



HILBRE HIGH SCHOOL HUMANITIES COLLEGE

STAFF BEHAVIOUR/ CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out clear guidance on the standards of behaviour expected from all staff at Hilbre High School Humanities College. The principles underlying the guidance aim to encourage staff to achieve the highest possible standards of conduct and minimise the risk of inappropriate conduct occurring.
- 1.2 All Hilbre Staff are in a unique position of trust and influence as role models for students. Therefore, staff must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all students within the school.
- 1.3 All Hilbre Staff also have an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, both inside and outside working hours and work setting.
- 1.4 This policy applies to all staff and volunteers in the school regardless of their position, role or responsibility. References to 'staff' throughout the policy relate to all of the following groups:
 - 1.4.1 All members of staff, including teaching and support staff.
 - 1.4.2 Volunteers, including Trustees.
 - 1.4.3 Casual workers.
 - 1.4.4 Temporary and supply staff, either from agencies or engaged directly.
 - 1.4.5 Student placements, including those undertaking initial teacher training and apprentices.
- 1.5 Hilbre High School requires that all staff have read and agree to comply with this policy.
- 1.6 Breach or failure to observe this policy may result in action being taken under the school disciplinary procedures including, but not limited to, dismissal.
- 1.7 This Code of Conduct is not an exhaustive list of acceptable and unacceptable standards of behaviour. In situations where guidance does not exist in this policy, staff are expected to exercise their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the students and the school.

2. Professional behaviour and conduct

- 2.1 Staff are expected to demonstrate the highest possible standards of personal and professional conduct and behaviour and consistently act with honesty and integrity. Hilbre High School expects staff to treat each other, students, parents/carers and the wider community with dignity and respect at all times.
- 2.2 Staff must act in accordance with their duty of care to students and ensure that the safety and welfare of students are accorded the highest priority.
- 2.3 Staff should show fairness in their treatment of children and avoid behaviours such as embarrassing or humiliating students, making jokes at the expense of students, discriminating against or favouring students and sarcasm.
- 2.4 Staff must have regard for the ethos and values of the school and must not do or say anything which may bring the school or Board of Trustees into disrepute. Accordingly, staff are required to ensure that all activities, including curriculum provision, all forms of school supervision, interaction and out of school provision conform to the values and ethos of the school, promote tolerance, uphold and promote British values (British values

include democracy, the rule of law, mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs) and reject all forms of discrimination and extremism.

2.5 Care should be taken by staff to avoid any conflict of interest between activities undertaken outside school and responsibilities within school. Staff should act in accordance with the school's policies and procedures at all times.

2.6 Bullying and harassment

In regards to bullying and harassment (including sexual harassment) staff should familiarise themselves and follow the:

- Equal Opportunities policy;
- Bullying and Harassment policy;
- Sexual Harassment policy.

The main points of reference are as follows:

Hilbre prides itself on being an equal opportunities employer. All employees have the right to work in an environment free of intimidation. Harassment and bullying (including sexual harassment) can reduce the effectiveness of the school by creating a threatening environment and increasing sickness absence and employee turnover. Any employee found to be harassing (including sexual harassment) a colleague will be disciplined in accordance with the Disciplinary procedure. Harassment can amount to gross misconduct and could lead to summary dismissal (ie. dismissal without notice.)

2.7 In regards to the use of mobile phones and other similar devices, staff should adhere to guidance given in the Social Media/Mobile Devices policy. The main points for reference are as follows:

- 2.7.1 Personal mobile devices should never be used during lesson times or in the presence of the student body. When on a school trip, staff should use their professional judgement when it is appropriate to use such devices.
- 2.7.2 Staff should never share their personal phone numbers with students. The only numbers that may be given out are the school safeguarding number and the school mobile, which is sometimes taken out by staff on trips.
- 2.7.3 Staff should never use their personal devices to take photographs of students (unless there are extenuating circumstances).
- 2.7.4 Staff should never upload photographs of students from their own personal social media accounts. If a photograph does mistakenly appear on a personal social media account, it must be deleted immediately.
- 2.7.5 Staff must take responsibility for the safeguarding of their own property (including mobile phones) whilst on the school site.

3. Dress and appearance

3.1 Hilbre High School recognises that dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, all staff must dress in a manner that is appropriate to a professional role and that promotes a professional image.

3.2 Staff should dress in a manner that is not offensive, revealing or sexually provocative and in a manner that is absent from political or contentious slogans.

3.3 Staff should dress safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake.

- 3.4 Staff should not wear denim of any colour when on the school site.
- 3.5 Tattoos and body art should be covered while staff are in school. Discreet earrings are acceptable but all other body piercings should be removed whilst on school premises.
- 4. Smoking, alcohol and other substances**
- 4.1 Hilbre High School is a non-smoking site. Staff must not smoke on school premises or outside school gates. Any member of staff wishing to smoke must leave the school grounds.
- 4.2 Staff must not smoke whilst working with or supervising students' offsite.
- 4.3 Staff must not consume or be under the influence of alcohol, illicit drugs or other illegal substances on or near school premises.
- 5. Relationships with students**
- 5.1 Staff must maintain professional boundaries with students appropriate to their position and must always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably. Staff should act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to question their actions or intent. Staff should think carefully about their conduct so that misinterpretations are minimised.
- 5.2 Staff must not establish or seek to establish social contact with students for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. If a young person seeks to establish social contact, you should exercise your professional judgement in making a response and be aware that such social contact could be misconstrued.
- 5.3 Staff must not develop personal or sexual relationships with students and should not engage in any sexual activity with a student. Sexual activity does not just involve physical contact including penetrative and non-penetrative acts.
- 5.4 Working Together to Safeguard Children defines sexual abuse as ... 'forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).
- 5.5 Staff should be mindful of Section 16 of The Sexual Offences Act 2003¹.
- 5.6 Staff must not make sexual remarks to a student, discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of, students or discuss student's sexual relationships in an inappropriate setting or context.

¹ Section 16 of The Sexual Offences Act 2003 provides that it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over (e.g. teacher, youth worker) to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual. A situation where a person is in a position of trust could arise where the child is in full-time education and the person looks after children under 18 in the same establishment as the child, even if s/he does not teach the child.

5.7 Contact with students should be through Hilbre High School's authorised mechanisms. All staff at Hilbre should use office landline phones when contacting parent/carers. Personal phone numbers, e-mail addresses or communication routes via all social media platforms should not be used and staff should not share their home address with students. If contacted via an inappropriate route, the member of staff must inform the Headteacher immediately.

5.8 Hilbre High School staff must not accept friend invitations or become friends with any student of Hilbre High School on any social media platform. Staff should also refrain from following the Twitter or other similar social media accounts of students. Staff must read the school's Social Media/Mobile Devices policy carefully and follow all advice and guidance contained within it.

6. Infatuations

6.1 It is not unusual for students or, sometimes their parents/carers, to develop infatuations towards members of staff. All such situations must be responded to sensitively to maintain the dignity of those concerned.

6.2 Staff should also be aware that such circumstances carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against staff. Any indications of an infatuation towards yourself or another member of staff must be reported to your line manager.

7. Gifts/hospitality

7.1 Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift/offer of hospitality that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. However, there may be occasions where students or parents/carers wish to give a small token of appreciation to staff, for example at religious festivities or at the end of the year.

7.2 It is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or to suggest to students that gifts are appropriate or desired. Money must not be accepted as a gift. If you are unsure whether to accept a gift you should consult your line manager.

7.3 Staff must not accept significant gifts [a sum to be assessed by the school] or hospitality from students, parents/carers, actual or potential contractors or outside suppliers. All such gifts/offers of hospitality should be reported to your line manager and recorded.

7.4 Personal gifts must not be given by staff to students and any reward to students should not be based on favouritism.

8. Physical contact with students

8.1 There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with students, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. A 'no touch' approach is impractical for most staff and may in some circumstances be inappropriate. When physical contact is made with students it should be in response to their needs at that time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.

8.2 Where feasible, staff should seek the child's permission before initiating contact. Staff should listen, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and, so far as is

possible, use a level of contact which is acceptable to the child for the minimum time necessary.

- 8.3 It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. Staff should, therefore, use their professional judgement at all times.
- 8.4 Staff should be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described. Staff should never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent. Always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny. Staff must not engage in rough play, tickling or fun fights with students.
- 8.5 Extra caution should be exercised where a child is known to have suffered previous abuse or neglect. Such experiences may sometimes make a child exceptionally needy and demanding of physical contact and staff should respond sensitively by deterring the child through helping them to understand the importance of personal boundaries.
- 8.6 Staff supervising PE and games or providing musical tuition should demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument on another member of staff, if possible. However, they may be required to initiate physical contact with students to support a child to perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument or to assist them with an exercise. Contact under these circumstances should be done with the student's agreement, for the minimum time necessary and in an open environment. Staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the student.
- 8.7 Physical contact must never be secretive, for the gratification of the adult or represent a misuse of authority.
- 8.8 If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported to your line manager, recorded and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the child's file.
- 8.9 Staff should refer to Hilbre High School's Intimate Care policy (this is active only when we have students who qualify for intimate care).

9. Child in distress

- 9.1 There may be occasions when a student is in distress and in need of comfort as a reassurance. This may include age appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.
- 9.2 Such incidents should always be recorded on "My Concern" Safeguarding software and shared with your line manager. If you have a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance you should seek further advice from the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs), Dave White or Jane Whisker.

10. Showers and changing

- 10.1 Students are entitled to respect and privacy whilst they are changing or showering after PE/games or swimming. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of

supervision in order to safeguard young people, meet health and safety requirements and to ensure that bullying does not take place. The supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the students and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

- 10.2 Staff should be vigilant about their own behaviour and announce their intention of entering a changing room. Staff must not change or shower in the same place as children.

11. One to one situations

- 11.1 Staff working individually with students should be aware of the potential vulnerability of students and staff in such situations. Staff should manage these situations with regard to the safety of the student and to themselves.
- 11.2 Individual work with students should not be undertaken in isolated areas or rooms where there is no external viewing panel. Where it is necessary to close doors for reasons of confidentiality, a colleague should be made aware of this and asked to remain vigilant.

12. Transporting students

- 12.1 In certain circumstances it may be appropriate for staff to transport student's offsite, for example sports fixtures, swimming lessons or other out of school activities. A designated member of staff should be appointed to plan and provide oversight of all transport arrangements and to respond to any difficulties that may arise. Andy Evans or Dave White should be contacted for guidance.
- 12.2 Staff should ensure that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. Staff should ensure that the driver has the appropriate license for the vehicle, that the vehicle is roadworthy, has a valid MOT certificate and is appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.
- 12.3 Staff should ensure that the driver is not distracted while the vehicle is in motion for any reason other than an emergency and should also ensure all passengers are wearing correctly fastened seatbelts. Staff should never transport students while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- 12.4 Prior to transporting student's offsite consent must be obtained from the students' parent/carer; staff should be aware that the safety and welfare of the students is their responsibility until this is safely passed back to their parent/carer.
- 12.5 No member of staff should transport students in their own personal vehicle unless accompanied by another member of staff. Appropriate fully comprehensive insurance cover is essential.

13. E-safety (all staff must read Hilbre High School Social Media/Mobile Devices policy and GDPR guidance)

- 13.1 Staff should follow Hilbre High School's Social Media/Mobile Devices policy for staff and the Rules for Responsible ICT Use guidelines at all times.
- 13.2 Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school or the school community into disrepute. Staff should adopt the highest security settings on any personal profiles they have. Refer to Section 6.13 of the Social Media/Mobile Devices policy.

- 13.3 Staff should remain mindful of their digital footprint and exercise caution in all their use of social media or any other web based presence they have. This includes written content, videos or photographs and views expressed either directly or by ‘liking’ certain pages or posts or following certain individuals or groups. Staff should exercise care when using dating websites where staff could encounter students.
- 13.4 Staff must not make contact with students, must not accept or initiate friend requests nor follow student’s accounts on any social media platform. Staff must not communicate with students via social media, websites, instant messenger accounts or text message. The only acceptable method of contact is via the use of school e-mail accounts or telephone equipment.
- 13.5 Staff should not make contact with students’ family members, accept or initiate friend requests or follow students’ family member’s account on any social media platform.
- 13.6 However, Hilbre High School acknowledges that staff who are also parents/carers may wish to make contact with other parents/carers who are friends, over social media. Staff must exercise caution and professional judgement in these circumstances and should not have any contact with students’ family members via social media if that contact is likely to constitute a conflict of interest or call into question their objectivity.
- 13.7 Mobile phones and personally-owned devices may not be used during lessons or formal school time. They should be switched off (or silent) at all times. The Bluetooth functionality of a mobile phone should be switched off at all times and may not be used to send images or files to other mobile phones. Mobile phones and personal devices are not permitted to be used in certain areas within the school site, such as changing rooms and toilets.
- 13.8 Mobile phones and personally-owned mobile devices brought in to school are the responsibility of the device owner. Hilbre High School accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of personally-owned mobile phones or mobile devices.
- 14. Photography, video and images of children**
- 14.1 Many school activities involve recording images as part of the curriculum, extra school activities, publicity or to celebrate an achievement. In accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018, the image of a student is personal data. Therefore, it is a requirement under the Regulation for consent to be obtained from the parent/carer of a student for any images made. It is also important to take into account the wishes of the student, remembering that some students do not wish to have their photograph taken or be filmed.
- 14.2 Using images for publicity purposes will require the age-appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their parent/carer. Images should not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without their consent. Staff should also be clear about the purpose of the activity and what will happen to the photographs/images/video footage when the lesson or activity is concluded.
- 14.3 Photographs/stills or video footage of students should only be taken using school equipment unless authorised by the Senior Leadership Team using strict safeguarding protocol. Outside agencies using their own equipment will be thoroughly vetted by the DSL. Enhanced DBS will be required.

14.4 Staff should remain aware of the potential for images of students to be misused to create indecent images of children and/or for grooming purposes. Therefore, careful consideration should be given to how activities which are being filmed or photographed are organised and undertaken. Particular care should be given when filming or photographing young or vulnerable students who may be unable to question how or why the activities are taking place. Staff should also be mindful that students who have been abused through the use of video or photography may feel threatened by its use in a teaching environment.

15. Confidentiality

15.1 Members of staff may have access to confidential information about students, their parents/carers or their siblings. Staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the student on a need to know basis.

15.2 Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a student or his/her family for their own, or others' advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other organisations). Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the student.

15.3 All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a student is bullied by another student, this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate school procedure. It must not be discussed outside the school, including with the student's parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the school except by a senior member of staff with the appropriate authority to deal with the matter.

15.4 Staff have a statutory obligation to share with Hilbre High School's DSL any information which gives rise to concern about the welfare or safety of a student or that might suggest a student is in need or at risk of significant harm. Staff should pass on information without delay in accordance with Hilbre High School's Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and this should be recorded on "My Concern". Staff must never promise a student that they will not act on or pass on any information that they are told by the student.

15.5 Staff should refer to the Department of Education's document information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for further guidance on information sharing. If you are in any doubt about whether to share you should seek guidance from a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

15.6 Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the Senior Leadership Team and only approved staff and Trustees should communicate to the media about the school.

16. Whistleblowing

16.1 Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, without fear of repercussion.

16.2 All school staff have a duty to report any behaviour by a colleague which raises concern. Staff should refer to Hilbre High School's Whistleblowing policy for further guidance. This is particularly important where the welfare of students may be at risk.

17. Compliance

- 17.1 All staff must read the documentation and sign a compliance form, when appropriate, to confirm they have read, understood and agree to comply with this policy.