



MILTON ABBEY

CODE OF CONDUCT AND CONTACT WITH PUPILS

Milton Abbey School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. **All staff must abide by the School's Child Protection Policy and this Code of Conduct at all times.**

Both policies are intended to encourage and sustain an atmosphere of mutual trust and to promote the positive, caring and professional relationships between staff and pupils that are essential in a boarding environment. All pupils have access to staff who can offer a variety of perspectives.

All staff undergo an Enhanced disclosure check with the Disclosure & Barring Service prior to commencing employment. Until this disclosure is received, no unsupervised access to children will take place.

Staff must always think carefully about their own conduct and the way in which they build relationships. Staff cannot step fully into the shoes of parents and patterns of caring in families vary. What one child has experienced as normal conduct may be intrusive and disquieting to a child from a different family background or culture. During adolescence a young person's responses and attitudes to personal contact change and we must be sensitive to these changes. The Housemaster is in loco parentis and therefore any queries about individuals must be addressed to the relevant Housemaster or, if not available, the Head or Deputy Head.

Staff should be aware that some actions may be misconstrued by pupils as unprofessional conduct. We should also all be alert to situations where we (ourselves) and other staff (including visiting staff) are potentially vulnerable to false allegations of abuse.

Inappropriate behaviour with or towards pupils of any age is unacceptable and likely to constitute gross misconduct. In particular, it is unlawful for any member of staff who works with the pupils and is therefore in a position of trust, to have a sexual relationship with a child aged 18 or under, even if the relationship is consensual.

1. No physical contact between staff and students

- A physical response to student misbehaviour is unlawful, unless it is intended to restrain the student from: causing harm to him/herself or others; committing a criminal offence; or causing damage to property (including their own). In such situations 'reasonable force' may be used. A copy of the School's Restraints Policy is available from your Line Manager. Well-meaning but gratuitous contact such as ruffling hair, or even putting a hand on a shoulder should be avoided.
- Exceptions to the 'no physical contact' rule might include:
 - Administering essential First Aid
 - The technical coaching of games, drama, music etc
 - Action to prevent harm or injury to the pupil or to others
 - In cases of distress where a student might benefit from an arm round the shoulder as he/she is taken to the Health Centre.
- Any physical contact must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or your Line Manager immediately.
- You must report any situation where inappropriate physical contact with a student has arisen to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Head or the Head as quickly as possible. A written record should be made immediately, giving factual details. A copy of this should also be given to the relevant Housemaster.

2. Pupil privacy

- Staff should be sensitive to the pupils' needs for privacy and personal space. This is particularly so in changing and boarding areas. In Houses, all members of staff should knock before entering a study bedroom
- All staff should avoid entering, except in the case of an emergency, the washing, changing and toilet facilities in House. If your job requires you to enter these areas then you must comply with the School's work schedules and standard procedures for carrying out your tasks.

At the start of each year, with reminders given as appropriate, the Housemasters should convey to pupils the guidelines above that relate to boarding accommodation. Pupils should be aware that they should change in private and that they should not wander into public areas such as corridors in a state of undress. This will help to ensure that they too are aware that adults will, at times, be in boarding areas. It is important that the pupils conduct themselves appropriately to avoid embarrassment on either side.

3. Meetings with pupils

- Staff must always be aware of the potential dangers arising from private interviews with students. It is essential that due regard is given to location (classroom or office would be an appropriate venue), visibility and audibility (e.g. keeping the door open). Always consider carefully whether it might be better if another adult were present.
- Staff (residential or non-residential) should not entertain pupils (including Personal Tutees) in their private accommodation without the prior knowledge and consent of the relevant Housemaster.

- Alcohol should not be served to pupils below the 6th Form. No pupil should be given alcohol without the prior knowledge and consent of the Housemaster and ideally should only be given when accompanied with food.
- Meetings with students off School premises (during term time or holidays) should only take place with the prior knowledge and consent of the Housemaster.
- Car journeys must be approved by the Housemaster, Deputy Head or the Head prior to the event except in an emergency.
- No private or regular one-to-one teaching arrangements should be made between staff, pupils and their families without the prior knowledge and consent of the Housemaster.

4. Communication with pupils (this should be read in conjunction with the Staff Email Protocol which forms part of the Internet Usage and Email Policy - Staff)

- Confidentiality should always be respected but staff must warn pupils that where the welfare of an individual or the wider School community is concerned this may not be feasible.
- Staff should consider the language that they use to and about pupils carefully. They should use discretion in conversations that cover sensitive matters and avoid making remarks of a personal nature. Terms of endearment ('sweetie', 'love' etc) should be avoided as these can be easily misconstrued.
- Staff should not shout at or swear at students, nor should they use inappropriate language within earshot of them. Conversations should be polite and courteous.
- Staff should never discuss students (or their families) in the hearing of other students. Making unsolicited personal remarks about another pupil, even if intended to be positive or jocular, should be avoided.
- Staff should avoid discussions that have sexual connotations unless these arise in the context of Biology, Enrichment, literature/RE (etc) lessons being taught.
- Staff should avoid being led into the disclosure of personal information about themselves or other members of staff.
- Staff should avoid the use of sarcastic, demeaning or insensitive comments.
- Students undoubtedly derive pleasure and benefit from 'other' staff endorsing their efforts and achievements; disciplinary matters, however, should be left in the hands of the member of staff dealing with the issue (Tutor, Housemaster or senior staff). The temptation to add gratuitous comments must be avoided.
- Communication between pupils and staff, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, emails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites, social networking sites, online gaming and blogs.
- Staff must not use Social Networking sites (e.g. MySpace, BeBo, Facebook etc) to connect or communicate with current pupils.
- Staff should be circumspect in all communications with students so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming. They should not give their personal contact details to students including personal e-mail

addresses, home or personal mobile telephone numbers, unless the need to do so is agreed with the Deputy Head.

- School mobile phones are always available for staff taking trips who wish to give out a contact number to pupils. E-mail or text communications between an adult and a pupil outside agreed protocols may lead to disciplinary and/or criminal investigations. This also includes communications through internet based web sites, such as social networking, instant messaging or gaming.
- Whilst there may be occasions when it might be practical for a member of staff to add a pupil's mobile telephone number to their mobile phonebook (e.g. on a School trip), telephone numbers of pupils should not be permanently stored on personal mobile telephones.

5. Out of School and After-School Activities

Staff should take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere of a boarding house or extra-curricular activity. The more relaxed relationships that may promote successful activities can be misinterpreted by young people. It is important to emphasise that the standards of professional conduct and behaviour expected of employees should be no different to that which applies within School. Employees should be aware of the particular care, which should be taken with older, more mature students in these circumstances.

- For any School trip or activity, all School rules must be adhered to.
- Duty members of staff should not drink alcohol if they will be driving a minibus.
- School Parties – those on duty and who are managing the event must not drink alcohol at all.
- All other members of staff must only drink in moderation and must always be conscious that the example that they set must be appropriate to pupils.

6. Dress Code

The way staff dress sends a message to pupils, parents and visitors about their professionalism and standards of care.

- Where a uniform is provided this should be worn at all times when on duty.
- Those who are not required to wear a uniform should be dressed appropriately for the duties they are required to carry out.
- Clothing should be clean and in good condition.
- A suitable top must be worn at all times.
- Suitable footwear must be worn at all times for health and safety reasons.

Staff will be informed in advance if the dress code is to be altered for a particular event.

7. General

- Staff should be punctual.
- Classes should not be left unattended, except in an emergency. Any pupil sent out of a lesson remains under the care of the teacher and must be told to wait outside the classroom.

- Over-familiarity should be avoided. It is not appropriate for pupils to address members of academic staff using first names during term time.
- Staff should set high personal standards of dress and appearance.
- Staff should adhere to the School's E-Mail and Internet Policy at all times.
- Mobile telephones must be switched off whilst at work.
- Staff should not use their mobile phone to take or store photographs of pupils.
- Photographs of pupils and children taken at School events should not be posted on to publicly accessible websites by members of staff without the prior permission of the Head.
- Pupils should not be given access to keys and key codes to sensitive or potentially dangerous places (e.g. swimming pool, laboratories, offices or master's common room).