physical intervention be used as a form of punishment; this unwarranted force is likely to constitute a criminal offence. In situations where de-escalation or physical contact is deemed necessary then the incident needs to be recorded appropriately.

**Staff must-**

- Refer to the physical intervention policy.
- Always seek to defuse a situation.
- Use a gradual and graded approach using minimum force for the shortest period of time.
- Record in the physical intervention log.

## **18. Sexual Contact with Students**

Any sexual contact by a member of staff with or towards a student is both inappropriate and illegal. Students and staff are protected by the same laws in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour. Students are protected by additional legal provisions regardless whether the contact is consensual or not. This sexual contact includes not just physical acts but also conversations and comments, and encouraging the student to watch or engage in pornographic material. Staff should also be aware that there are occasions where an adult embarks on a course of behaviour known as “grooming” and that giving special attention to a particular student might be construed as part of a grooming process.

### **Staff should-**

- Not pursue sexual relationships with children and young people in or out of school.
- Avoid any form of communication which could be interpreted as sexually provocative or suggestive.
- Indicate clearly by their response that any activity suggested by a student is unacceptable and will not be engaged in.
- Report all concerns to the DSL.

## **19. One to One Situations**

Staff working 1:1 with students are more vulnerable to allegations. Staff should recognise this possibility and plan and conduct activities accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure the safety of the staff and students. Meetings with students outside of school are not permitted unless as part of a multi-disciplinary process and once authorised by the Head and/or DSL.

### **Staff should-**

- Refer to health and safety policy.
- Ensure that the risk assessment has been fully read and kept up to date.
- Avoid meetings in quieter areas of the school.
- Inform staff of the meeting and the whereabouts prior to its commencement.
- Ensure that there is visual access either through CCTV, windows or open doors.
- Report any distress during the meeting to the DSL immediately.

## **20. Transportation of Children**

In certain situations, staff may agree to transport a student. Wherever possible it is advisable that transport is undertaken in a school minibus or school vehicles, ideally with another member of staff to act as an escort. The driver must also have the correct insurance- business, held on file. Where staff have been cleared to use their own vehicles, they must ensure that their vehicle has business insurance and current MOT and tax. At no time should the vehicle’s maximum capacity be exceeded and seat belts must be for every journey. In addition, a member of SLT should be informed when a staff member is taking a student out of school as a behaviour management strategy.

### **Staff should-**

- Plan and agree in advance with all parties concerned, including parents.
- Refer to 1:1 situations.
- Refer to mileage and expenses policy.
- Hold the correct insurance, tax and MOT.

- Ensure that their behaviour is in keeping with their position
- Ensure that SLT are aware of the journey.
- Refer to the transport policy for acceptable behaviour in taxis and mini-buses.

## **21. Curriculum**

Many areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter of a sensitive nature. Curriculum can sometimes lead to unplanned discussion surrounding such subjects. Responding to students' questions requires careful judgements and need the subject to be revisited once you have sought advice from senior. This also includes taking into account the Sex and Relationships Policy and the Drugs Education Policy

### **Staff should-**

- Refer to the Teaching and Learning section of the Behaviour Management Policy.
- Refer to the Curriculum Policy.
- Have clear lesson plans and stick to their contents as best they can.
- Refer to the policy on sex and relationships and drugs education.
- The PSHCE lead should ensure that there is sufficient content within their curriculum as well as offer outside visitors from specialist service.
- Not enter into inappropriate or offensive discussions, not offer non-partisan views.
- Ensure that in all discussions, staff personal opinions and thought are not shared, this can be seen as trying to bias a student's views, and would be inappropriate.

## **22. Photography**

Some of the school activities require the use of photo taking either for the activity or as a record of evidence for the school. Staff need to be aware of the potential for misuse of such material and should take into careful consideration how these activities are undertaken. All photos should be taken on one of the school cameras. Using images for KWS publicity requires the written consent of the parents. Images of students considered LAC/PLAC should not be used in this way.

### **Staff should-**

- Only take photos on the school camera
- Be clear about the purpose of the activity and what will happen to the photographs.
- Be able to justify images of students that may be in their possession.
- Not take photographs in 1:1 situations
- Ensure that any photos taken are given to the admin department to be downloaded onto the network and removed from the camera as soon as possible, but within 48 hours.

## **23. Internet Usage**

School IT equipment is not to be used to access inappropriate or indecent images or content, or for the dissemination of such material, such activities are illegal and will result in criminal proceedings and dismissal. IT equipment is not to be used for personal usage such as checking of personal email accounts, Facebook and other social media and shopping.

## **24. Whistleblowing.**

This is the mechanism by which staff can voice concerns about school practices, in good faith, without the fear of repercussions.

### **Staff should-**

- Refer to the whistle blowing policy.
- Report all practices that they feel raise concerns

## **25. Sharing concerns and Recording Incidents**

All staff should be aware of the KWS Safeguarding Policy, including procedures for dealing with allegations against staff. In the event of an incident occurring the information should be clearly and promptly recorded and reported to the DSL. Please follow the guides in the KWS stationary folder found on the IT drive. Other recording devices such as accident books, sanction books, registers and physical intervention logs are to be completed where needed and kept in the administration office. Where an incident has occurred between a student and a member of staff then there should be a period of de-brief to discuss any difficulties that may affect that relationship and ensure appropriate support is provided or action can be taken.

### **Staff should-**

- Refer to the safeguarding, complaints and whistle blowing policy.
- Be familiar with the reporting systems and stationery of KWS.
- Take responsibility to record any incident in the correct manner.

This policy will be reviewed at least every 2 years.