



GEORGE ABBOT SCHOOL

Policy Title:	Staff Conduct Policy
Author:	Headteacher
Committee Responsible:	GLAC
Governor Lead:	Jackie Thompson
Nominated Lead Member of Staff:	Rob Giles
Status & Review Cycle:	Statutory Annual
Date of most recent review:	September 2019
Next Review Date:	September 2020
School Mission Statement: Academic excellence within a strong community of equality and respect, where potential and opportunity are realised.	

Safeguarding Statement 2018-19 **“It could happen here”**

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children.

We make every effort to provide an environment in which children and adults feel safe, secure, valued and respected.

The purpose of this policy is to provide staff, volunteers and governors with the framework they need in order to keep children safe and secure in our school by ensuring all staff uphold the expected professional standards and conduct.

1. Key Personnel

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is: Rob Giles
Contact details: rgiles@georgeabbot.surrey.sch.uk

Deputy DSL(s) is: Joe Omar
Contact details: jomar@georgeabbot.surrey.sch.uk

Additional DSLs are: Wendy Nightingale, Jane Richings, Karen Bennett
Contact details: wnightingale@georgeabbot.surrey.sch.uk; jrichings@georgeabbot.surrey.sch.uk;
kbennett@georgeabbot.surrey.sch.uk

The nominated safeguarding governor is: Jackie Thompson
Contact details: gassafeguardinggovernor@gepacademies.com

The Headteacher is: Kate Carriett
Contact details: kcarriett@georgeabbot.surrey.sch.uk

The Chair of Governors is: Nicola Mead
Contact details: chairga@gepacademies.com

The Duty Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) can be contacted via:
Contact details: 0300 1231 650 opt 3

2. Terminology

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child(ren) includes everyone under the age of 18. On the whole, this will apply to students of our school; however, the policy will extend to visiting children including students from other establishments.

Parents refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents.

Social media refers to all forms of communication through internet, web based applications, text and instant messaging.

3. Introduction

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004; the Education Act 2002. It is in line with the DfE statutory guidance, *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018* (KCSIE) and also includes extracts from *Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People in Education Settings*¹. The full version of this guidance should be used as a working reference document for all members of staff working with children and young people and it will be used during induction and to inform relevant policies and procedures within the school. The policy also reflects Teacher Standards 2012 and Surrey Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) Procedures.

Whilst this code predominantly refers to 'employees' or 'members of staff', the School expects all those working for and on behalf of the school, including in a voluntary capacity, to reflect the standards of conduct and behaviour contained within this document.

The Governors Local Academy Committee takes seriously its responsibility under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

4. Policy Principles & Values

This policy sets out the standards of conduct expected from all staff at George Abbot School.

School requires that all staff have read and agree to comply with this policy. Breach or failure to observe this policy will result in action being taken under the school disciplinary procedures.

This policy is not exhaustive and so, all staff are expected to exercise their professional judgement to act in the best interests of the children and school at all times.

5. Policy Aims

To demonstrate the school's commitment with regard to upholding staff professional standards.

To support staff with their responsibilities to safeguard children and to act appropriately by following the expected code of conduct.

To encourage staff to minimise the risk of inappropriate conduct occurring and thereby enable staff to set a good example to children within the school.

¹ October 2015, Safer Recruitment Consortium, adapted and updated from an original IRSC / DfE document

6. Compliance

All staff must complete the form in appendix 1 to confirm they have read, understood and agree to comply with this policy. This form should be signed and dated and a copy retained on the member of staff's file.

7. Statement on Personal Conduct

The school expects all employees to promote and maintain high standards of personal conduct to sustain the good reputation of the school and to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. In particular employees are expected to:

- Perform their duties to the highest possible standards, with honesty, integrity and impartiality and be accountable for their own actions.
- Maintain the confidence and respect of the general public and those with whom they work.
- Treat others with respect, fairness and dignity at all times.
- Communicate promptly any relevant concerns they may have about the quality of provision or the safety and welfare of children and young people.
- Familiarise themselves with systems and procedures, including reporting requirements, within the school that support the protection of children and to attend training and read safeguarding briefings provided to ensure that they remain up to date.
- Be aware that their conduct inside and outside the workplace, as well as the conduct of others in their personal lives, could compromise their position within the school in relation to the protection of children, loss of trust and confidence or bringing the employer into disrepute. It could also result in action by regulatory bodies.

In addition to this code of conduct, teachers are also expected to meet the professional conduct standards outlined in the DfE Teachers' Standards.

8. Compliance with School Instructions

The school expects all employees to comply with lawful written and oral instruction unless to do so would result in a health and safety risk.

9. Data Protection

The school takes its obligations under data protection laws very seriously. All staff are expected to familiarise themselves with the GEP's Data Protection Policy and any associated procedures which govern day-to-day working practices as well as how to report a suspected data breach and to recognise when someone may have made a subject access request. If in any doubt you should consult your line manager promptly or contact the Data Protection Officer (whose details can be found on the Data Protection Policy).

10. Disclosure of Information

All employees should develop a clear understanding about what information can be disclosed to government departments, internal or external auditors, parents, students and the wider public, and what information should remain confidential. Any information made available should be provided in a clear and concise way. Employees should seek the advice of their line manager if they are at all unsure of the level of confidentiality which is required.

Employees should not use any information gained in the course of their employment for personal gain, or pass it on to others who might use it in such a way. Information concerning another person's personal affairs should not be divulged without prior approval, except where that disclosure is required or sanctioned by law.

11. Sharing Information about Students

There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a student, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a responsibility to pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated safeguarding responsibilities.

If a child – or their parent / carer – makes a disclosure regarding abuse or neglect, the member of staff should follow the school's procedures. The adult should not promise confidentiality to a child or parent, but should give reassurance that the information will be treated sensitively.

If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

12. Media / Legal Enquiries

Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to senior management.

13. Whistle Blowing

If an employee becomes aware of activities which he/she believes to be illegal, improper, unethical or otherwise inconsistent with this code of conduct, the employee should report the matter in accordance with the school's whistle blowing procedure or child protection procedure, as relevant (detailed in the GEP's Whistle Blowing Policy or the GEP's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy). All employees are required to comply with any investigation undertaken as a result of such allegations being raised.

14. Appearance and Dress

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression and some individuals will wish to exercise their own cultural customs. However, staff should select a manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role and which may be necessarily different to that adopted in their personal life. Staff should ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake. Those who dress or appear in a manner which could be viewed as offensive or inappropriate will render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations.

Members of staff act as role models and often have a professional relationship with a range of other stakeholders. For most staff, appropriate dress will be smart office-wear with discreet jewellery and make-up and hair styled conservatively. In certain areas, an agreed uniform, protective clothing or other exceptions are in place (such as for PE staff, catering and premises staff). Staff may wear sportswear or casual clothing and footwear for practical or physical activities.

15. Drugs and Alcohol

Employees must never arrive at work incapable through the effects of alcohol or drugs. Drinking alcohol or taking drugs (apart from appropriately prescribed medication or over-the-counter remedies) at work or during breaks is also strictly prohibited. The consumption of alcohol at staff events or meetings is subject to the authorisation of the Headteacher.

16. Political Neutrality

Employees should ensure that their own personal or political opinions do not interfere with any policy of the school.

17. Appointment of Staff

Employees should not be involved in a staffing appointment, or in any decision relating to the discipline, promotion or pay and conditions of another employee (or prospective employee) to whom they are related or have a close personal relationship.

18. Equality, Bullying and Harassment

All employees and members of the local community have a right to be treated with fairness and equality. Employees must ensure that they comply with the school's Equality Policy and other employment policies in relation to equality issues.

The bullying or harassment of other work colleagues, students or other members of the community is considered to be gross misconduct. Employees are expected to report any concerns or suspicions they may have about the treatment of others to their line manager or the Headteacher.

19. Contractors and Competitive Tendering

Contractors may include individuals who are temporarily working alongside school staff, or employees of an external firm that has been awarded a contract to provide services. All contractors should be treated with courtesy and respect.

Any orders and contracts must be awarded by fair and open competition against other tenders. No special favour must be shown to current or recent former employees or associates in awarding contracts.

Employees must declare any relationship with a particular contractor, or any potential contractors, to the appropriate manager.

Employees should be clear on the separation of client and contractor roles. Senior employees who have both a client/contractor responsibility must be aware of the need for accountability and openness.

Employees privy to confidential information on tenders of costs relating to contractors should not disclose the information to any unauthorised party or organisation.

20. Use of the School's Materials, Property or Resources

Employees must ensure that school funds entrusted to them are used in a responsible and lawful manner. Employees should not make personal use of any school property, facilities, equipment, materials, vehicles or resources unless properly authorised to do so.

21. Hospitality and Acceptance of Gifts

All school staff and those working on behalf of the school are expected to refuse the offer of inappropriate and disproportionate hospitality and gifts made as part of the discharge of their duties unless there are compelling reasons or exceptional circumstances for doing so. The acceptance of gifts and hospitality must be treated with extreme caution and may be regarded as a breach of the code of conduct. The onus is on the individual to take responsibility for making informed judgements about any offers of gifts and hospitality made to them and for seeking advice if they are unsure whether they can accept. As to what is 'inappropriate and disproportionate', something like a small token of appreciation to a teacher, a small bouquet of flowers sent in thanks or a small buffet lunch to facilitate networking, would not seem unreasonable whereas anything which is significant, such as tickets to football matches or concerts, have a value to them which could have the potential to be interpreted as recompense, inducement or endorsement.

Gifts or hospitality must not be accepted where it might be perceived to influence a decision in respect of purchasing goods or services, awarding contracts, preferential treatment or in the discharge of any other aspect of the school's day-to-day business. It is the responsibility of individual members of staff to refuse such offers and to report any possible conflict of interest and any cases where they believe that the school may be compromised. It is a criminal offence for employees or those working on behalf of the school to corruptly receive any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage for doing, or not doing anything, or showing favour, or disfavour, to any person in their official capacity.

In no circumstances should a statement ever be made in return for a personal gift or money.

It is expressly prohibited for an employee to accept any gift or hospitality from an organisation if he/she is actively involved in a tender process with the organisation on behalf of the school. This prohibition commences at the point that an invitation to tender is published and extends to a period of three months after a contract has been awarded.

For reasons of probity and transparency, the principle of receipt of gifts or hospitality extends to the spouse, partner or immediate family of the employee.

If an employee has any doubt about such an offer of a gift or hospitality, he/she is responsible for notifying and discussing this with his/her immediate manager.

22. Giving Gifts

It is not acceptable to give personal gifts to students or their families. This could be interpreted as a gesture either to bribe or groom. It might also be perceived that a 'favour' of some kind is expected in return.

Any reward given to a student should be in accordance with agreed practice, consistent with the school's Behaviour Policy, recorded and not based on favouritism.

23. Working Relationships and Social Contact Outside the Workplace

Internal and external working relationships are formed on a daily basis with colleagues, students, parents and contractors. These should be conducted in a professional, friendly and respectful manner.

It is acknowledged that staff may have genuine friendships and social contact with parents of students, independent of the professional relationship. Staff should, however, also be aware that professionals who sexually harm children often seek to establish relationships and contact outside of the workplace with both the child and their parents, in order to 'groom' the adult and the child and/or create opportunities for sexual abuse, exploitation or radicalisation.

Staff should recognise that some types of social contact with students or their families could be perceived as harmful or exerting inappropriate influence on children and may bring the school into disrepute (e.g. circulating propaganda).

If a student or parent seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise caution and professional judgement. This also applies to social contacts made through outside interests or the staff member's own family. Staff should be aware that if contact with ex-students were to develop into a relationship there would be a serious concern in relation to abuse of trust and safeguarding.

Some staff may, as part of their professional role, be required to support a parent or carer – e.g. Home School Link Worker. If that person comes to depend upon the staff member or seeks support outside of their professional role this should be discussed with senior management and where necessary, referrals made to the appropriate support agency.

Staff must comply with the Staff Social Media and Internet Code of Conduct at all times. The only acceptable method of contact is via the use of school email accounts or telephone equipment.

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social media which may bring themselves, the school or the school community into disrepute. Staff should adopt the highest security settings on any personal profiles they have. Staff should exercise caution in use of social media or any other web based presence they have. This includes written content, videos or photographs and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts or following certain individuals or groups.

24. Communication with Children and Young People

Employees should not seek to communicate, make contact with or respond to contact with students outside of the purposes of their work and should not give personal contact details (e.g. email address, home or mobile telephone numbers, details of web-based identities) to children.

Only equipment and services provided by the school should be used for communication and employees are expected to adhere to the school's ICT Acceptable Use Policy.

Employees are expected to report to their line manager any contact or correspondence with children they receive via personal contact mechanisms.

Members of staff should always report any indications (verbal, written or physical) that suggest a student may be infatuated with a member of staff to the Headteacher.

25. Physical Contact with Students

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with children, however it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role and in relation to the student's individual needs and any agreed care plan. Any physical contact should be in response to the child's

needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Adults should therefore, use their professional judgement at all times.

Members of staff should:

- be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the student, an observer or any person to whom this action is described;
- never touch a student in a way which may be considered indecent or to have occurred out of anger or frustration;
- always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny;
- never indulge in horseplay or fun fights;
- always allow/encourage students, where able, to undertake self-care tasks independently;
- ensure the way they offer comfort to a distressed student is age appropriate;
- always tell a colleague when and how they offered comfort to a distressed student;
- establish the preferences of students;
- consider alternatives, where it is anticipated that a student might misinterpret or be uncomfortable with physical contact;
- always explain to the student the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take;
- report and record situations which may give rise to concern;
- be aware of cultural or religious views about touching and be sensitive to issues of gender.

In certain curriculum areas (e.g. PE, drama or music), staff may need to initiate some physical contact with children, for example, to demonstrate technique in the use of equipment, adjust posture or support a child so they can perform an activity safely or prevent injury. Physical contact should take place only when it is necessary in relation to a particular activity. It should take place in a safe and open environment i.e. one easily observed by others and last for the minimum time necessary. The extent of the contact should be made clear and undertaken with the permission of the student. Contact should be relevant to their age / understanding and adults should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the student. Staff working in these areas are expected to have regard to any particular guidance or protocols provided to them on appropriate physical contact.

26. Appropriate Touch

The school has appropriate touch guidance as part of the GEP Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. All members of staff should act in accordance with this policy.

27. Behaviour Management and Physical Intervention

All members of staff must avoid any form of degrading or humiliating treatment to punish a child or use force as a means of punishment. Staff are expected to act as role models and should avoid shouting at children other than as a warning in an emergency situation. Adults may reasonably intervene to prevent a child from committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property or engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline. The use of physical intervention should, however, be avoided wherever possible and, where necessary, should only use minimum force and for the shortest time needed.

All members of staff are expected to understand and to follow the school's Behaviour Policy and physical intervention guidance as part of the GEP Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, as appropriate to their role.

28. Sexual Conduct

Any sexual conduct by a member of staff with or towards a student is unacceptable. It is an offence for a member of staff in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity with a student under 18 years of age and sexual activity with a child would be a matter for criminal and/or disciplinary procedures.

29. Lone Working and One to One Situations Involving Students

Staff working one to one with students, including visiting staff from external organisations, can be more vulnerable to allegations or complaints and should ensure that, wherever possible, there is visual access and/or an open door in one to one situations.

Members of staff should not arrange to meet with students from the school away from the work premises unless the necessity for this is clear and approval is obtained from a senior member of staff, the student and their parents/carers.

Staff are expected to adhere to the school's procedures on lone working, detailed in the GEP's Health and Safety Policy.

The school will conduct risk assessments in relation to the specific nature and implications of one to one work and any planned home visits.

30. Transporting Students / Educational Visits

A designated member of staff is appointed to plan and provide oversight of all transport arrangements and respond to any concerns that may arise. Staff should not offer lifts to students unless the need for this has been agreed by a manager.

Wherever possible and practicable it is advisable that transport is undertaken other than in private vehicles and with at least one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort.

It is a legal requirement that all passengers wear seatbelts and the driver should ensure that they do so. They should also be aware of and adhere to current legislation regarding the use of car seats for younger children. Staff should ensure that their conduct is safe and that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. They should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and appropriately insured and that the maximum carrying capacity is not exceeded.

Staff should never offer to transport students outside of their normal working duties, other than in an emergency or where not doing so would mean the child may be at risk. In these circumstances the matter should be recorded and reported to both their manager and the child's parent(s). The GEP's Health and Safety Policy and Educational Visits Policy set out the arrangements under which staff may use private vehicles to transport students.

Educational visits will be undertaken in accordance with the school's Educational Visits Policy and any member of staff accompanying children on an educational visit are required to familiarise themselves with and adhere to this policy.

31. Administering First Aid and Medication

Any member of school staff may be asked to become a qualified first-aider or to provide support to students with medical conditions, including the administration of medicines, but cannot be required to do so unless this forms part of their contract of employment. Any such employee will receive suitable training and will be expected to adhere to school guidelines and policies on undertaking such responsibilities.

32. Health and Safety

All employees have a shared duty to help prevent injuries or accidents occurring at work by complying with the GEP's Health and Safety Policy and all instructions relating to safety and security procedures. Risk assessments must be in place, where necessary, and relevant staff should be aware of their content and engaged in their regular review and implementation.

33. Photography, Videos and Other Images

The school has strict rules of the taking and use of images which are contained within the schools' Taking Photographs, Social Media and Video Policy and the Staff Social Media and Internet Code of Conduct. All members of staff should have regard to these rules. Under no circumstances should members of staff use their personal equipment to take images of students at, or on behalf of, the school or display or distribute images of students except as authorised by the school and with appropriate consent.

34. Declaration of Personal Interests and Outside Commitments

Employees are responsible for ensuring that their private interests, beliefs and personal associations do not conflict with their professional duties.

All employees should declare any non-financial or financial interest which might conflict with the ethos or work of the school or any relationship which, by the employee's association with that person, might adversely affect the school's reputation, attract negative publicity or potentially bring into question the employee's suitability to work with children and young people.

Declarations should be made via the Headteacher's PA (or for the Headteacher, via the CEO of the GEP) who should ensure that a written record is made in accordance with the school's procedure. Declarations must extend to acknowledging the involvement of a relative or partner of an employee in an organisation with which the school does business (or seeks to do business), particularly if they are directors, partners or hold senior managerial positions in those organisations.

Where employees are in any doubt about whether any personal relationships, interests, or outside commitments should be declared in particular circumstances, they should either declare the information in any case, or else seek further advice from the Business Manager or the Headteacher.

35. Secondary Employment

Employees are able to take up additional employment other than at the school provided the employment concerned does not constitute a conflict of interest or adversely affect their employment at the school.

Employees should, however, keep the school informed of other employment they undertake so that the school may ensure that the 48-hour weekly working time limit under the Working Time Regulations 1998 is adhered to. In the event that an employee's combined working hours are likely to exceed this figure they will be asked to sign a working time 'opt out' agreement.

36. School Policies

The school has in place a range of policies, some of which have been referred to in this code of conduct. Employees are expected to familiarise themselves with any policy the school has provided or drawn to their attention and to ensure that they take account of any future policy changes communicated to them. If in doubt about the application or interpretation of any policy an employee should seek advice from his/her line manager in the first instance.

37. Link Policies

Educational Visits Policy
Equality Policy
GEP Data Protection Policy
GEP Health and Safety
GEP Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
GEP Whistle Blowing Policy
ICT Acceptable Use Policy
Social Media and Internet Code of Conduct
Student Behaviour Policy
Supporting Young People with Medical Conditions
Taking Photographs, Social Media and Video Policy

