

STAFF CONDUCT WITH STUDENTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

In line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016*

All policies are generated and reviewed with an awareness of equality and diversity in relation to students, staff and visitors to On Track and within the community in the course of On Track work.

All policies are generated and reviewed placing safeguarding at the heart of all that we do.

In some On Track schools, the role of Head Teacher, referred to below, is undertaken by an appropriately experienced Manager.

There is a form on the next page following the end of this policy, which all staff members should sign and return to their Head teacher. This form is headed Appendix 1

This policy should be read alongside the On Track Staff Handbook.

There are three issues that are central to the staff code of conduct:

- The very challenging nature of many of the students attending On Track makes them appear to be very powerful in some respects. However, staff have much more power relating to decisions made around the student within the school day and sometimes beyond. This imbalance of power should be acknowledged and staff must be aware of the many ways in which their actions could influence students.
- Staff are not robots and are sometimes experiencing their own difficulties in life. Although these will affect how staff may be feeling, students should be shielded from this.
- It is important for staff to constantly review their behaviour in relation to students taking into consideration:
 - Am I acting professionally?
 - Am I acting in the interests of the student?
 - Am I acting in a way that would be seen as reasonable by anybody observing?
 - Am I acting as a role model to students?

1. Introduction

- On Track is committed to creating a professional and supportive environment in which staff and students can achieve a sense of well being. To achieve this aim, positive relationships must be fostered between students and staff at the same time as setting clear professional boundaries.
- This policy is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all staff are expected to observe. On Track staff are role models and are in a unique position of influence and must behave in a way that sets a good example to all the students within the school.
- Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work.
- Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and failure to comply with this policy could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.

2. Aims of our Staff Conduct with Students Policy

- For staff and students to be aware of what professional boundaries are in place.
- For staff to understand what is expected of their own behaviour in order for them to demonstrate high standards of conduct, which will encourage students to do the same.
- For staff to avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

3. Safeguarding Students

- On Track is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.
- All members of staff must act, and be seen to act, in the child's best interests.
- All members of staff must be familiar with the Safeguarding and Child Protection and Whistleblowing Policies and Keeping Children Safe in Education, Part 1

- All members of staff must report any concern about a child to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy.
- All members of staff must raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in regard to children.
- All staff must maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.

4. Confidentiality

- Where staff have access to confidential information about students or their parents/carers, staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the student and the information should not be discussed outside of school.
- 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 procedures. It must not be discussed outside the school.
- All staff have an obligation to share with the Designated Safeguarding Lead any information which gives rise to concern.
- Staff must never promise a student that they will not act on information that they are told them; the students must not be promised confidentiality.

5. Favouritism

- Care must be taken to avoid favouritism, or the appearance of favouritism shown towards students- Staff may find it easier to be with some students than with others, but this should never be reflected in the quality of support-or amount of attention offered.
- Support should be given according to the needs of the student as outlined in the student's Risk Assessment and Behaviour Support Plan.

6. Approach

- All interactions with students or colleagues should take place within a framework of respect.
- Any behaviour which could be seen as verbally or physically aggressive or abusive would be a serious breach of professionalism and could lead to disciplinary or criminal action.
- Tact, empathy and a good knowledge of the needs of the student should be evident in all interactions.
- Interactions should be non-confrontational and supportive at all times.
- Staff should always be prepared to admit errors or lack of knowledge.
- Staff should not disclose their own personal, sexual, family or employment concerns, or other private matters to students.
- Staff should always be careful not to prejudge, label or stereotype students or colleagues.
- Staff should be familiar with, and act within, the Behaviour Support Plan for each student.

7. Gossip/discussing other people

- Gossip relating to the private matters of students or colleagues should not be part of the culture of the school and should be actively discouraged.
- Staff should never share the personal details of colleagues with students.
- Staff should never discuss other staff members with students, other than in terms of their educational/support needs.
- Staff should never discuss one student with another in a 'gossipy' sense.

8. Providing advice

- When students ask for advice, this should be given in as non-directive way as possible, providing a range of options to allow the student to make an informed choice.
- If a student is being supported through a process of decision making, this should be documented and the staff member should discuss the matter with the Head teacher.
- Staff should be mindful of areas where they are not qualified to give advice, or where they feel it is not appropriate, or where the area under discussion is not one where they feel comfortable. If this is the case, the student should be directed towards another sympathetic staff member or outside agencies with suitable expertise.
- Generally the request for advice should come from the student, but if a staff member is concerned about something about which advice has not been requested (e.g. a potentially exploitative relationship away from the school), the information should be provided to the Head teacher/DSL on a Concern Form.

- Staff should not make promises to students or parent/carers which they are not authorised to deliver or are not agreed with the senior leadership team.

9. Use of Language

- At On Track all staff are expected to be good role models who actively promote and use language to demonstrate good communication and build self-esteem in students and colleagues.
- Staff should take care never to discuss personal matters in front of students or in circumstances where they can be overheard.
- When working with students, staff should always be looking for actions, behaviour and work which can be verbally praised.
- Where actions, behaviour or work fall short of expectations, students should never be told that they, or their work, are 'no good', 'a waste of time' or other such judgements which criticise the person or their work. Correction needs to be managed sensitively.
- Staff must not swear in front of the students.
- Staff must not use derogatory terms, sexual banter, and innuendo or sarcasm with, or in front of, students.
- Staff must not ridicule students or colleagues.
- Instructions given positively are more likely to be followed.
- Use of racist, sexist or homophobic language from students should be addressed consistently in line with school practice.
- Only a small percentage of communication comes from what is actually said, so staff need to be mindful of body language, tone of voice, facial expression etc.

10. Dress and Appearance

- Staff should take care to ensure they are dressed appropriately for the tasks and the work they undertake.
- Staff are expected to dress professionally with awareness that they are working in a school.
- Staff should avoid dressing in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate or could be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative.
- Cleanliness is important and it is expected that clothing will be clean and personal hygiene will be of a good standard, with an awareness that some students find personal odours, even perfume, difficult.
- Staff are discouraged from wearing expensive jewellery.
- Keys must not be left visible or available to students.

11. Transporting Students

- All transporting of students should take place in line with the On Track Driving Policy and Risk Assessment

12. Tobacco Products

- Staff members must not give or purchase tobacco products for students.
- Staff must not smoke in front of students.

13. Social Networking, Text Messages and Emails

- Staff should not be in contact with students, past or present, on social networking sites or using their personal mobile phones or email accounts.
- Staff should not request, or respond to, any personal information from the student, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role.
- Staff should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.
- Social media is a rapidly expanding area with new ways of communication arising all the time, but the principles set down in this policy should be assumed to apply to every means of communication and all personal devices.
- If at any point staff find they have been drawn into unwanted communication, they should immediately tell their Head teacher.

14. Use of mobile phones, tablets, cameras etc

- It is appropriate for staff to keep their personal phone with them to allow communication e.g. if a student leaves the school site and is being followed by the staff member.

- Personal calls or texts should not be made when with students and responses to incoming calls or texts should wait until the staff member has non-contact time, unless they involve an emergency. This may necessitate asking for cover to ensure that students remain supervised.
- Personal phones should not be used to make calls or texts to students or any member of their family, nor should staff give their personal phone number to students or families.
- Staff should not lend their phone to students.
- Many staff will have personal photos on their phone and these should generally remain private. It would be reasonable to show a student a photo of a pet or a photo relating to their education, but not one which gives more personal information. Eg a photo of the staff member's children or home.
- Photos of work completed by students is good working practice, but care must be taken before taking a photo of a student and the parent consent form maintained on the student's file must be checked. Even if the parent/carer has agreed that a photo can be taken, the student's permission should be sought.
- Where possible, all such photos should be taken on the school's equipment. If the staff member has used their mobile phone or personal camera, the photos should be downloaded to a school computer as soon as possible and the photos deleted from the phone/camera.
- Staff are responsible for the safety of their own property whilst at work.

15. Personal Devices

- The Head teacher will make staff aware of what they can and can't do when using personal laptops, phones, tablets or any other devices when using the school network or computer systems.
- The school network can only be used for professional purposes, as required by the role undertaken by the staff member.
- Personal devices should be password protected and the passwords should not be shared with any other staff member or student.
- Personal data should not be stored on the school network.
- Staff should ensure that any personal device brought into school contains no material that will bring their professional role into disrepute or which could be considered offensive, illegal or discriminatory.
- All personal devices should have suitable anti-virus software agreed with the E-safety Lead.
- No information relating to students can be maintained on a personal device.
- If information relating to On Track is downloaded onto a personal device, that device should not then be used by anybody else out of school e.g. spouses, children or friends, until such time as the On Track information is removed.
- On leaving On Track, care must be taken to remove all information relating to On Track from personal devices.
- Personal use such as online banking, social media or online shopping should not happen during the school day and staff should be aware that such activities could make your details accessible to others if you are linked to the network.
- Staff should ensure that personal devices are free of viruses before linking to the network.
- Personal devices must be Health and Safety compliant e.g. power lead not frayed and device PAT tested.
- Use of personal devices should be in line with On Track's E-safety Policy.

16. Contact with Students Outside School Hours

- Contact with students out of school hours should be avoided and should never be initiated by staff members. Although staff establish friendly, professional relationships with students, this is not to be confused with a friendship, which serves the needs of both parties. Any out of hours contact due to unusual or unforeseen circumstances must be carefully documented and the Head teacher informed. Care must be taken to ensure absolute transparency in these circumstances to protect both the student and the staff member.
- If a student or parent seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the staff member should exercise her/his professional judgement in making a response but should always discuss the situation with their senior manager within On Track.

17. Staff Conduct Outside School Hours

- Staff must not engage in conduct outside of work which could seriously damage the reputation of the school or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.

- Staff behaviour that results in a loss of faith in the integrity of the staff member will result in disciplinary action.
- In particular, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct will be regarded as unacceptable.
- Staff must reveal all new criminal convictions during the course of their employment with the organisation.
- Staff must exercise caution when using information technology, including social media, and be aware of the risk to themselves and others.
- Staff using social networking sites must ensure that, if adding personal news items, they do not include reference to the Company by name or by photograph, or to any employee, client, customer or any other person or organisation connected with the Company, or any of their relations or friends.
- Any use of social networking sites that brings the Company into disrepute, or breaches the equal opportunities and discrimination policy or harassment policy, will be regarded as gross misconduct and will result in summary dismissal.
- Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school nor be to a level which may contravene the working time regulation or affect an individual's work performance. (See Contract of Employment)

18. Giving and receiving of gifts

- The giving of gifts or rewards to students should be part of an agreed plan, recorded and discussed with a senior manager within On Track and the parent or carer. Personal gifts or financial help to students are not permitted.
- Staff should exercise care when selecting students for specific activities or privileges to avoid perceptions of favouritism or unfairness. Methods and criteria for selection should always be transparent and subject to scrutiny.
- There are occasions when students or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff e.g. on special occasions or as a thank-you and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value. All gifts from students or parents should be reported to the Head teacher.

19. Physical Contact

- There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate for staff to have some physical contact with the student with whom they are working. However, it is crucial that in all circumstances, staff should only touch students in ways which are appropriate to their professional role and responsibilities.
- Not all students feel comfortable about physical contact, and staff should not make the assumption that it is acceptable practice to use touch as a means of communication. Permission should be sought from a student before physical contact is made.
- When physical contact is made with a student this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one student in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different student. Staff, nevertheless, should use their professional judgement at all times, observe and take note of the student's reaction or feelings and use a level of contact and/or form of communication which is acceptable to the student for the minimum time necessary.

20. Taking students to a staff member's home.

- There are rare occasions when it may be appropriate for a student to be taken to a staff member's home eg if the staff member has a small holding and is able to offer to students opportunities in line with their learning package, which cannot be found elsewhere. This should only happen when it has been fully discussed with the Head teacher in advance and a Director has given specific permission for the activity to take place. This should never involve lone working i.e. at least one other staff member must be present. The Risk Assessment for such activities must include all aspects of the student's behaviour and should not take place if there has been any history of allegation against staff. There are no occasions when a student can be taken to a staff member's home without full planning and discussion.

21. Medication

- If a staff member is taking any medication, it must be kept locked away in such a way that it would not be possible for a student to gain access to it. It must not be taken within the view of students.

22. Disciplinary Action

- All staff need to recognise that failure to meet these standards of behaviour and conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

23. External support

- Care First provides confidential, impartial advice and support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. There is access to a telephone and online service. Care First can be accessed on:

www.carefirst-lifestyle.co.uk

user name – ote001

password - ices1234

24. Policy Review

In order to ensure that this policy is relevant to the work that you are doing, it would be helpful to receive feedback. If you have any comments to make, or suggestions for additions or amendments, please email directors@ontrackededucation.com

June 2010

Reviewed August 2010

Revised September 2011

Revised October 2012

Reviewed October 2013

Revised May 2014

Revised June 2014

Reviewed December 2014

Revised June 2015

Revised October 2015

Reviewed October 2016

Revised July 2017

Revised October 2017

Appendix 1 to Staff Conduct Policy

This policy should be read alongside:

The Safeguarding Policy

The Whistleblowing Policy

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2016) – Part 1

In signing below you are saying that you have read and understood all four documents, which can be found on the resources gateway.

If you have any concerns or feel that you need additional training to fully understand any or all of these documents, please do not sign, but refer directly to your Head teacher, who will provide or arrange training.

I have read and understood the Staff Conduct with Students Policy and Procedures and associated paperwork:

Name:

Signature:

Date: