



**MOUNT HOUSE
SCHOOL**

INSPIRING EVERY INDIVIDUAL

SCHOOL POLICIES

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

Review	Date	By
Last Reviewed	September 2020	
Next Review	September 2021	

Introduction

All staff at Mount House have an overriding responsibility to act and to conduct themselves at all times in a manner which makes a positive and active contribution to the education and welfare of the pupils in our school and in our care. All staff must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school, and maintain high standards in their own presentation, attendance and punctuality. Also, they must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

This Code of Conduct covers staff behaviour, pupil relationships and communications including the use of social media.

Teachers must make the education of their pupils their first concern, and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. Teachers must act with honesty and integrity; have strong subject knowledge; keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up-to-date and are self-critical; forge positive professional relationships; and work with parents in the best interests of their pupils.

Members of staff must

Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils:

- establish a safe and stimulating environment for pupils, rooted in mutual respect;
- set goals that stretch and challenge pupils of all backgrounds, abilities and dispositions;
- demonstrate consistently the positive attitudes, values and behaviour which are expected of pupils.

Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils:

- be accountable for pupils' attainment, progress and outcomes;
- be aware of pupils' capabilities and their prior knowledge when planning;
- guide pupils to reflect on their progress and their emerging needs;
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn and how this impacts on teaching;
- encourage pupils to take a responsible and conscientious attitude to their own work and study.

Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge:

- have a secure knowledge of the relevant subject(s) and curriculum areas, foster and maintain pupils' interest in the subject, and address misunderstandings;
- demonstrate a critical understanding of developments in the subject and curriculum areas, and promote the value of scholarship;
- demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of standard English, whatever the teacher's specialist subject;

Plan and teach well-structured lessons:

- develop knowledge and understanding through effective use of lesson time;
- promote a love of learning and pupil's intellectual curiosity;
- set homework and plan other out-of-class activities to consolidate and extend the knowledge and understanding pupils have acquired;
- reflect systematically on the effectiveness of lessons and approaches to teaching; and
- contribute to the design and provision of an engaging curriculum within the relevant subject area(s).

Adapt the teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils:

- know when and how to differentiate appropriately, using approaches which enable pupils to be taught effectively;
- have a secure understanding of how a range of factors can inhibit pupils' ability to learn, and how best to overcome these;
- demonstrate an awareness of the physical, social and intellectual development of children, and know how to adapt teaching to support pupils' education at different stages of development; and
- have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities; those of high ability; those with English as an additional language; those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them.

Make accurate and productive use of assessment:

- knowing and understanding how to assess the relevant subject, therapy and curriculum areas, including statutory assessment requirements;

- making use of formative and summative assessment to secure pupils' progress;
- using relevant data to monitor progress, set targets, and plan subsequent lessons; and
- giving pupils regular feedback, both orally and through accurate marking, and encourage pupils to respond to the feedback.

Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment:

- having clear rules and routines for behaviour in classrooms, taking responsibility for promoting good and courteous behaviour both in classrooms and around the school, in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy; always use praise, sanctions and rewards consistently and fairly;
- managing classes effectively, using approaches which are appropriate to pupils' needs in order to involve and motivate them; and
- maintaining good relationships with pupils, exercise appropriate authority, and act decisively when necessary.

Personal and Professional Conduct for all teaching and non-teaching staff

At Mount House it is incumbent on all staff including volunteers to comply with the following Professional Code of Conduct, and to conduct themselves in line with the school's Anti-Bullying, Supervision of Pupils, and Behaviour Policies (inclusive of their associated documents).

Conduct deemed to be in contradiction to that detailed in this Code of Conduct might be a matter for disciplinary action.

All staff are required to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct at work, but also outside of work, including in the online environment.

Everyone at Mount House has a duty to uphold public trust in us as professionals and to maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:

- treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a staff member's professional position;
- having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions, showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others;
- not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; and

- ensuring that personal beliefs and thoughts are not, directly or indirectly, expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law. These guidelines are designed to encourage an atmosphere of trust in which all colleagues can conduct their professional lives with confidence. The school recognises the need for, and the desirability of, friendly and respectful social and professional rapport between staff and pupils. Staff must conduct themselves professionally in their relationships with pupils, parents and staff and must not behave in a way that could bring the school into disrepute. Members of staff and volunteers need to be aware that unwary actions can be misconstrued as unprofessional conduct.

To avoid misunderstandings the following should be adhered to carefully:

- One-to-one meetings with pupils should, wherever possible, take place in public or semi-public places such as classrooms or offices;
- When in a private meeting with a child or one-to-one session, ensure furniture is positioned to allow easy access into or out of the room
- At no time will staff travel unaccompanied outside of the school with pupils;
- Male members of staff should never be in girls' changing areas unless accompanied by a female member of staff;
- Never be behind a locked door with a child;
- Outward displays of affection are only appropriate in the case of comforting a distressed child, and should never occur unless there is another adult present;
- Do not text or use any form of online messaging to pupils;
- Take great care that relationships with individual pupils are kept on a professional level. It is important that all pupils are treated the same and that discipline is friendly, fair, consistent and impartial. Take care that "joking comments", or "banter" cannot be misconstrued to give offence;
- Do not be party to gossip about colleagues or pupils or parents;
- Pay particular attention to the guidance about interacting with pupils via social media and other forms of electronic communication as detailed in the school's Online Safety Policy;
- The highest level of confidentiality should be maintained at all times in relationships with both adults and pupils. Make it clear that there are certain circumstances (e.g. where a child is suffering or is likely to suffer harm) when other people will need to be told so that the community or the pupil can be protected.

- If a pupil behaves inappropriately or makes an inappropriate advance to a member of staff, it is essential that the pupil is immediately informed that the language or behaviour is unacceptable. The incident, and what has been done and said, should be recorded, and reported to the Principal immediately.

Whistleblowing

The term "whistleblowing" means the confidential raising of problems or concerns within an organisation by a member of staff. This is not "leaking" information but refers to matters of impropriety, e.g. a breach of law, school procedures or ethics. Nor is whistleblowing the raising of a grievance within the school (which would be dealt with under the staff grievance procedures). Staff should consult the school's Whistleblowing Policy, which all members of staff are given during their induction into the school, and which is updated and distributed to all staff annually.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is the responsibility of all who work, volunteer or learn in our school, and everyone is required to report instances of actual or suspected child abuse or neglect to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Deputy DSL). Mount House recognises it is an agent of referral and not of investigation. It is essential that all members of staff read and familiarize themselves with the procedures laid down in the school's safeguarding policy as well as the guidance provided by the DfE document Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1 and Annex A.

We make it clear both in induction and other training, and in guidance provided for staff that they have a responsibility to speak up about safeguarding and welfare matters within our school and to external agencies where necessary. This is one part of the way in which we establish in our school a positive safeguarding culture. The school provides immunity from retribution or disciplinary action against such staff for whistleblowing in good faith. At all levels, including newly appointed staff, contractors and volunteers, briefing or training is given on responding to suspicions or allegations of abuse and knowledge of what action they should take in response to such suspicions or allegations.

The staff and directors of the school seek to run all aspects of school business and activity with full regard for high standards of conduct and integrity. If members of school staff, parents, directors or the school community at large become aware of activities which give cause for concern, they must refer to the school's Whistleblowing Policy, which acts as a framework to allow concerns to be raised confidentially and provides for a thorough and appropriate investigation of the matter to bring it to a satisfactory conclusion, under the school's disciplinary procedure.

The school is committed to tackling fraud and other forms of malpractice and treats these issues seriously. The school recognises that some concerns may be extremely sensitive and has therefore developed a system which allows for the confidential raising of concerns within the school environment.

Punishments

The following sanctions / punishments will never be used:-

- Any form of hitting of a child (including hitting a child in anger or retaliation); or threatening behavior, ie acts or words; or words said in the form of a joke or 'banter'. 'Banter' is bullying, and will always be treated as such, see the school Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Deprivation of food or drink.
- Enforced eating or drinking.
- Prevention of contact by telephone to parents or any appropriate independent listener or helpline.
- The forced requirement to wear distinctive clothing.
- Withholding of any aids or equipment needed by a child.

Corporal Punishment is not allowed or deemed to be acceptable at any time at Mount House. However, teachers and other staff are entitled to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils in certain circumstances including disruptive behaviour when safety is paramount. Further guidance on the use of restraint and reasonable force is available in the *Behaviour Policy*.

Trust and Ethical Conduct

As a result of our knowledge, position, and/or the authority invested in their role, all our staff are in positions of trust. A member of staff can be described as in a position of power or influence because of their role

Staff will always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which could be misinterpreted by others. We expect all staff to report and record any potential incident, whether inside or outside the school.

Sexual Activity - It is an offence for a member of staff or anyone working at Mount House (who are in positions of trust), to engage in sexual activity with, or in the presence of, any pupil or to cause or incite any pupil to engage in or watch sexual activity. It is also an offence to engage in sexual activity, as detailed above, with any child under the age of 18. Any sexual activity between a member of staff and a child or young person with whom they work, or have previously worked with, may be regarded as a criminal offence and will always be a matter for further investigation, that may lead to disciplinary action/criminal proceedings.

Staff, and those working with pupils, must clearly understand the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their contact with pupils. Allowing or encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which might lead to a sexual relationship is unacceptable conduct.

The Principal should always be informed if a member of staff has any concerns in order to ensure the activation of appropriate procedures. For their own safety and protection, staff, and those working with pupils, should exercise caution in situations where they are alone with pupils. These may include: musical instrument tuition, 1:1 coaching, pupil counselling, sport coaching, conveying a pupil by car, engaging in inappropriate electronic communication with a pupil and so on. In a 1:1 situation, the door should be left open.

Where incidents occur which might otherwise be misconstrued, or in the exceptional circumstances where it becomes necessary physically to restrain a pupil for their own protection or others' safety, this will be appropriately recorded and reported to the Principal and parents on the same day.

Grooming

Grooming embodies the sole purpose of gaining the trust of a child or young person and manipulating that relationship so that sexual abuse can take place. Staff are aware that constantly conferring inappropriate special attention and favour upon a child can be construed as being part of grooming behaviour; to which the disciplinary procedure will be considered accordingly.

Social Contact

Staff should also be alert to the possible risks that might arise from social contact with pupils outside of Mount House. Home visits to pupils or private tuition of pupils should only take place with the knowledge and approval of the Principal. Visits/telephone calls, texts or emails by pupils to the homes of staff members, or by staff to pupils, should only occur with the prior knowledge and approval of the Principal.

Personal relations

No pupil will be invited into the home of a member of staff, or anyone working for Mount House, unless the reason has been firmly established and agreed with parents, guardians or carers, and the Principal has given his/her consent.

Gifts, Rewards, Favouritism

All giving of gifts or rewards are part of our Behaviour Policy for supporting positive behaviour or recognising particular achievements. There may be specific occasions when staff may wish to give a child a personal gift. This is only acceptable practice where, in line with the agreed policy, senior managers and parent/carer(s) have discussed the reasons for it and the action is recorded. Any gift should be openly given and not based on favouritism. Staff must remain alert at all times to the fact that the giving of gifts can be misconstrued as a gesture to either bribe or groom a child.

Staff will take care in selecting pupils for specific activities or privileges to avoid perceptions of favouritism or unfairness. Methods and criteria for selection will always be transparent and subject to scrutiny.

There are always occasions in school when pupils or parents wish to pass on a small token of their appreciation such as a thank you. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis, or of any significant value.

Employees may accept gifts up to the nominal value of £50. Employees should notify the Bursar if they receive a gift that is in excess of £50.00 nominal value. If the value is unknown and it is not inconceivable that it may be in excess of £50.00 nominal value, the Finance Office should be informed. They will make the decision as to the estimated value of the gift. The details will be entered onto a log accessible to them. The log should be reviewed on a regular basis by the SLT.

Members of staff should never reveal their personal telephone numbers, email address and other contact details to pupils.

Concerns about the welfare of colleagues or pupils should be communicated to the Principal immediately. Do not ever assume that this is someone else's responsibility, or that someone else will communicate it.

General Conduct of Staff To the pupils

We should always be clear in our instructions, information, grammar, politeness and being authoritative within the school rules and the school behaviour and discipline policies. We have a duty to be supportive of the pupils and promote their welfare. We must offer support to vulnerable children while at all times maintaining an appropriate professional relationship and distance from them. At all times staff must be aware of and act within the professional boundaries that are normal for teachers and staff working in schools and which are detailed within this document. Specifically, staff should at all times recognise that self-restraint and checking with the Principal or another senior member of staff should be the norm if you are uncertain of how to act.

Staff must all be aware of the school's Safeguarding Policy and act in accordance with it, especially if a pupil discloses something of relevance in this regard.

All staff must not use any language to the pupils which may be offensive. Absolutely no swear words or words with a sexual connotation may ever be used. Any incidents of this will be treated as a disciplinary matter and action will be taken.

To each other as staff Staff should be polite and professional, supportive and co-operative to each other. We expect our staff to work as a team. This means we need staff to be able to share information and ideas, be ready to be thoughtful and reflective about the education we provide, and readily responsive to instruction from the senior staff.

We expect staff to refrain from any actions which may undermine another staff member's confidence or professional abilities, including bullying one another. At all times, staff should remember that we are all working with the best interests of the pupils in mind.

Staff should conduct themselves in public at all times as a professional, whether at a school social occasion outside school hours or in school. At school social occasions, staff should be moderate in their behaviour, language and consumption of alcohol. At external school-

related functions, staff must also be moderate in their consumption of alcohol. They should act as if on duty at all times when in contact with school parents, pupils and staff, remembering to address each other as Miss/Mr/Mrs, when within earshot of parents and/or pupils.

Whatever the occasion staff are expected to keep the academic and professional procedures and processes of the school confidential as required by the Principal at all times unless given clear and unequivocal permission to do otherwise.

If a staff member is having a relationship with another member of staff or stakeholder of the school, they should make the Principal aware of this, so that he/she can determine whether there could be a potential conflict of interests.

We expect staff to be ready to listen and help our parents and treat them as very important partners in our work of educating our pupils/their children. Parents must be treated with courtesy and respect and we should expect that back from them.

Parents should not be treated as personal friends and should be addressed by their title i.e. Mr/Mrs/Miss and not by their first names. This courtesy should be extended back to staff by the parents and anything else should be discouraged by example.

Any incident of inappropriate behaviour by a parent should be responded to with a quiet statement to the parent that you will refer the issue to the Principal for discussion. Staff should never engage in private or public heated discussion with parents, particularly if they are angry. In this case, remove yourself physically from the situation and state you will refer this to the Principal.

Staff who are also parents should be spoken to sensitively, and in a timely fashion, about their children (not in their work time, or amongst colleagues). Ensure that professional relationships are secured, and that there are no feelings of awkwardness or bias.

Staff Members' Dress Code

Teachers should be dressed appropriately and smartly, at all times, and in line with the staff dress code, as follows :

- Staff must be tidy, well-groomed and dressed in a manner suitable for their role and working with children.
- Gentleman are required to wear a suit or professional/smart trousers and shirt.
- Ladies also need to wear appropriate business-like clothing. Short skirts/dresses above the knee, low cut tops, low and tight trousers, or underwear on display, are not appropriate in the school environment. Jeans, leggings, trainers and flip flops are not permitted.

- Staff are role models, and should dress appropriately and professionally, not displaying tattoos, wearing excessive jewellery, nose studs (unless for religious reasons) or body piercings.
- In certain jobs, there will be different business dress standards that apply; however, these still need to be appropriate for a school environment. You will be told about these by your line manager if applicable.

Mobile Phones

Personal Mobile Phones and Cameras Personal cameras belonging to staff and volunteers are not to be used on the school premises or school grounds at any time. Cameras on staff owned mobile phones should not be used on school premises or school grounds at any time.

No images may be taken of the school or any pupils using mobile phones or personal cameras. Personal mobile phones may be used in dedicated staff areas or in class and teaching rooms ONLY when the pupils are not present.

Staff should not accept mobile phone calls, text messages or personal emails during a lesson or when they are with pupils in public school areas. The only exception to this is if the Principal calls a staff member (usually only on Sports Days or on school trips, or if the School Office calls in similar circumstances). These calls will only be made in unusual or emergency situations.

The school cameras may be used for official photographs under the direction of the Deputy Head Pastoral. These photographs must only be downloaded using the school's computers and not onto a personal, private computer.

Use of IT Equipment and Systems Mount House

IT covers a wide range systems and hardware and includes personal devices when used on school premises or for school business. Staff should expect that use of Mount House IT equipment and facilities will be monitored and may be recorded at all times.

Staff are expected to:

- Respect all IT equipment/facilities at Mount House and report any faults or any accidental damage.
- Not take school owned IT equipment off the premises without permission from the Principal.
- Not use the school's IT equipment for personal use.
- Comply with the IT security systems and not disclose any passwords provided by the school or related authorities. If a member of staff suspects that their login details

have become known to others, they should immediately ask for these details to be changed.

- IT security includes the requirement to log out of or lock a computer when staff are out of line of sight.
- Not install hardware or software on school IT equipment without the permission of the Principal.
- Not deliberately browse, download, upload, or distribute any material that could be considered unsuitable, offensive, illegal or discriminatory. If a staff member accidentally encounters any such material then they should immediately close, but not delete in the case of emails, the material and report it to the Pastoral Deputy Head.
- Respect copyright and intellectual property rights.
- Use IT equipment and facilities for educational purposes only.
- Ensure that personal and pupil data (such as data held on MIS systems) is kept secure and is used appropriately whether it is accessed from the school premises or accessed remotely. Data will only be shared in line with the guidelines in the school Data Protection Policy.
- Staff devices should be encrypted if any data or passwords are stored on them. The school expects all removable media (USB memory sticks, CDs, portable drives) taken outside school or sent by post or courier, to be encrypted before sending.
- Read, understand and comply with all aspects of the school Data Protection Policy, and refer any queries or issues immediately to their line manager or IT Support. When using electronic communication for school business, whether it be by email, social networking sites or other online means, it should be professional and courteous at all times.

School provided communication systems should be used at all times in the following situations:-

- All communication between staff, pupils and parents
- When using personal Social Networking Sites staff must not accept pupils as 'friends' or 'contacts' and must ensure the highest privacy controls are used at all times. It is not advisable to have parents as friends and this should be avoided wherever possible. Personal Social Networking Sites must not contain pictures of pupils or their parents, and pictures of colleagues should be with the subject's permission.

Inappropriate adult behaviour

Behaviour which must be avoided also includes:

- Talking about sex lives, particularly in front of pupils;
- Being alone with pupils in a group setting for unusually long periods of time without good reason;
- Showing unusual interest in one specific pupil;
- Inappropriate use of mobile phones where phone calls or texts take attention away from supervising pupils;
- Staff should not have social networking pages on display on the classroom computers.

Staff Declarations

- Changes to personal details and circumstances – it is incumbent on all staff to advise the school of any changes to their personal and contact details or circumstances.
- Medical conditions affecting work - it is every staff member's responsibility to notify Human Resources or the Principal immediately if there is any change to their medical condition, or if there are any health issues that may affect the staff member's ability to undertake their work effectively.
- Disclosure of an Official Nature, including Disqualification by Association - it is every staff member's responsibility to notify the Principal immediately, if they are convicted of any criminal offence, warned or reprimanded or officially cautioned in relation to such an offence. Staff must also notify the Principal if any member of their household is ever disqualified from working with children. Failure to comply with these staff declarations could be seen as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary action.

Safeguarding children's welfare

Safeguarding at Mount House is everyone's responsibility. It applies to all who work, or volunteer, or learn, or supply services to our school. Staff must report any concerns about a child, as soon as possible, to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or, if unavailable, the Deputy DSL.

Although referrals to the local Child Safeguarding Board (LSCB) are normally managed by the DSL, anyone may refer a child if necessary. Staff should refer any concern about another member of staff (or volunteer) to the Principal immediately – or if the Principal is the focus of the concern, to the Chairman of the Board of Directors.

Members of staff should use the school's Safeguarding and Whistleblowing Policies should they have any concerns about the handling of safeguarding matters either in general or specific cases.

Remember, these guidelines will protect you, the children and the school. Failure to comply may well be interpreted by the school as misconduct. Please be aware of the importance of these measures and adhere to them at all times.