



Hatfield Wick Education Staff Code of Conduct Policy

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Policy Statement

Hatfield Wick Education is committed to creating a safe, professional, and respectful learning environment for all students and staff. This Staff Code of Conduct outlines the expected behaviours and standards for all staff members working within Hatfield Wick Education, ensuring compliance with statutory guidance, safeguarding protocols, and professional standards. All staff are expected to uphold the principles outlined in the *Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with Children and Young People in Education Settings (2015)*, the *Teachers' Standards (2012)*, and *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2024*. This policy is guided by our CARES values: Compassion, Aspiration, Respect, Equality, and Safety.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to:

- Ensure that all staff maintain high standards of professional behaviour and integrity.
- Protect students by creating a safe and supportive environment, free from harm and safeguarding risks.
- Promote positive relationships and respectful interactions between staff, students, and colleagues.
- Provide clear guidance on acceptable behaviour, including online conduct and use of social media.
- Uphold the reputation and values of Hatfield Wick Education.

2. Legal and Statutory Framework

This policy is guided by the following statutory frameworks:

- *Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with Children and Young People in Education Settings (2015)*: Provides advice on professional conduct and safe working practices for those working with children and young people.

- *Teachers' Standards 2012*: Defines the expectations for teachers in terms of professional behaviour, teaching standards, and the maintenance of public trust.
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2024*: Outlines safeguarding responsibilities and procedures for all staff working with children and young people in educational settings.
- Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- SEND Code of Practice (0–25 years).

3. CARES Values in Staff Conduct

3.1 Compassion

Staff are expected to treat all students, parents, and colleagues with empathy and understanding, recognising the diverse needs of individuals. Demonstrating compassion means providing support in a non-judgmental way and being sensitive to the personal challenges faced by students and staff.

3.2 Autonomy

We encourage staff to act with professional autonomy, making responsible decisions and exercising their judgment in the best interest of the students. They are empowered to uphold the highest standards while being held accountable for their conduct.

3.3 Respect

Respect for all individuals is at the core of Hatfield Wick's ethos. Staff must treat students, colleagues, and external stakeholders with courtesy and professionalism at all times. This includes maintaining appropriate boundaries and fostering positive, respectful relationships based on trust and integrity.

3.4 Empathy

Staff must show empathy by understanding and being considerate of the feelings and perspectives of others, especially when dealing with sensitive issues or difficult situations. Empathy enables staff to respond thoughtfully to the needs of students and colleagues, fostering a culture of trust and emotional support within Hatfield Wick Education.

3.5 Support

Hatfield Wick Education promotes a culture of mutual support, where staff help one another to achieve personal and professional growth. Staff are expected to provide support to students by offering guidance, encouragement, and practical help. Additionally, colleagues should be willing to assist each other and collaborate to enhance the educational experience for all. This culture of support extends to

ensuring that staff are aware of and adhere to safeguarding practices, supporting the safety and well-being of all students.

3.5 Safety

Staff are responsible for ensuring the physical and emotional safety of students in their care. This includes following safeguarding protocols, identifying and reporting concerns promptly, and maintaining professional boundaries both in person and online.

4. Professional Conduct Expectations

All staff are required to follow the highest standards of professional behaviour, as outlined below:

4.1 Safeguarding Responsibilities

- All staff have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of students, following the procedures set out in *KCSIE 2024*.
- Staff must complete all safeguarding training provided by Hatfield Wick Education and remain vigilant in identifying and reporting concerns.
- Staff must report any safeguarding concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or in their absence, a deputy DSL.
- Staff must report low-level concerns about the behaviour of colleagues in accordance with the Low-Level Concerns procedure.
- Physical contact with students must only occur when necessary and in ways that are appropriate, respectful, and in line with safeguarding guidance.

4.2 Appropriate Relationships

- Staff must maintain professional boundaries with students at all times. Friendships, romantic or sexual relationships between staff and students, regardless of age, are strictly prohibited and may lead to disciplinary action.
- Staff should avoid any behaviour that could be interpreted as grooming or inappropriate. This includes favouring specific students or engaging in overly familiar interactions.
- Communication with students must be professional and related to educational purposes only. Personal communication (e.g., social media, texting) outside of school should be avoided unless required for professional duties and approved by leadership.

4.3 Conduct Outside Work

- The behaviour of staff outside of work can affect the reputation of Hatfield Wick Education. Staff must avoid conduct, in person or online, that could negatively impact the organization or their ability to fulfil their professional duties.
- Criminal activities, involvement in inappropriate behaviour, or actions that breach trust (e.g., misuse of social media) must be reported to leadership immediately and may result in disciplinary action.

4.4 Confidentiality and Data Protection

- Staff must respect the confidentiality of students, families, and colleagues. Any personal or sensitive information shared by students must be handled in accordance with data protection laws and school policies, including the *Data Protection Act 2018* and *UK GDPR*.
- Staff should only share confidential information with those who have a legitimate need to know in order to safeguard the welfare of a student or staff member.
- Information may be shared without consent where required to safeguard a child or comply with statutory duties.

4.5 Use of Technology and Social Media

- Staff must adhere to Hatfield Wick Education's Acceptable Use of Technology policy and only use school equipment for work-related purposes.
- Personal use of social media should not involve interaction with students. Staff should avoid posting content that could bring their professional reputation or Hatfield Wick Education into disrepute.
- Communication with students through digital platforms (e.g., emails, learning platforms) must be professional, transparent, and for educational purposes only.
- Staff must not communicate with students using personal social media accounts or personal messaging platforms. All communication must take place via approved Hatfield Wick Education systems.

5. Honesty and Integrity

Hatfield Wick Education expects all staff to act with honesty and integrity in all professional interactions and duties.

5.1 Professional Integrity

- Staff must act in the best interests of the students, maintaining the highest standards of honesty and ethical behaviour.
- Staff should be transparent in their professional conduct, ensuring that any personal, financial, or social conflicts of interest are disclosed to leadership.

- Plagiarism, falsification of records (e.g., student progress reports, attendance), or any form of dishonesty in fulfilling professional duties will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action.

5.2 Accountability

- Staff are expected to take responsibility for their actions and decisions. This includes acknowledging and learning from mistakes and actively seeking solutions to improve their practice.
- Staff must provide accurate information to leadership, colleagues, and parents and ensure that all reports and records are truthful and reflective of actual events or circumstances.

5.3 Trust and Professionalism

- Building trust is central to the staff-student and staff-parent relationships. Staff are expected to maintain an open and honest dialogue with students, colleagues, and parents, fostering relationships based on trust.
- Staff should never use their position for personal gain or to manipulate situations to their advantage, whether inside or outside the workplace.

5.4 Financial Integrity

- Staff must handle all financial matters, including expense claims, resource management, and budgeting, with honesty and in accordance with Hatfield Wick Education's financial procedures.
- Misuse of funds, resources, or property belonging to Hatfield Wick Education or students will be treated as a serious breach of trust.

6. Dress Code and Appearance

Staff are expected to present themselves professionally and appropriately at all times:

- Clothing should be suitable for a professional educational setting and in line with health and safety requirements.
- Staff must avoid wearing clothing that could be seen as provocative, inappropriate, or offensive.
- Personal hygiene and cleanliness should be maintained to high standards in all interactions with students, colleagues, and parents.

7. Attendance and Punctuality

Staff are required to:

- Arrive on time for work, meetings, and scheduled duties.
- Notify Vicky Crimmins by 8 am if they are unable to attend work due to illness or other unavoidable circumstances.
- Fulfil all duties as outlined in their contract, including providing adequate notice for planned absences.

8. Reporting Concerns and Whistleblowing

Staff must report any concerns they have about the conduct of colleagues, students, or other individuals involved with Hatfield Wick Education. This includes:

- Safeguarding concerns or inappropriate behaviour towards students.
- Concerns about illegal or unethical behaviour by colleagues.
- Breaches of this Code of Conduct.

All reports will be handled in line with Hatfield Wick Education's Whistleblowing Policy, ensuring that staff who raise concerns are protected from retaliation.

9. Staff-Student Boundaries

Maintaining clear, professional boundaries between staff and students is critical to safeguarding and ensuring mutual respect.

9.1 Physical Contact

- Physical contact should be avoided unless necessary (e.g., to prevent harm or in situations where it forms part of the learning process). Where physical contact is required, it should be appropriate, non-invasive, and in line with safeguarding guidance.

9.2 Gifts and Favors

- Staff should not give personal gifts to students or accept gifts that could be interpreted as favouring or forming inappropriate relationships.
- Any rewards or recognition given to students must be part of a school-approved reward system.

10. Disciplinary Action

Failure to adhere to the standards outlined in this Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action. Serious breaches, particularly those involving safeguarding or professional boundaries, may result in suspension, termination of employment, and referral to external agencies such as the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Where appropriate, concerns may also be referred to professional regulatory bodies or awarding organisations in accordance with statutory and contractual requirements.

11. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to updates in statutory guidance (as amended), including *KCSIE*, *Teachers' Standards 2012*, and any changes to safer working practices. Hatfield Wick Education is committed to ensuring that all staff understand and comply with the standards of professional behaviour expected of them.