



THE
**WHITE
HOUSE**
PREPARATORY SCHOOL

**The White House Preparatory School
and
Woodentops Day Nursery**

Staff Code of Conduct and Behaviour Policy

This policy must be read together with the Employment Handbook, the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, and the Whistleblowing Policy.

1. General Expectations and Professional Standards

All staff must treat all members of the school community with respect. This includes colleagues, pupils, and parents.

Staff are expected to behave professionally at all times. They must remain aware that parents and children form a view of them and the school whenever they meet, whether inside or outside of school. Staff behaviour outside of school can have an adverse impact on their professional standing with parents and children, as well as impacting the reputation of the school.

Therefore, staff must behave in a manner which reduces any risk of an adverse view. This code of conduct is intended to support staff in protecting themselves—for example, from inadvertently laying themselves open to allegations of abuse or unprofessional conduct.

Initial Proactive Guidance:

- **1:1 Situations:** Try never to be alone with a child. If this is not possible, ensure the door is kept open, that you are visible through a window, or that a colleague is in close geographic proximity (ideally able to hear). This is especially important for staff supporting music, sport, and specific learning experiences demanding 1:1 support outside of the classroom.
- **Physical Contact:** Any physical contact must be the minimum required for care, instruction, or restraint. Any physical contact must be for the benefit of the child (e.g., positioning fingers on a violin or piano, or a brief cuddle for an upset Kindergarten child), never for the comfort or gratification of the adult.
- **Reporting Incidents:** If a member of staff ever finds themselves in an uncomfortable situation or one that they feel compromises them, however innocent, they must alert the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as soon as possible after the event, and normally before leaving the school site that day.



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2. Communication with Pupils (Including Social Media)

Staff must not give their personal mobile phone numbers or personal email addresses to pupils or parents, nor should they communicate with them by text message or personal email.

- **School Channels:** If staff need to speak to a pupil or parent by telephone, they must use school telephones. All email communication must go through official school systems (e.g., The White House School Google Mail account). Phone calls to parents should be made in the School Office unless agreed otherwise in advance.
- **Social Media Restrictions:** Staff must not have any contact with children or parents on any personal social media platform. This expectation continues after children have left the school and applies until they reach the age of 18 or have left secondary education—whichever is later. (See separate protocol for staff who are parents of children at the school).
- **Position of Trust:** Staff are reminded that it is a criminal offence for a person aged 18 or over 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.
- **Staff-Parents Protocol:** Where a member of staff is also a school parent, specific written protocols will be agreed with leadership regarding communication and association with their parent peers and their child's peers.
- **Electronic Monitoring:** Staff must immediately report to the DSL any attempts by pupils or parents to communicate with them outside of approved school channels.

3. Physical Contact, PE, and Sports Activities

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. Staff must use their professional judgement at all times, avoid unnecessary physical contact, and remain alert to the fact that minor forms of friendly physical contact can be misconstrued by pupils or onlookers.

A member of staff can never take the place of a parent in providing physical comfort and should be cautious of any demonstration of affection. Physical contact must never be secretive, for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority.



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Physical Education, Music, and Specific Activities:

- Where exercises or procedures need to be demonstrated, extreme caution must be used if the demonstration involves contact with pupils. Wherever possible, physical contact should be avoided.
- It is acknowledged that some staff (e.g., those who teach Sport, swimming, or music tuition) will on occasion have to initiate physical contact to support a pupil so they can perform a task safely, demonstrate equipment/instruments, or assist with an exercise. This must be done with the pupil's explicit verbal agreement.
- Contact under these circumstances must be for the minimum time necessary and must take place in an open environment. Staff must remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the child.
- If a member of staff believes an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances must be recorded on CPOMS StaffSafe as soon as possible, the Headteacher/DSL informed, and a copy placed on the pupil's file.

4. Physical Intervention and Reasonable Force

The use of reasonable force is permissible only when a child is in imminent danger of inflicting an injury on himself/herself, on another person, or causing severe damage to property, and then only as a last resort when all non-physical efforts to de-escalate the situation have failed.

- The force used must be the minimum necessary to achieve the desired result and must be entirely proportionate to the risk.
- Another member of staff should, if possible, be present to act as a witness.
- All incidents involving the use of physical intervention or reasonable force must be recorded in writing on CPOMS StaffSafe and reported immediately to the DSL and the Headteacher.
- **Woodentops Nursery / EYFS Setting:** In strict accordance with early years regulations, parents/carers will be informed of any physical intervention or force used on their child. A written record will be maintained, and parents must be notified on the exact same day the incident occurred, or as soon as reasonably practicable.



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5. Low-Level Concerns and Whistleblowing

The School wishes to foster a culture of openness, safety, and transparency. Staff must distinguish between a low-level concern, a safeguarding allegation meeting the harm threshold, and a whistleblowing matter.

Low-Level Concerns

A low-level concern is any concern—no matter how small, and even if no more than a suspicion—that a member of staff has acted in a way that is inconsistent with this Code of Conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work.

- Should any member of staff have a low-level concern about the behaviour of another colleague, they must report it at once to the Headteacher (or to the Principal if the concern relates to the Headteacher).
- Reporting low-level concerns allows the school to identify problematic behavior early and safeguard both children and staff.

Safeguarding Allegations (Harm Threshold)

Where an allegation suggests that a member of staff or volunteer has harmed a child, committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, or behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, the Headteacher/DSL will handle this strictly under Part 4 of KCSIE.

- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be informed and consulted within 24 hours of the allegation coming to light, and before the school undertakes any internal investigation of its own.

Whistleblowing

If a member of staff feels that a safeguarding concern or allegation is not being properly addressed internally by the school leadership, they must utilize the school's Whistleblowing Procedure.

- No one who reports a genuine concern in good faith needs to fear retribution. Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, staff are entitled to raise a concern directly with an external body (such as Ofsted, ISI, or the Local Authority) where the circumstances justify it.



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6. Daily Conduct Requirements for Staff

Attendance and Timekeeping

Staff are expected to be punctual at all times. Should a staff member need to be absent or expect to be late, they must ask the Headteacher in advance when possible. If delayed or absent at short notice (e.g., due to illness), staff must follow the strict morning reporting procedures outlined during the Autumn Term induction.

Signing In and Out

Staff are not required to sign in or out at the normal beginning and end of the working day. However, should staff arrive after or leave before their normal contracted hours, they must report to the School Office to sign in/out.

For Fire and Health & Safety reasons, staff who leave the school site for any reason during the working day (e.g., to visit the Post Office) must sign out with the School Office and sign back in upon return. Failure to do so will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

Eating and Drinking

- No hot liquids or food (e.g., tea, coffee, soup) are to be carried around the school unless covered with a secure, spill-proof lid.
- No hot food may be consumed by staff while actively supervising or teaching children, including playground and sports duty, unless dining with the children in the dining hall.
- The Staff Room is the designated area where hot food and drinks should be prepared and consumed.

Smoking and Vaping

To promote a healthy working environment and mitigate fire risks, smoking and the use of e-cigarettes/vapes are strictly prohibited anywhere on the school and nursery site.

Should staff smoke off-site or on their way to work, they must ensure their clothing does not smell of smoke. This is a health and safety matter of essential relevance when working with very young children.



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Alcohol, Illegal Drugs, and Medication

- The consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs is strictly prohibited on site. The only exception is during designated school functions where senior leadership has explicitly agreed that modest amounts of alcohol may be consumed by staff who are not directly responsible for supervising pupils.
- An employee's conduct, cognitive abilities, and performance must never be adversely impacted by alcohol or drugs when undertaking their duties. This includes the perceived hangover impact of previous usage (e.g., "the morning after"). If leadership suspects impairment, an immediate investigation will occur.
- **EYFS / Nursery Specific Rule:** In accordance with statutory EYFS requirements, practitioners must not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance which may impair their ability to care for children. Staff taking prescription medication that may affect their ability to safely care for children must inform management and seek medical advice before working with EYFS children.

Personal Appearance

Staff are required to maintain a smart, professional appearance to convey efficiency and organization to parents and visitors.

- Jeans, denim, and flip-flops are not permitted.
- Staff must keep a professional jacket on site for unexpected parent "show-arounds."
- Appearance during Open Mornings and formal school events must be exceptionally smart.

Mobility and Flexibility

Due to the operational demands of the school, staff must be prepared to transfer within classes either temporarily or permanently, or to undertake reasonable work of a different nature, provided it is safe to do so and the staff member is adequately trained.

7. Use of Mobile Phones, Cameras, and Electronic Devices

Personal Mobile Phones & BYO Devices (The School Settings)

- Staff mobile phones must be stored securely away, out of sight of children, and switched off or set to silent during contact hours.



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- Mobiles must never be used in the presence of pupils. On site, they may only be used in the Staff Room, the Headteacher's Office, or the School Office.
- If private conversations are required, staff must sign out at the School Office and leave the school site. Staff should provide the school's main landline number as their emergency contact for third parties (e.g., their own children's schools).
- Any unauthorized use of a mobile phone around children will be treated as a significant disciplinary issue.

Personal Mobile Phones & BYO Devices (Woodentops Nursery Settings)

- Nursery staff may bring personal mobile phones for use strictly during scheduled lunch and rest breaks.
- During working hours, all personal mobile phones must be switched off and stored in the designated locked box located in the staff kitchen. Phones may only be checked in the staff room during breaks.
- Under no circumstances are staff permitted to have personal mobile phones in playrooms, changing areas, or bathrooms. Breach of this regulation will be treated as **gross misconduct** and may result in summary dismissal.
- When operating off-site on outings or trips, personal mobile phones must remain at the nursery. The nursery will provide an official "outing phone" pre-programmed with management and emergency contact numbers.

Device Searches

The school reserves the right to request a search of "Bring Your Own" (BYO) devices (e.g., mobiles, tablets, laptops), outer clothing, bags, and vehicles while on site if there is reasonable suspicion of a breach of this policy, data protection, or safeguarding procedures.

- Staff may request a colleague to be present during a search.
- If there is suspicion that a personal device contains illegal content (such as indecent images of children), the school will not conduct an internal digital search; the device will be secured, and the police and LADO will be contacted immediately.



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Photographs and Digital Images

- **School Devices Only:** Digital images or recordings of pupils for learning journeys, evidence of progress, or promotional use must only be taken using school-provided cameras or official school devices.
- **Data Storage:** Images must be downloaded directly onto the secure school Google Drive for monitoring and storage, and immediately deleted from the local device/memory card before the device leaves the school site. For residential trips, images must be held securely on the school camera until the trip returns, then downloaded and wiped immediately.
- **Personal Equipment:** As a general rule, staff must never use personal equipment to photograph or record pupils. Specific, time-limited permission may only be granted by the Headteacher for specific pedagogical reasons (e.g., green-screening projects).
- **Consents & Distribution:** No photo or recording of a child may be published, shared, or passed outside the school or nursery unless explicit written parental consent has been verified at the start of the academic year.
- **Data Legislation:** The taking, storage, and processing of all digital images will be managed strictly in accordance with the **Data Protection Act 2018** and **UK GDPR**.

8. School Trips and Transporting Pupils

School Trips

The designated trip leader on all visits (day or overnight) must take an official school mobile phone. The school phone must be used for all communication with parents. The trip leader is responsible for ensuring that any temporary records of parents' mobile numbers are securely deleted or shredded immediately upon return to the school.

Transporting Pupils

Staff must never transport a pupil in their personal car or in a taxi without explicit, advance permission from the Headteacher or Principal. This permission will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. If authorized, specific written instructions, risk assessments, and insurance verifications must be completed and agreed upon prior to travel.



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9. Confidentiality and Safeguarding Disclosures

Staff members must never give absolute guarantees of confidentiality to pupils or adults wishing to disclose safeguarding or protection concerns.

- Staff must clearly explain that they can only guarantee to pass the information to the minimum number of authorized people (the DSL/Headteacher) who need to know in order to take proper action and protect the child.
- Staff must take all necessary steps to protect the informing pupil or adult from retaliation or distress.
- Any safeguarding concerns or disclosures must be reported on the **same day** via CPOMS and directly to the DSL.

10. School Community, Equality, and Complaints

Equal Treatment

We are committed to equal treatment for all pupils regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity. We aim to create a friendly, caring, and receptive environment in which every individual is valued and supported toward growing autonomy and self-esteem.

Bullying

Bullying, harassment, victimisation, and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all pupils, staff, and parents fairly and with consideration, and expect the same in return. Any form of bullying, including cyberbullying, is unacceptable, and incidents will be recorded and dealt with under the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

Complaints

The school maintains a clear complaints procedure accessible to parents. Staff must encourage parents to articulate concerns at the earliest possible moment to allow for swift resolution, and pass any formal grievances directly to senior leadership.

11. Visitors, Parents, and Relations

As a general rule, visitors, parents, and relatives are prohibited from taking photos or recordings inside the school building, on site, or during daily nursery activities.



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- **Public/Special Events:** Exceptionally, permission may be granted by the Headteacher or Senior Leadership for public occasions where children perform or compete (e.g., Sports Day, Inter-house Music competitions, ballet displays).
- **Private Guidance:** When permission is granted, explicit guidance must be communicated to visitors that these images are strictly for private family viewing and must **never** be uploaded, shared, or broadcast on public social media platforms. Nursery parents and visitors must be regularly reminded to keep mobile phones put away entirely while inside the nursery building.

Policy will be reviewed annually			
Policy reviewed:	Sept 26	By:	Principal & Headteacher
To be reviewed:	Sept 27	By:	Principal & Headteacher

