



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/ Housemistress (HsM) is in loco parentis and therefore any queries about individuals must be addressed to the relevant HsM or, if not available, the Head or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

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. Conduct with Pupils

Pupils respect commitment, competence, trustworthiness, fairness and friendliness. There is an expectation that your commitment should be to the whole life of the School which means that teaching does not begin and end in the classroom. Milton Abbey pupils can and will learn to trust you if they know where they stand. Being consistent in your expectations, doing what you say, listening without prejudice or impatience and treating pupils with respect go a long way to building healthy working relationships with them.

While you cannot like all pupils equally, you must always endeavour to treat them with equity. Being friendly but not overly familiar with pupils is an important tool in ensuring you maintain your professional boundaries. It is not your role to be a friend to the pupils; blurring professional

lines in this way can and will lead to mixed and complicated relationships with the pupils with whom you live and work.

Milton Abbey staff must have due regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the School and not undermine or exploit the vulnerabilities of the pupils. In line with the Teachers' Standards Part Two: Professional Conduct, your personal values, attitude and behaviour should set a standard that is open but never indiscreet.

2. Physical Contact

A physical response to pupil misbehaviour is unlawful, unless it is intended to restrain the pupil 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 Sports, Drama, Music etc.
- Action to prevent harm or injury to the pupil or to others
- In cases of distress where a pupil 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 pupil has arisen to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Senior 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 HsM.

3. Pupil Privacy

- Staff should be sensitive to 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 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 HsMs 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.

4. Meetings with Pupils

- Staff must always be aware of the potential dangers arising from private interviews with pupils. 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 HsM. (Please refer to 'Resident Staff Guidance').
- 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 HsM and ideally should only be given when accompanied with food.
- Meetings with pupils off School premises (during term time or holidays) should only take place with the prior knowledge and consent of the HsM.
- Car journeys must be approved by the HsM, Deputy Head (Pastoral) 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 HsM.

5. Communication with Pupils *(this should be read in conjunction with the staff email protocol which forms part of the Staff Acceptable Usage Policy and Milton Abbey policies regarding General Data Protection Regulation)*

- 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 pupils (or their families) in the vicinity of other pupils. 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 an appropriate curriculum context, for example: Biology, PSHE, Literature or RS.
- 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.
- Pupils 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, HsM 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. (Refer to the Staff Acceptable Usage Policy)
- Staff must not use **Social Networking sites** (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat etc.) to connect or communicate with current pupils.
 - In the event of wanting to continue communications with a pupil once they have left Milton Abbey, professional discretion is advised and should be exercised with caution. If the former pupil is still under 18 or has continued multiple friendships with current pupils, there is a greater risk of blurring professional boundaries which should be avoided.
- Staff should be circumspect in all communications with pupils 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 pupils including personal e-mail

addresses, home or personal mobile telephone numbers, unless the need to do so is agreed with the Senior 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 contacts (e.g. an emergency on a school trip), telephone numbers of pupils should not be permanently stored on personal mobile devices. The likelihood of this taking place will be negated by following trip protocol where staff are able to access and school provided phones that are available.

6. 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 pupils 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.

7. Dress Code

The way staff dress sends a message to pupils, parents and visitors about their professionalism and standards of care. It is an important safeguard for staff and pupils that staff wear clothing that is appropriate to their role and garments are suitable for the activities carried out whilst at work.

- 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 and not likely to be viewed as offensive/discriminatory, revealing or sexually provocative.
- Appropriate footwear must be worn at all times, particularly for health and safety reasons.
- Staff will be informed in advance if the dress code is to be altered for a particular event.

8. Resident and Boarding Staff

- Resident Staff Guidance is provided for residential and boarding staff.
- Common sense and discretion are important when inviting people to your home, particularly during term time. Access to staff homes will often be in direct line of pupil corridors, communal spaces and in some areas washing facilities. Pupils will have a reasonable expectation of people other than their house staff being in their boarding house, but resident staff must be mindful of the lives pupils lead during term time.
- It is important to establish and maintain personal boundaries around your home, and this should be reflected in your conduct with pupils and if and how you choose to share this space with them.

9. 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 Acceptable Usage Policy at all times.
- Staff must not use their personal devices 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 the staff common room).