Code of Conduct for All Staff Including Early Years

Abbotsford Preparatory School

1. Introduction

Our Code of Conduct reflects the DfE guidance, in particular 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (DfE July 2017), Staffing and Employment Advice for Schools' (DfE, 2024) and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (DfE, 2025).

This policy should be read in conjunction with the policies listed below:

- Behaviour and Discipline
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Complaints

This policy should also be read in conjunction with the Employee Handbook and your employee contract.

The school's expectation is that all students receive the highest possible quality of teaching and learning within a positive and respectful environment.

It is important, therefore, that staff understand that their own behaviour and the way they conduct themselves with their colleagues, students, parents and other stakeholders sets an example and affects the school environment.

The school recognises that the majority of staff always act in an appropriate manner and treat others with dignity and respect. However, we consider it important to make clear the standards we expect from staff so that misunderstandings and/or misinterpretation of rules are kept to a minimum.

This Code is intended to set out our expected standards of conduct, our rules and values. It applies to all staff, regardless of status. It is not an exhaustive compilation of what staff can and cannot do but it is hoped that it will ensure everyone is clear about what is acceptable and what is not.

The Code is binding on all school staff. Breaches of the Code and the standards expressed in it could result in disciplinary action, including dismissal for serious offences. We hope, of course, that such action won't be necessary and that all staff will ensure they read the Code and act in accordance with it.

2. General Standards and Expectations

It is important that members of the school's staff:

- provide a high standard of service in dealings with colleagues, students, parents and other stakeholders whether in person, by telephone, letter or e-mail;
- are polite, responsive and treat people with respect;
- are as clear as possible about any decisions and actions taken and the reasons for them;
- always use appropriate language and never demean, distress or offend the decency of others

This may happen, for example, by displaying material or pictures that could be seen as offensive, or by making degrading, suggestive or insensitive comments or remarks;

- respect the rights of others and treat them with dignity;
- never threaten, bully, fight with or assault anyone;
- never steal, damage or take items that belong to others (except for item confiscation from students);
- hand lost property in to the office;
- do not discriminate against, harass or victimise anyone met in the course of work, on any grounds, including the protected characteristics (Equality Act 2010):

    - age
    - race (which includes colour and ethnic / national origin)
    - disability
    - religion or belief
    - gender
    - gender reassignment
    - pregnancy or maternity
    - sexual orientation
    - marital or civil partner status
    - working on a temporary or part time basis
    - Trade Union involvement

(Note that discrimination, harassment and victimisation include the use of language, making remarks, telling jokes, displaying materials or behaving in a way that may be interpreted as discriminatory, even if not directed at a particular individual[s])

- raise any concerns about inappropriate behaviour by students, parents or colleagues, or about the internal workings of the school by following the appropriate procedure;
- promote the school's vision, ethos and values;
- comply with school policies and any other rules, regulations or codes that apply to work and the workplace;
- do not make public statements about the school without first obtaining authorisation from the Headteacher;
- avoid actions that may discredit the school or bring it into disrepute, this explicitly includes the expression or promotion of partisan views in personal conduct or delivery of the curriculum;
- ensure they are not under the influence of alcohol during working hours. (The Headteacher will decide if it is appropriate for alcohol to be made available at staff parties/social events);
- do not abuse drugs;
- do not disclose or misuse confidential information;
- do not engage in, or encourage, gossip, rumour or innuendo;

3. Management and Staff Relations

An atmosphere of mutual confidence, trust and respect between managers and staff is essential to achieving the school's aims and targets and providing a high quality of teaching and learning.

Members of staff should:

- Promote the School in a positive manner
- Work reliably and in accordance with the school's policies and practices as well as any other rules and regulations that apply to your work and/or the workplace
- Carry out any reasonable instructions given to you by your manager and/or Headteacher
- Recognise that they are part of a team and that everyone should be working together to achieve similar aims for the benefit of students

Managers should, in addition:

- Support and assist staff to carry out their work properly, including the implementation of the School's Induction Process for all new staff
- In dealings with staff, act in accordance with the relevant local and national conditions of employment/service
- Give feedback and advice on areas for further development to assist staff in meeting objectives
- Aim to develop staff to meet current and future needs of the school
- Consider constructive suggestions for improvements to working practices and standards
- Treat all staff fairly, consistently and with dignity
- Provide a safe and healthy working environment free from discrimination and harassment

4. Reporting Malpractice and Improper Conduct

Most problems and concerns within the workplace can be easily resolved, often informally. Sometimes it is necessary to use a more formal route, such as the School's Grievance Procedure. Very occasionally, however, more serious issues may arise involving, for example, unlawful conduct, financial malpractice, corruption, health and safety issues or other actions, which are not in the best interests of the students or the school.

Staff may be worried about raising serious issues, perhaps concerned that one may be mistaken, that one may lose one's job or otherwise suffer some form of retribution as a result. However, the School actively encourages an atmosphere to enable you to raise concerns about malpractice at an early stage, in the right way. Provided that you are acting in good faith, the school will protect you from victimisation or other detriment, even if you are mistaken about the matter. However, raising unfounded allegations maliciously would be viewed as a disciplinary matter.

Prior to raising a concern, staff should please note:

- Professional Association or Trade Unions may have in place a Code, or rules, which set out how members should behave in relation to raising concerns involving colleagues and/or in relation to dealings with colleagues in general. Staff are advised, if they are members of such an association, to familiarise themselves with any such Code or rules or contact their Union for further advice.
- Where concerns relate to a child protection issue, action should be taken in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Low Level Concerns

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work and
- does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door, or
- humiliating pupils.

It is important that **low level** concerns are recorded and reported correctly: these may form a wider context and therefore all staff are aware that even minor and low-level concerns must be taken seriously and reported to the Headteacher. The Headteacher is the ultimate decision maker in respect of all low-level concerns, although it is recognised that depending on the nature of some low-level concerns, the Headteacher may wish to consult with the DSL. Safeguarding training includes identifying low level concerns and identifying these for early intervention.

All low-level concerns are recorded in writing. The records include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, and action taken. The name of the individual sharing their concerns is also be noted, but if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that is respected as far as reasonably possible. Records of concerns are kept confidential, held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

Records are reviewed regularly so that potential patterns of concerning, inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, the school decides on a course of action, either through the disciplinary procedure or, where a pattern of behaviour moves from a low-level concern to meeting the harm threshold, in which case it is referred to the LADO.

Consideration is also given to whether there are wider cultural issues within the school that enabled the behaviour to occur and where appropriate policies and procedures could be revised, or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again.

The school retains information related to individuals where low-level concerns have been reported until the individual leaves their employment.

The Safeguarding Team additionally review pastoral notes and incidents to ensure that any low-level safeguarding issues are considered. Once a low-level concern has been reported, the Safeguarding Team will ensure that this is handled correctly, escalating if required. Low-level concerns will be reported to the same persons as set out above in relation to concerns and allegations that meet the harms test. This escalation will depend on the threat of harm, which is assessed frequently and robustly. If there are any doubts, the Safeguarding Team seeks advice from Social Services and Trafford TSSP

Reports about supply staff and contractors should be notified to their employers so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified. When a low-level concern has been raised by a third party, the Headteacher/DSL will collect as much evidence as possible by speaking (where possible) with the person who raised the concern, to the individual involved and to any witnesses. Reports of low-level concerns will be recorded in writing, with details of the concern, the context in which it arose and action taken. The name of the person reporting should be noted, respecting wishes to remain anonymous as far as reasonably possible. Records of low-level concerns are reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified and responded to. Where a pattern of behaviour is identified, the school will decide on a course of action. This might be internal disciplinary procedures, or referral to the LADO if the harms threshold is met. The school will consider if any wider cultural issues in school that enabled the behaviour to occur and if appropriate policies could be revised or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of recurrence. The rationale for all decisions and actions taken must be recorded.

5. School Policies and Procedures

All members of staff must comply with the school's policies and procedures. Policies are available on request from the Headteacher.

6. Dealings with Students

Members of staff are expected to:

- Work towards and encourage the highest possible level of achievement for all students
- Value and respect all students equally, treating them in a polite, positive, responsive and considerate manner
- Apply the School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy as situations demand to encourage and develop appropriate behaviours
- Ensure that items confiscated from students are left in a safe place, ideally labelled and locked away. Parents/guardians should be informed about when items will be returned
- Act in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Ensure that professional boundaries are not breached and behaviour that could be misinterpreted or otherwise leave one vulnerable to allegations of inappropriate behaviour should be avoided
- Maintain professional boundaries in all interactions with students, including on social media. To protect privacy and uphold professional standards, all staff must ensure their personal social media profiles are set to private and are not accessible to students. Under no circumstances should staff engage in direct communication with students via social media platforms, nor should they accept friend or follow requests from students. Any necessary communication should occur through official school channels. These guidelines are in place to safeguard both staff and students and to foster a respectful and professional learning environment.

7. Health and Safety

The school's aim is to promote good health and ensure safe working practices for staff, students, parents, other stakeholders and visitors. Staff of the School also have a legal responsibility to

contribute to a safe working environment. Failure to accept this responsibility may put themselves and/or others at risk. Staff should ensure that they:

- read and understand the School's Health and Safety Policy;
- comply with Health and Safety Regulations and use any safety equipment and protective clothing supplied by the school;
- comply with any hygiene requirements;
- comply with any accident reporting requirements;
- never act in a way which might cause risk or damage to any other members of the school community, or visitors.

8. Appearance and Dress

It is expected that staff:

- when at work, or representing the school, ensure that their appearance is neat and clean
- always dress in a manner which is appropriate to their role and the circumstances or setting in which they work
- remember that they are a role model for students and their appearance and dress should reflect this important and unique position
- do not dress in a way that may cause embarrassment to students, parents, colleagues, other stakeholders, or visitors. (for example: consider the appropriateness of T-Shirts with slogans).

Ultimately, it will be for the Headteacher to decide whether a member of staff's appearance and/or dress is appropriate or not.

The Headteacher must ensure that the rights of employees to dress as they please, and in accordance with their principles and beliefs, is balanced with the need for the school to promote a suitable image to its stakeholders. At all times, care will be taken not to discriminate in relation to appearance and dress requirements.

9. Hours of Work and Attendance

It is important that all staff are in school at their agreed starting time and do not leave before their agreed finishing time. Bad timekeeping and poor attendance have an adverse effect on students' education, increases costs and causes disruption for others.

It is recognised that most staff are punctual and do not take time off without good cause or obtaining prior permission.

Our expectations are that staff:

- attend work in accordance with your contract of employment and associated terms and conditions in relation to hours, days of work and holidays
- Wherever possible, make routine medical and dental appointments outside of working hours or during holidays. The only exceptions to this requirement will be in the event of an emergency or difficulty, in relation to hospital appointments (which are rarely negotiable) or to attend for ante-natal care if you are pregnant. Pregnant employees are entitled to paid time off for ante-natal appointments. In any circumstances, however, staff should agree time off with the Headteacher at the earliest opportunity to ensure that adequate cover arrangements can be made
- taking leave without permission will be subject to disciplinary action.

10. Sickness Absence

All staff are expected to follow the school's absence reporting procedure when they are absent from work due to illness or injury. This procedure includes notification as early as possible on the first day of absence, keeping the school informed where absence continues, requirements for the provision of medical certificates and procedures on return to work.

11. Sensitive Information and Confidentiality

It is expected that staff will use sensitive information properly and have due respect for confidentiality.

If staff have access to such information, they should ensure that they:

- know what information the school treats as confidential (check with the Headteacher if you are unsure);
- know who is entitled to have access to what information (check with the Headteacher if you are unsure);
- are responsible and professional in using and allowing access to personal information on students, parents, staff, governors and any others;
- use personal information in line with the principles of the Data Protection Acts. Such data must:
    - be obtained lawfully and fairly
    - be held only for specified and lawful purposes
    - be relevant and just sufficient for those purposes
    - be used or disclosed for no other purpose
    - be accurate, up to date, and kept only as long as is necessary
    - be held securely to prevent unauthorised access or tampering
    - be available for inspection and correction by the person it is about
    - not be transferred to countries outside the UK without adequate protection.

12. Use of School Resources & Technology & Online Safety and Mobile Phones

School communications systems and equipment, including electronic mail and Internet systems, along with their associated hardware and software, are for official and authorised purposes only. The Headteacher may authorise personal use which:

- does not interfere with the performance of professional duties;
- is of reasonable duration and frequency;
- serves a legitimate school interest, such as enhancing professional interests or education;
- does not overburden the system or create any additional expense to the school. The Headteacher should carefully consider discretionary use for any other purpose.

Staff are expected to conduct themselves honestly and appropriately on the Internet, and respect the copyrights, software licensing rules, property rights, privacy and prerogatives of others.

Internet users are prohibited from transmitting or downloading material that is obscene, pornographic, threatening, racially or sexually harassing, or in any way contravenes the Equal Opportunities Policy. Chat rooms may not be visited, nor sites known to contain offensive material.

The keeping of a personal diary/blog on the Internet (whether at school or at home) where reference is made to the school without authorisation is not acceptable as such usage could cause harm to the reputation of the school and may undermine the confidence of parents.

Staff should not post photos of staff events on Facebook without getting consent from those featured in pictures.

Online safety is understood to be ever more complex as the internet and online world expands and changes.

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- **Content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism.
- **Contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes'.
- **Conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and
- **Commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

The school ensures online safety is a running and interrelated theme whilst devising and implementing policies and procedures. This will include considering how online safety is reflected as required in all relevant policies and considering online safety whilst planning the curriculum, any teacher training, the role and responsibilities of the designated safeguarding lead and any parental engagement.

Our internet policy also covers how the internet is used and the safeguarding measures in place surrounding the community's use of the internet. The school uses monitoring and filtering devices to prevent the misuse of the internet. We review on a regular basis the effectiveness' of filtering and monitoring systems, via our Central IT Team. We also ensure that the leadership team and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place and are able to manage them effectively, knowing how to escalate concerns when identified.

In the EYFS, the use of mobile phones and personal cameras and devices is not permitted.

Social networking sites often set a minimum age limit (Facebook is 13, for example) for users to register online. Teaching children to use digital technology safely is an important part of the curriculum.

Staff must be alert to disclosures by students of cyber bullying and internet grooming. Such disclosures must be recorded and referred in the same way as other forms of bullying or abuse.

Pupils are not permitted to have mobile devices in school or on school trips/residentials

Under normal circumstances, the use of mobile phones by staff in the classroom is forbidden. Phones should be turned off and out of sight. However under exceptional circumstances, and only

on direction from the Headteacher, it may be necessary to allow the use of mobiles to ensure the wider safety of the setting, for example on the failure of the internal telephone system. Staff will be allowed to use phones for taking school-based photographs with prior consent from the Headteacher. All images must be deleted after being uploaded to the central share point. If this is the case, the right to examine phones is reserved if there is any suspicion of inappropriate use.

Where devices are beyond the School's control (3G, 4G, 5G etc) risks are considerably greater and the education aspect of safeguarding in this area becomes particularly important; understanding safe habits, controls and privacy settings when online should enable students to make the right choices when using their own connections. The use of unsupervised mobile technology is forbidden to reduce this risk.

13. Keeping Within the Law

Staff are expected to operate within the law. Unlawful or criminal behaviour, at work, or outside work, may lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal, being taken against you. You must ensure that you:

- Uphold the law at work
- Never commit a crime away from work which could damage public confidence in you or the school, or which makes you unsuitable for the work you do. This includes, for example:
    - Submitting false or fraudulent claims to the Council or other public bodies (for example, income support, housing or other benefit claims)
    - Breaching copyright on computer software or published documents
    - Sexual offences which will render you unfit to work with children or vulnerable adults
    - Crimes of dishonesty which render you unfit to hold a position of trust.

- Write and tell the Headteacher immediately if you are charged with, or convicted of, any crime whilst you are employed at The School. (This includes outside of your working hours). The Headteacher and/or governors would then need to consider whether this charge or conviction damages public confidence in The School or makes you unsuitable to carry out your duties.

14. Childcare Disqualification

Childcare disqualification is an additional requirement to the general child safeguarding arrangements provided under the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) regime, which apply to all children. The childcare disqualification arrangements apply to staff working with young children in childcare settings. The arrangements predominantly apply to individuals working with children aged 5 and under (including Reception classes) and apply to those working in wraparound care for children up to the age of 8, as well as those involved directly in the management of such provisions.

The criteria for disqualification under the 2006 act and the 2018 regulations include:

- inclusion on the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Children's Barred List;
- being found to have committed certain violent and sexual criminal offences against children and adults which are referred to in regulation 4 and Schedules 2 and 3 of the 2018 regulations (note that regulation 4 also refers to offences that are listed in other pieces of legislation);
- certain orders made in relation to the care of children which are referred to in regulation 4 and listed at Schedule 1 of the 2018 regulations;
- refusal or cancellation of registration relating to childcare (except if the refusal or cancellation of registration is in respect of registration with a child minder agency or the sole reason for

refusal or cancellation is failure to pay a prescribed fee under the 2006 act (regulation 4(1) of the 2018 regulations)), or children's homes, or being prohibited from private fostering, as specified in paragraph 17 of Schedule 1 of the 2018 regulations;

- living in the same household where another person who is disqualified lives or is employed (disqualification 'by association') as specified in regulation 9 of the 2018 regulations (note that regulation 9 only applies where childcare is provided in domestic settings, defined as 'premises which are used wholly or mainly as a private dwelling' in section 98 of the act, or under a domestic premises registration, including non-domestic premises up to 50% of the time);
- being found to have committed an offence overseas, which would constitute an offence regarding disqualification under the 2018 regulations if it had been committed in any part of the United Kingdom;
- The above list is only a summary of the criteria that lead to disqualification. Further details about the specific orders and offences, which will lead to disqualification, are set out in the 2018 regulations.

If you, as a member of staff, fall under the criteria of the childcare disqualification, it is your duty to inform the Headteacher of any such information that may mean that you are disqualified under the 2018 'Disqualification Under the Childcare Act' regulations. All personal and sensitive information will be stored and destroyed fairly and lawfully.

For the full statutory guidance and further information, please read here.

15. Whistleblowing

It is recognised that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. The school will ensure that all staff are made aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues to the Headteacher. If staff feel unable to raise the issue with the Headteacher or they feel that their genuine concerns are not being addressed they should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Assistant DSL, or another Director if they feel their concerns are not being addressed. Staff at school must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of Senior Management. Although this can be difficult this is of paramount importance where the welfare of children may be at risk.

You may be the first to recognise that something is wrong, but may not feel able to express your concerns out of a feeling that this may be disloyal to a colleague or you may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings however natural, must never result in a child or young person continuing to be unnecessarily at risk. Remember it is often the most vulnerable children or young person who are targeted. These children need us to safeguard their welfare.

Don't think what if I'm wrong- think what if I'm right

Reasons for Whistle Blowing:

- each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour;
- to prevent the problem worsening or widening;
- to protect or reduce risk to others;
- to prevent becoming implicated yourself.

What stops people from Whistle Blowing:

- starting a chain of events which spirals;
- disrupting the work or project;
- fear of getting it wrong;
- fear of repercussions or damaging careers;
- fear of not being believed.

How to raise a concern:

- you should voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you feel you can. The earlier a concern is expressed the easier and sooner action can be taken;
- try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning you and why;
- approach the Headteacher;
- if your concern is about the Headteacher you should inform the Directors;
- make sure you get a satisfactory response – don't let matters rest;
- you should put your concerns in writing, outlining the background and history, giving names, dates and places if possible;
- you are not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, but you will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for your concern.

The Next Steps

- The School will notify you of the nature and progress of any enquiries.
- Your employer has a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimisation.
- No action will be taken against you if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith.
- Malicious allegations may be considered as a disciplinary offence.

Self-Reporting

There may be occasions where a member of the school staff has a personal difficulty, perhaps a physical or mental health problem which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with their Headteacher so that professional and personal support can be offered to the member of staff concerned. Whilst such reporting will remain confidential in most instances, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children.

16. Disciplinary Procedure

A disciplinary procedure is a formal way for an employer to deal with an employee's misconduct or capability. There are varying levels of procedure depending on the gravity of the situation. For disciplinary procedures following safeguarding matters, please refer to the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

Before starting a disciplinary procedure, it will be investigated as to whether the problem can be resolved in an informal way. This can often be the quickest and easiest solution. Informal resolution of the issue may occur with a private discussion, agreeing improvements to be made or by setting up a training or development plan, if there is a performance issue.

In the case of gross misconduct, an investigation will be carried out and the full disciplinary procedure will be followed.

In exceptional circumstances consideration may be given to removing a member of staff from their place of work (i.e. suspension) at the outset of the investigation or at any stage during the investigation. Suspension may be considered at any stage. Suspension is a neutral act, not a disciplinary sanction and the employee will receive normal pay. Where possible an alternative should be found to suspension. This could include alternative duties/locations or removal from contact with students.

Members of staff have the right to be accompanied at a disciplinary hearing by either (up to) two trade union representatives or one work colleague. It is the responsibility of the member of staff to arrange their own accompaniment and to inform the relevant person conducting the meeting that they are to be accompanied and by whom.

At any disciplinary hearing or appeal hearing the member of staff will have the right to:

- produce written statements and bring witnesses (All written statements shall be circulated to all parties at least 3 days in advance of the hearing);
- ask questions of any witness's present;
- present his/her case (or be represented by up to two trade union representatives or one work colleague) prior to the decision being made whether to issue the warning or to dismiss.

The member of staff will be given sufficient information about the allegations to enable them to answer the case at the hearing together with all documentary evidence to be presented by the management side during the hearing. The hearing will be conducted either by the Headteacher or the Directors.

No employee will be dismissed for a first breach of discipline except in the case of gross misconduct, when the penalty may be dismissal without notice and without pay in lieu of notice. Except for gross misconduct, a member of staff dismissed by reason of disciplinary action shall be given notice based on their terms and conditions of employment.

The following decisions may be issued by a governing body panel or Headteacher at a disciplinary hearing;
The decision to issue no formal sanction.

- Level 1 warning may be given where the case is of sufficient importance or seriousness to bring to the attention of the employee formally. The time limit for this sanction shall be 6 months (excluding the summer break from the date of the decision).
- Level 2 warning may be given where the case has already involved a first warning and insufficient improvement has been made, where further misconduct has occurred, or where the case is of sufficient importance or seriousness to bring to the attention of the member of staff formally. The time limit shall be 9 months (excluding the Summer Break) from the date of the decision.
- Level 3 warning may be given where the case has already involved a first warning and insufficient improvement has been made, where further misconduct has occurred, or where the case is of sufficient importance or seriousness to bring to the attention of the member of staff formally. This level of sanction may also be issued where a determination of gross misconduct may not warrant dismissal for example due to mitigating circumstances. The time limit for this sanction shall be 12 months (excluding the Summer Break) from the date of the decision. For the purposes of future disciplinary action, breaches of discipline will be disregarded after the specified time of satisfactory conduct. However, the fact that the employee has been subject of disciplinary action will form part of that person's employment record. The following disciplinary sanction can only be issued by a governor, unless the governors have delegated this authority to the school's Headteacher.

- Level 4 Dismissal. An employee is likely to be dismissed where the case has already involved a final warning and insufficient improvement has been made or where further misconduct has occurred or where the case.

A letter detailing the decision will be given to the member of staff within 10 working days of the date of the disciplinary hearing taking place or sooner where possible and a copy placed on the member of staff's personnel file, if a warning is issued.

17. Grievance Procedure

The grievance procedure is designed to ensure that concerns, problems and complaints arising in the course of employment can be raised and resolved quickly and in a fair and reasonable manner. The grievance procedure exists to provide a mechanism for employees to raise concerns. Any vexatious, malicious, trivial or excessively unreasonable complaint will not be heard under the grievance procedure. Confidentiality should be maintained by all those involved, including the member of staff, at all stages throughout the procedure by ensuring that only those people who need to know have access to details e.g. trade union representative or work colleague. Written records of issues will be treated as confidential and kept no longer than is necessary.

If an employee has a complaint that involves another employee or other employees, they must initially try to resolve the matter by direct approach to the employee or employees involved.
All parties should attempt to seek informal resolution by talking through the issue e.g. as part of day-to-day management, routine meetings between individuals and the SLT or informal meetings between employees and/or the SLT. An employee can request an informal meeting with the SLT if they have not had an opportunity to raise their concern.

All parties should consider mediation if the complaint involves conflict or disagreement between employees or between the SLT and an employee. Mediation is a voluntary process where an independent mediator helps two or more people in dispute to attempt to reach an agreement. It requires agreement from both the employee bringing the complaint and the employee complained about. The role of the mediator is completely impartial – they would have had no previous contact with the parties and no previous involvement in the case. Mediation can be used at any stage of the grievance procedure however it is essentially an 'informal' process, so it is often used prior to formal procedures. If mediation is used during the formal stages, the grievance procedure should be suspended whilst mediation is being used as an appropriate method of resolving the dispute.

If the employee is still dissatisfied after informal resolution has been fully explored, they may proceed to the formal stage of the procedure.

To raise a formal grievance an employee must submit a written statement to the Headteacher without unreasonable delay, (if the Headteacher is not the subject of the grievance). The written statement must set out the nature of the grievance and detail how the employee would like the grievance to be resolved. The line manager or Headteacher should arrange for a formal grievance meeting to be held without unreasonable delay, after a grievance has been received. If the Headteacher is the subject of the grievance, the written statement should be submitted to the Governors of the school. The Governors will investigate the grievance following the procedure. If the grievance is against one of the Governors, the employee should submit his/her grievance in writing to the Governors, who will then arrange for the matter to be investigated without unreasonable delay by an alternative appropriate individual, who will investigate the grievance following the procedure.

Consideration should be given to adjourning the grievance meeting for any investigation that may be necessary, and the investigation should be carried out without unreasonable delay. The meeting

should then be rearranged without unreasonable delay and within a timescale agreed with the employee. once the investigation is completed, the Headteacher or manager will meet with the employee to confirm the findings and outcome. This will be followed up in writing and include the right of appeal. The letter will be sent within seven days of the outcome meeting.

If the employee who raised the grievance can demonstrate the outcome was not reasonable in their opinion, they have the right to appeal. The appeal should be lodged in writing with the Governors within 14 days of receipt of the outcome letter. The employee will be notified in writing of the decision by the Governors within seven days of the appeal meeting. The appeal hearing is the final stage in the grievance procedure and the Governors decision is final.

If the grievance and the disciplinary are around the same issues it may be appropriate to deal with them both together.

An employer is not required to deal with a 'grievance' raised by an ex-employee, as the grievance procedure focuses on resolving disputes with employees. However, issues raised by ex-employees should be considered under the school's Complaints Policy.

Further advice

If there is anything in this Code that is unclear, please speak to the Headteacher.

Date	Position	Name of Reviewer	Date of Next Review
August 2025	Headteacher	C Howard	August 2026
August 2025	Proprietor	Mr A. Khan	August 2026