



# MILTON ABBAY SCHOOL

**STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY  
(Applying also to governors, volunteers and peripatetic staff)**

Human Resources

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## 1. Introduction

Milton Abbey (“the School”) strives to be a community in which everyone is known, understood and respected and in which:

- kindness is central
- diversity and difference are celebrated
- all stand up for what they know to be right

We work together to create a healthy, happy, safe environment for all.

This policy aims to:

- bring together expectations and guidance for staff, governors, volunteers and peripatetic in their standards of behaviour, and in their conduct towards others.
- to provide clear guidance about behaviour and actions so as not to place pupils, staff or other persons at risk of harm.

References made to ‘child’ or ‘children’ refer to children and young people under the age of 18 years however the principles of this document apply to professional behaviours towards all pupils, including those over the age of 18 years and therefore ‘child’ should be read to mean any pupil at the school.

References made to adults and staff refer to all those who work with pupils in the school whether in a paid or unpaid capacity and includes those who are not directly employed by the school (e.g. sports coaches, governors, etc).

This policy is underpinned by the school’s Child Protection Policy and Procedures together with government [guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\) 2025](#), [Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings](#) and the School’s Whistleblowing Policy.

All members of the School community should:

- develop productive and supportive relationships with colleagues;
- exercise management responsibilities in a respectful, inclusive and fair manner;
- comply with all School policies and procedures;
- participate in the School’s development and improvement activities; and
- uphold the School’s reputation and standing within the local community.

## 2. Safeguarding

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 members of the School community must abide by the School’s Safeguarding 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 all members of the School community that are essential in a boarding environment.

- In addition, all staff must:
  - Read and understand Part 1 of KCSIE 2025.
  - Know the role, identity and contact details of the current Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and their Deputies;
  - Know the role and identity of the Governor with lead responsibility for Safeguarding;
  - Be aware that they are in a position of trust (i.e. the adult is in a position of power or influence over the pupil due to his or her work); that the relationship is not a

relationship between equals and that this position must never be used to intimidate, bully, humiliate, coerce or threaten pupils.

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, and if appropriate employee start dates will be adjusted.

Staff must always think carefully about their own conduct and the way in which they build their relationships with pupils. The safeguarding culture of the School is, in part, exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between staff and pupils, and behaviour by the adult that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement.

All staff should put the well-being, development and progress of all pupils first by:

- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils under their supervision.
- Using professional expertise and judgment for the best interests of pupils in their care.
- Demonstrating self-awareness and taking responsibility for their own actions and for providing help and support to pupils.
- Raising concerns about the practices of teachers or other professionals or volunteers where these may have a negative impact on pupils' learning or progress, or may put pupils at risk.

All staff should be aware that:

- They 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) acts in loco parentis and therefore any queries about individuals must be addressed to the relevant HSM or, if not available, the Head, Senior Deputy or one of the Deputy Heads.

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.

Staff should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which could be misinterpreted by others and report and record any such incident.

Inappropriate behaviour with or towards pupils of any age is unacceptable and likely to constitute gross misconduct.

Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a pupil is unacceptable, including any form of touch or comment which is or may be considered to be indecent or could be interpreted as sexually suggestive, provocative or give rise to speculation.

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.

Through the school's safeguarding training, staff are made aware of 'grooming' behaviours. All staff have a responsibility to always report to the Head any concerns about the behaviour of a colleague which could indicate that a pupil is being groomed.

## **2.1 Whistleblowing**

At Milton Abbey there is a culture of sharing and raising concerns to ensure that the community is compliant in its responsibilities to keep its staff and pupils safe. Staff are valued within this establishment, and it is their professional responsibility to ensure that they aspire to best and reflective practice.

All staff are required to report their own wrongdoing, or any wrongdoing or proposed wrongdoing of any other member of staff or any conduct which they may suspect to be inappropriate to the Headmaster.

The School is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. To ensure these standards are consistently maintained it is important that any fraud, misconduct or wrongdoing by any officer, employee, agency worker, individual or supplier to the School is reported and properly dealt with. We therefore encourage all individuals to raise any concerns that they may have about the conduct of others in the School or the way in which the School is run.

For further information, employees should refer to the Whistleblowing Policy.

## **3. Standards of Personal Behaviour**

### **3.1 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

Milton Abbey School celebrates diversity and is committed to achieving equality for all. Those of all faiths and none are equally welcome in our community. The Abbey is central to our school life. Community worship is in the tradition of the Church of England.

Inclusion and diversity are core values at Milton Abbey School. We seek to ensure that the workplace is supportive of all our staff and expect respect to be shown to all members of staff, regardless of sex, age, (dis)ability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, ethnic background, culture, sexual orientation, religion or belief or any other factor in line with the Equality Act 2010.

All Staff should demonstrate respect for diversity and take steps to promote equality by:

- acting appropriately and in accordance with this Code of Conduct, towards all pupils, parents, guardians or carers and colleagues;
- complying with the School's policies and this Code of Conduct;
- addressing issues of discrimination and bullying whenever they arise; and
- helping to create a fair and inclusive School environment.

All staff will be supported and encouraged to perform to their potential.

Please also refer to the Staff Equality and Diversity Policy.

### **3.2 Bullying and Harassment**

Milton Abbey takes a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment, this includes discrimination towards staff who hold one of the protected characteristics. Staff:

- must treat colleagues with courtesy and respect and must not abuse them verbally or physically
- must not harass or bully or be rude to colleagues
- must comply with the standards set out in this and the Staff Equality and Diversity Policy.

Disciplinary action will be taken against inappropriate behaviour that shows lack of respect for others or causes people to feel threatened.

Please also refer to the *Positive Work Environment Policy*.

### 3.3 Violence and Aggression at Work

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines workplace violence as “any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work” and states that it can include verbal abuse or threats, as well as physical attacks. This can be via face-to-face contact, online or by telephone.

The School takes a zero-tolerance approach to violence and aggression whilst at work. However, it is acknowledged that some staff may, on occasion, encounter violence or aggression from pupils, parents, members of the public, customers, colleagues and visitors to the school, and therefore the School takes reasonable measures to eliminate or minimise the risks.

- Risk assessments will be undertaken for specific pupils with known difficulties.
- Staff will receive training from time to time on measures to be taken in different circumstances.
- All incidents of violence and aggression involving staff must be reported to the Director of Finance & Operations.
- Where a member of staff has to use positive ‘handling procedures’ as a result of violence in the school, these should be recorded.
- Following an incident of violence or aggression, support will be offered by the school – where necessary staff should be directed to access support from the Employee Assistant programme (EAP) or School Counsellor.
- Staff are expected to take account of their own safety when considering their actions in intervening in any incidents of violence or aggression.

Please also refer to the *Positive Working Environment Policy*.

### 3.4 Conduct Outside Work

For avoidance of doubt ‘Conduct Outside Work’ is defined as staff outside of working hours off site, or outside of working hours on site. An employee must not bring the School’s name into disrepute.

As a general rule, what employees do after working hours and away from the premises is a personal matter. The School does not concern itself with the private lives of its staff unless they affect the School’s operation or its reputation. The School will become involved in the following circumstances (where all of the School’s policies will continue to apply):

- At work parties, events and other work-related social occasions
- At third-party (e.g. suppliers, parents) occasions where the employee has been invited in their capacity as an employee and representative of the School
- At work-related conferences and training courses
- Where the employee is away on business on behalf of the School

Improper behaviour will lead to investigation and possible disciplinary action, including dismissal.

Statutory Guidance outlined in KCSIE 2025 makes clear that there are types of behaviour which may indicate a person poses, or might pose, a risk of harm if they continue to work in regular or close contact with children. This is more commonly known as the ‘harm test’: a person has ‘behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children’.

This may be indicated when an incident occurs outside of work, did not involve children but could have an impact on an employee’s suitability to work with children, for example, being involved in a safeguarding issue or perhaps a domestic violence incident at home, where violent behaviour could pose a risk to children at school. This is known as ‘transferable risk’.

Where concerns of this nature are known or raised, the Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedures will be followed in relation to Allegations about Staff or Volunteers.

There may be times where an individual's conduct or actions in their public life come under scrutiny from the community, the media, or public authorities (including with regard to their own children, or children or adults in the community). Staff should be aware that their behaviour either in or out of the workplace could compromise their position with the school in relation to the protection of children, loss of trust and confidence or bringing the school into disrepute. Such behaviour may also result in prohibition from teaching by the Teaching Regulations Agency, a bar from engaging in regulated activity, or action by another relevant regulatory body.

Staff should therefore always refrain from behaving in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or act as an appropriate role model.

### **3.5 Relationships and Contact with other members of staff and suppliers, customers, clients and parents**

Members of staff who are relatives or who have close personal relationships should not normally have a supervisory, assessing or authorising relationship with each other.

Employees must inform the Headmaster if they have a close personal relationship with another employee or supplier, customer, client or parent which could be considered by colleagues or others, as impacting on the way that they conduct themselves at work or causing a conflict of interest.

Staff should be aware that where they meet children or parents, guardians or carers socially, such contact could be misinterpreted as inappropriate, an abuse of a position of trust or as grooming. Any social contact that could give rise to concern should be reported to the Senior Deputy Head or Headmaster.

Staff who are friends with parents, guardians or carers of pupils or who, for example, are voluntary workers in youth organisations attended by pupils, will of course have contact with those pupils outside school. However, members of Staff should still respect the above advice wherever possible and should keep the Senior Deputy Head or Headmaster informed of such relationships.

Staff who are also parents at the School need to be aware of the importance of maintaining confidentiality regarding school matters when mixing socially with other parents. Both the staff member and the School need to maintain clear boundaries between work and parenting matters (e.g. making formal appointments to discuss pupil behaviour). Please see the DSL for support or advice.

Any contact with current or past parents and with past pupils, relating to school business, must be carried out on school systems, in accordance with the Acceptable Use Policy.

Staff are not permitted to be in communication with pupils of the school via social media. When a pupil leaves the school, staff are not permitted to be in touch with them (unless via official school communications) until 3 years post their departure from Milton Abbey in MVI or 3 years from when they turn 18 (whichever is later). If a pupil is known to staff outside of school and this may pose an issue, please inform the DSL or Senior Deputy Head.

### **3.6 Health and Wellbeing**

Milton Abbey School require Staff to share pertinent medical information as part of the Safer Recruitment process, to enable the school to respond appropriately and ensure where appropriate reasonable adjustments are made to support effective and safe working practices in line with the employee's duties.

- It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that the school are aware of any changes of significance in their health that impact on their ability to fulfil their duties as outlined in their job description.
- It is the employer's responsibility to work with employees to address concerns, make reasonable adjustments where possible and support employees to fulfil their duties.

Employees have a responsibility to themselves and their colleagues to ensure they are able to comply with reasonable adaptations and restrictions employed by the school in response to any critical incident or government legislation.

Milton Abbey School is committed to ensuring that its Staff have the opportunity to share concerns and take an active role in the development and nurture of its workforce and community. The school offers an Employee Assistance Programme to assist and support staff and their families. Staff benefit from this free independent confidential service, with counselling readily available. Further information on the Employee Assistance Programme can be found on the staff gateway page, under HR.

It is an employee's duty to ensure they take a proactive approach to self-care, as well as the sharing any concerns relating to their mental and physical health and wellbeing that impacts their ability to undertake their role or share any concerns where their role impacts on their health and wellbeing.

Adults taking medication which may affect their ability to care for children should seek medical advice regarding their suitability to do so. The school must have sufficient confirmation that any medication does not impair a member of staff's ability to look after children.

### **3.7 Alcohol and Drugs**

Under legislation Milton Abbey School, as an employer, have a duty to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety and welfare at work of all employees and similarly, all employees have a responsibility to themselves and their fellow colleagues. The use of alcohol and drugs may impair the safe and efficient running of the School and/or the health and safety of our employees.

If an employee's performance or attendance at work is affected as a result of alcohol or drugs, or the school believes they have been involved in any drug related action/offence, they may be subject to disciplinary action and, dependent on the circumstances, this may lead to their dismissal.

### **3.8 Health and Safety at Work**

All staff are responsible for their own safety and that of others who they may affect during their work, including children, and should be familiar with the school's Health and Safety Policy, and other relevant supporting policies. For a full list of H&S Policies, please see the staff gateway, under H&S.

Health & Safety responsibilities are not optional and should be considered a mandatory aspect of every job description. Neglectful or wilful non-compliance will be considered a HR matter and could result in disciplinary proceedings.

Employees must bring any Health and Safety concerns to the attention of the Director of Finance & Operations or the Senior Deputy Head immediately.

## **4. Conduct and Behaviour**

All Staff should maintain public trust and confidence in the School and in their profession by:

- demonstrating honesty, integrity and acting in good faith in the course of their duties;
- understanding and upholding their duty to safeguard the welfare of children and young people;
- understanding and demonstrating fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs;
- maintaining appropriate standards of behaviour and conduct whether inside or outside of normal School hours and whether on or off the School's site; and maintaining an effective learning environment;

- setting the highest standards of conduct and must behave politely and reasonably towards pupils, colleagues, parents, members of the public and customers of the School at all times;
- demonstrating self-awareness and take responsibility for their own actions and for providing help and support to pupils and colleagues;
- ensuring power and balance by not abusing their authority either in relation to a colleague or employee;
- achieving an appropriate standard of dress, which meets health and safety requirements, neatness and personal hygiene; (see section 7 for further details)
- adhering to the rules of confidentiality across all areas of school life, through verbal, written or social media correspondence;
- not conducting themselves in a manner (including outside of working hours) which could reasonably be regarded as bringing themselves or the School into disrepute;
- awareness that Milton Abbey School employees must not take illegal drugs or any illegal substances whilst employed by the school, this applies to both in or out of term time. If illegal drug use is suspected employees may be required to undergo a 'test' to determine and confirm illegal drug use.
- taking reasonable care with School property, equipment, resources and facilities and ensuring that they are only used for School purposes;
- behaving towards others in a way that creates mutual respect, whilst respecting professional boundaries;
- understanding that acts of violence, threatening behaviour and verbal abuse are unacceptable;
- not subjecting any other person to any form of harassment, victimisation or bullying;
- complying with all lawful and reasonable instructions of the School and their managers;
- familiarising themselves with the legislation, standards, policies, rules and procedures that relate to their work and general conduct.
- Completing training requests in a timely manner and certainly by set deadlines;
- Adhering to location based security and health and safety requirements ( e.g.locking doors) and abiding by rules relating to unauthorised access (e.g. all roofs)

Employees requiring further information or guidance as to the appropriate course of action to adopt in any situation must refer to their Line Manager.

#### **4.1 Additional principles for teachers**

Teachers should take responsibility for maintaining the quality of their teaching practice by:

- meeting the professional standards for teaching applicable to their role and position within the School;
- reflecting on their current practice and seeking out opportunities to develop knowledge, understanding and skills;
- helping pupils to become confident and successful learners; and
- establishing productive relationships with parents, guardians or carers by:
  - a. providing accessible and accurate information about their child's progress;
  - b. involving them in important decisions about their child's education; and
  - c. complying with this Code.

## **5. Work Performance**

- Employees must carry out their duties at a level of performance acceptable to the School.
- Employees must co-operate with reasonable requests and instructions from managers.
- Employees must at work, and otherwise, act within the law to reflect the trust and confidence the public places in them.
- Employees must assist where required with enforcement action taken by the School.

- Employees must co-operate with the police and other enforcement bodies in providing statements and evidence.
- Employees must co-operate with any internal or external enquiry or investigation.
- Employees should follow the appropriate procedures to raise concerns:
  - With regards to concerns, complaints or allegations about Staff/Volunteers:
    - Follow the Safeguarding Policy , Low Level Concerns Policy and Procedures for Managing Allegations Against Staff, Volunteers, the Headmaster and Governors
  - With regards to concerns or complaints about operational or strategic processes directly relating to duties:
    - Discuss with and refer to your Line Manager in the first instance.
    - Escalate matters to their Line Manager if there is no satisfactory conclusion.
    - Where there is no resolution to a concern or complaint, escalate matters to the Senior Deputy Head or Director of Finance & Operations. If there is no conclusion following escalation, refer the matter to the Headmaster, or follow the procedures outlined in the Grievance Policy.

## 6. Attendance and Timekeeping

- Employees are contracted to the School to carry out a job. Regular attendance at work is essential to undertake the duties of that job.
- Employees must notify their line manager of any absence from duty for any reason - including non-attendance at an approved course of training. Employees must explain their absence, as soon as is reasonably practicable and in accordance with prescribed arrangements. If the reason for absence is sickness, employees must comply with the appropriate sickness notification arrangements.
- Employees must comply with their starting and finishing times.
- Employees must comply with annual leave procedures.
- Persistent lateness is unacceptable.
- Persistent absenteeism is unacceptable.

Please also refer to the Sickness Absence Policy.

## 7. Dress and Personal Appearance

The school takes its legal obligation to avoid unlawfully discriminating against any protected characteristic (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) very seriously. In so doing, the School will make reasonable adjustments for staff with disabilities and/or religious expression where appropriate and does not conflict with health and safety or other legitimate requirements.

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. Employees must be aware that their appearance contributes to the impression and reputation of our school.

- Where employees are remote working (meetings, teaching, webinar etc.) they must ensure they are dressed in an appropriate manner, reflective of a working day.
- Employees must maintain a standard of dress and appearance that is appropriate or required for the workplace and to the work being undertaken
  - Where particular clothing is provided for health, safety and hygiene as uniform and/or to portray a corporate image, it must be worn.
  - 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
  - Not have political, provocative or offensive logos or designs
  - Cover the chest, midribs, buttocks, groin areas and underwear garments.
- 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.
- Staff must ensure that visible tattoos are appropriate for a professional school environment. Tattoos that contain profanity, violence, explicit content or promote discrimination or hatred must be covered while at work. Staff should speak to the Senior Deputy Head if they have concerns about whether a tattoo needs to be covered or if they have tattoos with religious or cultural significance.
- Staff are expected to wear jewellery that is appropriate for a professional school environment and does not pose a health and safety risk. Jewellery should be modest and not excessive. Staff should use their professional judgement. We respect and accommodate jewellery work for religious or cultural reasons. Staff should speak to their Line Manager if they have any questions about this.
- Staff are expected to maintain standards of personal hygiene appropriate for a professional school environment. We recognise that some staff may have medical conditions or other circumstances that affect personal hygiene, and we will work sensitively with individuals to provide support and make reasonable adjustments where needed. Staff who have medical conditions or other circumstances that may affect personal hygiene are encouraged to speak confidentially with their Line Manager so we can provide appropriate support. Any concerns about personal hygiene will be handled with sensitivity and discretion by the Line Manager.
- Staff who smoke should be mindful of the impact of smoke odour on colleagues and pupils. Staff should ensure they wash their hands after smoking, and where possible, use breath fresheners if necessary and change outer layers if smoke odour is strong.
- Hair (including facial hair) should also be clean, neat, well-groomed and of conventional colour and style unless it is in conflict with accepted religious beliefs.
- School ID passes must be worn at all times on the School site.
  - Where ID passes cannot be worn for Health and Safety reasons, staff should be prepared to show their ID when requested if they are not visible.

## **8. Conduct with Pupils**

Pupils respect commitment, competence, trustworthiness, fairness and friendliness. There is an expectation that a member of staff's 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 adults if they know where they stand. Being consistent in 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.

Maintaining appropriate professional boundaries with pupils is essential for safeguarding both pupils and staff. All staff must understand and maintain these boundaries at all times.

You must always endeavour to treat them with equity and fairness. Being friendly, approachable and supportive is appropriate; being overly familiar or blurring professional lines is not. Your role is to educate, support and safeguard pupils, not to be their friend.

If you find yourself in a situation that could be misinterpreted, or if you're concerned about your own behaviour or that of a colleague, speak immediately to the Headmaster.

Milton Abbey Staff must have due regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school and not undermine or exploit the vulnerabilities of pupils. With regards to Teaching Staff, they must align with the [Teacher Standards](#) 'Part Two: Professional Conduct', personal values, attitude and behaviour should set a standard that is open but never indiscreet.

### **8.1 Physical Contact with Pupils (including Use of Reasonable Force)**

Milton Abbey School has high expectations of pupil behaviour and enjoys high standards of behaviour and strong relationships between members of the community. We aim to operate a community in which all pupils can learn self-control. The use by Staff of reasonable force to control or restrain is likely to be required only in exceptional circumstances but it is essential that all teachers and support staff are aware of their responsibilities in this area and appropriate procedures to follow.

The use of force or physical contact must be reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances Staff should refer to the school's guidance on Use of Reasonable Force to understand what circumstances may require a pupil to be physically restrained by a member of staff and what procedures should be adopted.

In all cases where the use of reasonable force has taken place, the incident must be reported to the Headmaster or Senior Deputy Head as soon as possible. A written record should be made immediately, giving factual details.

Physical contact with pupils is not permitted. However, Milton Abbey School recognises that it is not illegal to touch a pupil and that there are occasions where physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary. Examples might include:

- Administering essential First Aid
- When demonstrating technical coaching of Sports, Drama, Music etc.
- Action to prevent harm or injury to the pupil or to others
- In cases of distress
- To support a pupil with essential intimate care

Any physical contact must be reported to the DSL as soon as possible. A written record should be made immediately, giving factual details.

### **8.2 Pupil Privacy**

Staff should be sensitive to the pupils' needs for privacy and personal space. This is particularly important in changing and boarding areas. In Houses, all members of staff must always knock before entering a dormitory.

All staff should avoid entering, except in the case of an emergency, the washing, changing and toilet facilities in House. If a job role requires staff to enter these areas, they must comply with the School's work schedules and standard procedures for carrying out their tasks.

At the start of each year, with reminders given as appropriate, the Housemaster/Housemistress (HSM) 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 must 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.

### **8.3 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').
- No alcohol should be served to Sixth Form pupils at any event at which Lower School pupils are present. Staff should refer to the Alcohol Policy for guidance.
- Staff may not drink alcohol while on duty or while supervising pupils (but refer to the section below regarding staff attending evening functions).
- Meetings with pupils off School premises (during term time or holidays) should only take place with the prior knowledge and consent of the HSM or Senior Deputy Head.
- Car journeys must be approved by the HSM, Senior Deputy Head or the Head prior to the event except in an emergency. Emergency transport must be reported as soon as possible to the Senior Deputy Head.
- 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 or Senior Deputy Head.

#### **8.4 Communication with Pupils**

*(This should be read in conjunction with the staff email protocol which forms part of the Staff Acceptable Use of Technologies Policy and Milton Abbey policies regarding General Data Protection Regulation and Online Safety)*

- 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 pupils, 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 hearing of other pupils. Making unsolicited personal remarks about another pupil, even if intended to be positive, 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 RE.
- 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 Use Policy)
- Staff must not use **Social Networking sites** (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat etc.) to connect or communicate with current pupils.
  - When a pupil leaves the school, staff are not permitted to be in touch with them (unless via official school communications) until 3 years post their departure from Milton Abbey in MVI or 3 years from when they turn 18 (whichever is later). In the event of a staff member wanting to continue communications with a pupil once they have left Milton Abbey School, advice must be sought from the School DSL.
  - If the 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.
- Staff should not give their personal contact details to pupils or parents 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 stored on personal mobile devices. The likelihood of this taking place will be negated by following trip protocols. Staff taking trips are supplied with a 'trip mobile' as part of their trip pack.

### **8.5 Gifts, Rewards, Favouritism and Exclusion**

Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment, this includes companies and suppliers who may wish to (or currently do) have business with our School. There are occasions (such as Christmas and End of Term) where pupils or parents may wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff as a thank you and this is usually acceptable to the value of £100. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value from a single source. All offers of gifts over £100, or for clarity regarding regular gifts must be reported to the Headmaster.

It is inadvisable for staff to give personal gifts to pupils or their families as this could be interpreted as a gesture either to bribe or groom. It may also be perceived that a 'favour' of some kind is expected in return. Any reward that is given to a pupil should be in accordance with agreed practice as part of the school's reward systems and not based on favouritism.

Staff should exercise care when selecting children for specific activities, jobs or privileges in order to avoid perceptions of favouritism or injustice. Similar care should be exercised when pupils are excluded from an activity and methods of selection and exclusion should always be subject to clear, fair and agreed criteria.

### **8.6 Infatuations and 'Crushes'**

All staff need to recognise that it is not uncommon for pupils to be strongly attracted to a member of staff and/or develop a 'crush' or infatuation. Staff should therefore make every effort to ensure that their own behaviour cannot be brought into question, does not appear to encourage this and be aware that such infatuations may carry a risk of their words or actions being misinterpreted.

Any member of staff who receives a report, overhears something, or otherwise notices any sign that a young person has become or may be becoming infatuated with either themselves or a colleague should immediately report this to the Headmaster. The school will support staff who are experiencing any unwanted attention from a pupil and provide appropriate guidance.

### **8.7 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 staff should be no different to that which applies within School. Staff 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.

- Members of staff on duty or supervising pupils should not drink alcohol.
- When Staff are on duty but not supervising children (e.g. representing the School at a parent dinner), staff are reminded that any alcohol consumption should be moderate and must not impair their capacity to carry out their duties in a professional manner.

## **9. Resident and Boarding Staff**

- Resident Staff Guidance is provided for residential and boarding staff at induction.
- 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.

Please also refer to 'Resident Staff Guidance'.

## **10. Acceptable of Use of Technologies**

### **10.1 Acceptable Use Policy**

- ICT (including data) and related technologies such as e-mail, Digital Learning Environments, the Internet and mobile devices are an expected part of our daily working life, physically within, and when working remotely.
- Staff are to be aware of their responsibilities when using ICT and safeguarding the Milton Abbey School community.
- All staff are expected to read the policy (including published revisions) and adhere to its contents.

### **10.2 Remote Working**

- Staff engaging in remote working should display the same standards of dress and conduct that they would when in school.
- Teaching Staff delivering online lessons should ensure they are compliant with the procedures outlined in the Staff Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).

### **10.3 Photographs and Moving Images**

Most of the people who take, or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely understandable and acceptable reasons. However, some people abuse children through taking or using images, so the school will ensure that we have safeguards in place.

#### **To protect pupils, the school will:**

- Seek their consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example on our website, social medial or in publications);
- Seek pupil and parental consent to use images of pupils;
- Use only the pupil's first name and initial of their surname with an image;
- Ensure pupils are appropriately dressed in any image taken;
- Only use school equipment to make images of children (no personal devices are permitted for this purpose and Staff must not use their personal devices to take or store photographs of pupils);
- Encourage pupils to tell a member of staff if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them;

- Ensure that photographs of pupils and children taken at School events or for School business should not be posted on to publicly accessible websites or personal social media by members of staff without the prior permission of the Headmaster.

#### **10.4 Confidentiality and Data Protection**

Staff at the school may have access to special category personal data about pupils and their families which must be kept confidential at all times, shared only when legally permissible to do so and in the interest of the child. There may be circumstances where a member of staff may be expected to share information about a pupil and in such cases staff have a responsibility to pass on the information without delay but only to those with designated safeguarding responsibilities or to statutory services.

Staff are expected to comply with and understand their responsibilities under school's Data Protection Policies and abide by the provisions set out in the General Data Protection Regulations (2018) and Data Protection Act (2018). If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential, they should seek guidance from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

### **11. Use of Social Networking Sites**

Any work related issue or material that could identify an individual who is a child, parent/relative or work colleague, which could adversely affect any of the above or the School must not be placed on a social networking site. This means that work related matters must not be placed on any such site at any time either during or outside of working hours and includes access via any computer equipment or mobile device.

Employees are not permitted to add School parents/guardians as friends on social networking sites if the only connection with the parent/guardian is through the School. Staff are not permitted to be in touch with past pupils on social networking sites until 3 years post their departure from Milton Abbey in MVI or 3 years from when they turn 18 (whichever is later).

Under no circumstances should you post negative or derogatory comments relating to the School or your employment with us, as comments such as these can have a detrimental impact on our reputation, even if you are not directly linked to clients of the School. This includes posting information following the end of your employment. Similar thought should always be given to any images and pictures you upload, consideration should be given to the need to maintain a professional and responsible image.

### **12. 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 and respect should be shown by all and to all in our community. Clear professional boundaries are to be established by all Staff in their dealing with pupils.
  - By convention, our pupils should refer to all teaching staff by their title and surname and to certain Operations Staff (including Matrons, Health Centre Team and Cleaners) by their first names (though any such member of staff who prefers to be known by title and surname should make this clear).
  - Other Staff may be addressed by pupils either by first name or title and surname, according to the member of staff's preference.
  - It is never acceptable for a pupil to address a member of staff by a nickname.

- Staff should set high personal standards of dress and appearance.
- Staff should adhere to the School's Acceptable Use of Technologies Policy at all times.
- 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).

### **13. Sharing Concerns and Recording Incidents**

All Staff should be aware of the school's safeguarding procedures including procedures for dealing with allegations or low-level concerns against staff and volunteers (including suspicions of abuse). In order to safeguard and protect pupils and colleagues where Staff have any concerns about someone who works with children they should immediately report this in accordance with the school's Safeguarding Policy.

The School has procedures for dealing with allegations against staff (including the Headmaster), Governors and volunteers who work with children that aim to strike a balance between the need to protect children from abuse and the need to protect staff and volunteers from false or unfounded allegations.

**There are 2 recognised levels of allegations or concerns:**

1. **Allegations that may meet the harms threshold.**
2. **Allegation/concerns that do not meet the harms threshold – referred to as 'low level concerns.'**

**In all cases, any concern or allegation about a member of staff, volunteer, or governor must be reported directly to the Headmaster.**

**Any concern or allegation about the Headmaster must be reported directly to the Chair of Governors or the LADO.**

Allegations that might indicate a person would pose a risk of harm if they continue to work in their present position, or in any capacity with children in a school or college constitutes an 'Allegation that Meets the Threshold for Harm'. This guidance should be followed where it is alleged that anyone working in the school or a college that provides education for children under 18 years of age, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors has:

- **Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child**
- **Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or**
- **Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm if he or she works regularly or closely with children.**

Any allegations not meeting these criteria will be dealt with as a 'Low Level Concern' in accordance with KCSIE and Dorset Safeguarding Children Board procedures. Advice from the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) will be sought in borderline cases.

Staff are encouraged to use the Whistleblowing Policy if they have concerns regarding the conduct or behaviour of a colleague and they feel that matter has not been addressed appropriately by the school.

### **14. Breach**

Failure to comply with this Code of Conduct (or any rule, procedure, or responsibility such as those indicated above) will be regarded as serious and any breach is likely to lead to investigation and disciplinary action under the School's agreed disciplinary procedures.

## **15. Questions**

Any questions you have about this policy must be brought promptly to the attention of your Line Manager, the Director of Finance & Operations, or the Senior Deputy Head.