

## STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

### Summary

Our Staff Code of Conduct is based on the commitments we make in our 'Ethos and Aims' and our 'Philosophy of Care'. It is also underpinned by the legal obligations placed upon us as professionals through our duty of care to the boys in the School and our position of trust as adults working with young people. All staff should be aware of our Staff Code of Conduct which sets clear expectations for our personal conduct and behaviour. This summary should be read alongside the full policy which follows.

Expectations for the conduct of **all staff** are higher at Tonbridge School than in most organisations and we set clear expectations for the personal and professional conduct of all staff and provide guidelines for all staff covering a number of topics and situations:

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|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Honesty and Integrity            | 11. Whistleblowing                                |
| 2. Propriety and Behaviour          | 12. One-to-One Situations                         |
| 3. Use of Language                  | 13. Staff Homes                                   |
| 4. Communication                    | 14. Boy Privacy                                   |
| 5. Data Protection                  | 15. Physical Contact                              |
| 6. Dress and Appearance             | 16. Sensitive Curriculum Issues                   |
| 7. Punctuality                      | 17. Photography, Video, and other Creative Arts   |
| 8. Knowledge of School Policies     | 18. Issues of Confidentiality and Media Relations |
| 9. Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions | 19. Transporting Children                         |
| 10. Giving and Receiving of Gifts   | 20. Professional Judgement                        |

In addition, **Teachers** make the education of their boys a primary concern and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. All teachers at Tonbridge School must (as a minimum requirement):

1. Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge boys.
2. Promote good progress and outcomes by boys.
3. Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge.
4. Plan and teach well-structured lessons.
5. Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all boys.
6. Make accurate and productive use of assessment.
7. Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment.
8. Fulfil wider professional responsibilities.

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Our Staff Code of Conduct is based on the commitments we make in our 'Ethos and Aims' and our 'Philosophy of Care'. It is also underpinned by the legal obligations placed upon us as professionals through our duty of care to the boys in the School and our position of trust as adults working with young people. Members of staff are expected to have a good knowledge of legislation and guidance – such as Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and Working Together to Safeguard Children – and of School Policies that inform and further expand on the contents of this document.

1. Tonbridge School aims to provide a caring and enlightened environment in which the talents of each individual flourish. We encourage boys to be creative, tolerant and to strive for academic, sporting and cultural excellence. Respect for tradition and an openness to innovation are equally valued. A well-established House system at the heart of the School fosters a strong sense of belonging. Tonbridge seeks to celebrate its distinctive mixture of boarders and day boys; this helps to create a unique broadening and deepening of opportunity. We want boys to enjoy their time here, but also to be made aware of their social and moral responsibilities. Tonbridgians should enter into the adult world with the knowledge and self-belief to fulfil their own potential and, in many cases, to become leaders in their chosen field. Equally, we hope to foster a life-long empathy for the needs and views of others: in the words of the great novelist and Old Tonbridgian, E.M. Forster: 'Only Connect'. **(Ethos and Aims)**
2. Tonbridge School aims to give an academic education of the very highest standard, and through its academic, recreational and other facilities, to enable boys to acquire the self-reliance and sense of duty and values necessary for them to play a constructive role in the changing world to which they belong. **(Philosophy of Care)**
3. **Duty of Care** - All staff have a legal 'duty of care' towards children under their protection. This involves a duty to keep young people safe and to protect them from sexual, emotional, and physical harm. This means that they must always act and be seen to act in the child's best interest, avoiding any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their actions. In relation to the handling of risks, the law requires that prudent and reasonable precautions be taken in relation to foreseeable harm. Risk assessments are required of us in order to fulfil that obligation. The concept of what it is 'reasonable' to expect is important in any legal consideration of a duty of care.
4. **Position of Trust** - All adults working with young children are in positions of trust in relation to the young people in their care. This is not a relationship of equals, and adults clearly cannot use their position of authority either for their own personal advantage or gratification, or to intimidate, coerce or undermine children. For instance, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, where a person aged 18 or over is in a position of trust with a child under 18, it is a criminal offence not only for that person to engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of that child, but also to cause or incite that child to engage in or watch sexual activity. There are exemptions in the latter for those involved in delivering biology lessons or health education. Staff must also not use their position to intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce, or undermine young people.

**All staff should be aware of the Staff Code of Conduct Policy which sets clear expectations for our personal conduct and behaviour.**

## Part One – TEACHING

Teachers make the education of their boys a primary concern and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. Teachers act with honesty and integrity; have strong subject knowledge, keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up-to-date and are self-critical; forge positive professional relationships; and work with parents in the best interests of their boys. At Tonbridge School we expect teachers to be intellectually and academically active and to demonstrate the same intellectual curiosity we expect of our boys.

### All teachers at Tonbridge School must (as a minimum requirement):

- 1. Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge boys:**
  - Establish a safe and stimulating environment for boys, rooted in mutual respect.
  - Set goals that stretch and challenge boys of all backgrounds, abilities and dispositions.
  - Demonstrate consistently the positive attitudes, values and behaviour expected of boys.
- 2. Promote good progress and outcomes by boys:**
  - Be accountable for boys' attainment, progress, and outcomes.
  - Be aware of boys' capabilities and their prior knowledge, and plan teaching to build on these.
  - Guide boys to reflect on the progress they have made and their emerging needs.
  - Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how boys learn and how this impacts on teaching.
  - Encourage boys to take a responsible, conscientious, and self-evaluative attitude to their own work and study.
- 3. Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge:**
  - Have a secure knowledge of the relevant subject(s) and curriculum areas, foster and maintain boys' interest in the subject, and address misunderstandings.
  - Demonstrate a critical understanding of developments in the subject and curriculum areas and promote the value of scholarship.
  - Demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy, and the correct use of standard English, whatever the teacher's specialist subject.
- 4. Plan and teach well-structured lessons:**
  - Impart knowledge and develop understanding through effective use of lesson time.
  - Promote a love of learning and boys' intellectual curiosity.
  - Set homework and plan other out-of-class activities to consolidate and extend the knowledge and understanding boys have acquired.
  - Reflect systematically on the effectiveness of lessons and approaches to teaching.
  - Contribute to the design and provision of an engaging curriculum within the relevant subject area(s).
  - Continue to develop their skills and understanding in pedagogy, particularly with respect to the changing landscape of digital literacy and learning.
- 5. Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all boys:**
  - Know when and how to differentiate appropriately, using approaches which enable all boys to be taught effectively.
  - Have a secure understanding of how a range of factors can inhibit boys' ability to learn, and how best to overcome these.
  - Demonstrate an awareness of the physical, social, and intellectual development of children, and know how to adapt teaching to support boys' education at different stages of development.
  - Have a clear understanding of the needs of all boys, including those with special educational

needs; those of high ability; those with English as an additional language; those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them.

- Respond to guidance and support offered by the Learning Strategies Department to ensure that teaching methods are appropriately modified to support boys with specific SEND needs.

#### **6. Make accurate and productive use of assessment:**

- Know and understand how to assess the relevant subject and curriculum areas, including statutory assessment requirements.
- Make use of formative and summative assessment to secure boys' progress.
- Use relevant data to monitor progress, set targets, and plan subsequent lessons.
- Give boys regular feedback, both orally and through accurate marking, and encourage boys to reflect on and respond to the feedback.

#### **7. Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment:**

- Have clear rules and routines for behaviour in classrooms and take responsibility for promoting good and courteous behaviour both in classrooms and around the School, in accordance with the School's Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions policy and the boys' Expected Behaviour Code.
- Have high expectations of behaviour and establish a framework for discipline with a range of strategies, using praise, sanctions and rewards consistently and fairly.
- Manage classes effectively, using approaches which are appropriate to boys' needs in order to involve and motivate them.
- Maintain good relationships with boys, exercise appropriate authority, and act decisively when necessary.

#### **8. Fulfil wider professional responsibilities:**

- Make a positive contribution to the wider life and ethos of the School.
- Develop effective professional relationships with colleagues, knowing how and when to draw on advice and specialist support.
- Deploy support staff effectively.
- Take responsibility for improving teaching through appropriate professional development, responding to advice and feedback from colleagues.
- Communicate effectively with parents and colleagues with regard to boys' achievements and well-being.

### **Part Two – PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT (ALL STAFF)**

Expectations for conduct are higher at the School than in most organisations; we have clear expectation for:

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1. **Honesty and Integrity.** Honesty and Integrity at School comes in many forms, but above all refers to having upstanding character traits and work ethics including sound judgement, truthfulness, dependability, and loyalty. A well-known definition of “Honesty and Integrity” is doing the right thing (through your words, actions, and beliefs) when no one is watching. Having a high degree of Honesty and Integrity at School means that you: are trustworthy and reliable; practice and encourage open and honest communication; are responsible for your actions; respect others’ opinions, even if you don’t agree with them; are accountable for your mistakes; show respect and support for your peers; and protect confidential information. Given the status and history of the School, staff are expected to conduct themselves with exemplary levels of honesty and integrity at all times.
2. **Propriety and Behaviour:** Staff should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their peers, boys and parents. An individual’s behaviour, either in or out of School, should not compromise his/her position within the School. This means that staff should not behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children (this might involve misuse of drugs, alcohol, acts of violence or use of social media). In addition, staff must be even-handed, consistent and unambiguous in the way they treat boys, avoiding any actions that would be considered ‘unprofessional’, such as excessive informality in a boy’s room in his Boarding House. Boys should be treated with dignity and respect and staff should always have regard for the need to safeguard and promote the well-being of all boys. Staff should always show tolerance of and respect for the rights of others and staff should never promote views or act in a manner that undermines or belittles different genders, different sexualities, religions or racial groups or those who are disabled. For instance, the verbal slighting in public of a boy (or indeed another member of staff), whether intended or unintended, might be regarded as unprofessional.
3. **Use of language:** Staff must ensure that they use appropriate language at all times. Staff must:
  - Avoid words or expressions that have any unnecessary sexual content or innuendo.
  - Not use language that could be considered racist, sexist, transphobic or homophobic.
  - Not use language that promotes extreme political ideas or that promotes any form of radicalisation.
  - Avoid any words or actions that are over-familiar.
  - Not swear, blaspheme, or use any sort of offensive language in front of boys.
  - Understand that the use of sarcasm or derogatory words should be avoided when sanctioning or disciplining boys and unprofessional comments about anyone must also be avoided.
  - Take care if engaging in so-called ‘banter’ with boys, however well intended.
4. **Communication:** Communication between staff and boys should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries, and staff should be vigilant about avoiding situations that might be open to misinterpretation. It is also critical that staff recognise that these standards apply in all areas of mobile and internet communication. Social networking sites are also areas where colleagues need to be vigilant. Members of staff should not have current boys as friends on social network sites or apps, and they should be conscious of the risks of being ‘friends’ with or ‘following’ recent leavers from their personal accounts. Staff social media accounts should be private and secure; any communication between staff and recent leavers should be professional in tone and current preferred and best practice would be for staff to use existing alumni networks. For example, it would not be appropriate to discuss current boys or staff at School and all communications should be in accordance with the spirit of the School’s policies and procedures in place whilst the boy was a pupil at the School. Email addresses are available to boys and parents for professional interaction only – for example, questions about work or the timing of practice sessions. Staff should never communicate with boys or their parents from personal email addresses. Communication via personal mobile numbers is only permitted in regulated school activities, for

example when on trips or at sports fixtures where a School mobile has not been provided. Staff should be guided by how any reasonable person may interpret both the message and motivation for communication. Staff should immediately bring any inappropriate communication from a boy or a parent to the attention of the Second Master, the Bursar, or the Headmaster. If staff are in any doubt over whether a communication may be inappropriate, they should immediately bring the communication to the attention of the Second Master, the Bursar, or the Headmaster.

- 5. Data Protection:** Staff should be mindful of their obligation to protect data (and other sensitive information) relating to the boys, parents or staff at Tonbridge School from unauthorised access and in accordance with the School's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice. Staff must not:
- Share School passwords with family members (or others) and should ensure that family members do not have access to their School user account.
  - Save personal data relating to staff, boys, parents or volunteers to an unencrypted portable media device (e.g. USB stick), laptop, tablet, mobile phone or any other portable device. This includes data such as exam results, and documents such as School reports.
  - Take copies of sensitive data relating to boys, staff or volunteers (e.g. medical, child protection or criminal record information) off the School site without prior permission from the Second Master or Bursar. If there is a genuine need to take sensitive information off site (e.g. for trips) the information should be printed, stored securely whilst it is needed and then securely destroyed.
  - Make or distribute lists of boys or parents including personal details without a specific legitimate purpose.
  - Dispose of paper copies of documents containing sensitive information in general refuse or recycling bins. These documents must be shredded.

Staff must:

- Ensure that laptops, desktops and mobile phones which may contain information relating to boys (including School emails) are password protected and that data drives are encrypted where possible.
  - Ensure that usernames/passwords are not "saved" or "remembered" on public computers.
  - Make use of "InPrivate" web-browsing where available when using public computers (e.g. to check email);
  - Avoid exposing all of the email addresses to all of the recipients when sending out a group email to parents: staff must place their own email address in the "To" field, and the email addresses of the intended recipients in the "BCC" field.
- 6. Dress and Appearance:** A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, staff should ensure that their appearance promotes a positive and professional image and is appropriate to their role and status.
- 7. Punctuality:** Staff should set the same standards of punctuality as we expect of the boys. Lessons and other activities should start and end accurately at the times assigned. A boy should not generally be detained by a member of staff so that he is late for his next engagement.
- 8. Knowledge of School Policies:** The School is required by law to have certain policies and others have been produced in response to issues over time. These policies are published in full on Firefly, and some are included in other specific handbooks. Whilst we acknowledge that it is unrealistic to expect staff to have a verbatim knowledge of all the policies, they should know of their existence and be ready to look them up as needed and appropriate.

There are, however, some policies which need to be well known by all members of staff and it is an expectation and requirement that staff do so. Of these the most important are: **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; Anti- Bullying Policy; Cyberbullying Policy; Behaviour Rewards and Sanctions Policy; IT Acceptable Use (Staff) Policy; and the**

**Whistleblowing Policy.** Safeguarding, Child protection and anti-bullying are the business of every person in a position of responsibility in the School; it is suggested that staff carry round their child protection card with a summary of procedures on them. But it is also important that staff are aware of the need and the means to report significant **Incidents or Conversations** and any **Accidents** – either by email or on the online forms designed for this purpose. We must have a written record of these. Similarly, staff should have knowledge of School policies for **Marking and Recording, Conduct of Sport, Physical Restraint, Searching, Confiscations** and the **Memoranda** (School rules). Finally, there are a variety of policies which fall under the general umbrella of ‘**Health and Safety**’. Those of which staff should be particularly aware relate to **fire, emergency procedures, School trips, minibus driving and medical policy.**

- 9. Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions:** The Behaviour Policy for the School is set out in full in the Memoranda and the Tonbridge School App. Staff should be aware of the main features of this policy. They should actively promote and teach the ‘Expected Behaviour’ code and all staff should feel confident to challenge poor or antisocial behaviour by the boys. Praise and encouragement should be used to reward good behaviour and achievement, either informally or by awarding Commendations. Staff should also be clear about the different levels of sanctions and their responsibilities in this context. The promotion of good behaviour and discouragement of bad behaviour are the general responsibility of all staff.
- 10. Giving and Receiving of Gifts:** The School’s policy on the giving and receiving of gifts is dealt with in detail in the School’s Anti-Corruption and Bribery policy. Boys and parents may offer staff gifts at certain point of the year, normally at Christmas or the end of the academic year and there is nothing to prevent a member of staff accepting a gift, with most being of comparatively low financial value. Any gift or hospitality that is valued at more than £100 should be declared to the Bursar, who keeps a record of such gifts in line with the Bribery Act 2010.

Staff should be aware that it is not acceptable to receive a gift or hospitality from a third party if they know or suspect that it is being offered with an expectation that an advantage will be provided by the School in return.

If any member of staff is unsure about whether or not they should accept a gift, they should raise this concern with the Second Master or Bursar at the earliest opportunity. If any member of staff has a concern or suspicion of malpractice, these should be raised at the earliest opportunity following the procedure set out in our Whistleblowing Policy.

- 11. Whistleblowing:** Staff should feel confident to follow our whistleblowing procedures if they have concerns about child protection, fraud, bribery, malpractices, health and safety, criminal offences, miscarriages of justice and failure to comply with legal obligations or unethical conduct, and to ensure that there is transparency and accountability in relation to how concerns are received and handled. The Whistleblowing Policy outlines clearly what procedures are in place at the School for staff to raise concerns internally and/or outside of the School’s internal organisation.
- 12. Low-Level Concerns:** If colleagues have Low-Level concerns, (i.e. concerns that do not reach the threshold) about the conduct of an adult working in or on behalf of the School they should let the Second Master know in the first instance, who will deal with the matter appropriately.

Examples of Low-Level concerns around a colleague’s behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

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

- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating, or offensive language.

Staff are encouraged and should feel confident to self-refer, where, for example, they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.

- 13. One-to-One Situations:** Staff working in one-to-one situations with boys are potentially more vulnerable to allegations. It therefore makes sense to plan and conduct such meetings to ensure that the security of both boy and staff are met. It is recommended that such meetings should take place where there is visual access and/or an open door. It is also strongly recommended that notes are kept of any meeting likely to be difficult and placed on the file thereafter, and consideration given to having another member of staff in the room or close by where at all possible. If any boy becomes distressed or angry in any such meeting, always report this to a senior colleague. If anyone employed by the School is regularly in a one-to-one situation with boys, a risk assessment can be undertaken. Members of staff should not meet up with boys outside of School, without the express permission of the DSL or the Headmaster.
- 14. Staff Homes:** Boys should not visit staff unaccompanied unless specifically agreed in writing in advance by the DSL or the Headmaster. Staff must not allow boys to stay in their homes overnight unless there is a friendship between a boy and the child of a member of staff. In these cases, all such arrangements must be made with full parental consent and the DSL informed of the event in writing prior to it taking place, so that it can be logged in advance.
- 15. Boy Privacy:** All boys have a right to personal privacy. Always knock before entering a room, announce your presence before going into any area where boys might be changing, allow boys to make private phone calls and do not read any personal correspondence. Staff may not enter areas where boys are showering unless there is some kind of emergency. Any such scenario should be reported immediately to the Second Master, Bursar or Headmaster.
- 16. Physical Contact:** There are occasions when it is appropriate for staff to have some physical contact with boys, such as when giving instruction in a musical instrument, but it is crucial that it should be appropriate to their professional role. It is not possible to be exhaustive about all situations, since it varies according to the particular set of circumstances. A general culture of 'limited touch' should be adapted to the individual requirements of each boy – it is not illegal to touch a boy. However, staff should be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued, that boys should never be touched in a way that could be viewed as indecent, that they should never indulge in horseplay or 'fun fights' with boys and that all physical contact will be open to scrutiny. In sport, physical contact with boys should never be seen as putting the boy in any danger or not paying due regard to the wider duty of care. It is vitally important that staff record any incident which has the potential to be misconstrued and report this to the Deputy Head Pastoral and the Second Master immediately. The School's policy on Physical Restraint of boys is published as a separate document.
- 17. Sensitive Curriculum Issues:** Many areas of the curriculum can raise issues or subject matter which is sexually explicit. This requires careful planning and judgement, which considers the aim of the lesson in the context of the syllabus. Staff should not engage in offensive or inappropriate discussion about sexual activity. Schools must use non-discriminatory practices and procedures, and staff must ensure in their teaching and pastoral work that they do not condone discriminatory practices or directly discriminate on the grounds of a protected characteristic including on grounds of race, disability, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or gender reassignment in accordance with their obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

- 18. Photography, Video and other Creative Arts:** This is a difficult area which stems from public concern that recorded images of children have the potential to be misused for pornographic or 'grooming' purposes, and from the need to defend those rights of privacy and data protection which any individual should enjoy. Any such image-recording activity needs to have a clear purpose, and consideration should be given to what will happen to the images when the activity finishes. These issues are addressed in more detail in the School Policy 'Taking, Storing, and using Images of Boys', the School's Privacy Notice, and the contract between parent and School, but any boy, parent or member of staff is entitled to withdraw such consent either generally or for any specific occasion or purpose. Staff should be particularly sensitive to children who are clearly uncomfortable with being filmed or photographed and realise the potential for misinterpretation of their activity. The use of mobile phones or other photographic devices to take photographs of boys or staff without their consent is forbidden by the School rules. Where possible and practicable, images should be taken on equipment owned by the School or the House, and not on personal recording devices.
- 19. Issues of Confidentiality and Media Relations:** Staff may be party to confidential information about the School and its business. This might include personal details of parents, boys, and staff or financial information and marketing plans. Staff should not disclose such information either intentionally or inadvertently other than in the proper course of their employment with the School. Staff should also take care that any electronically stored confidential information which is taken off the School premises should be kept safe and secure at all times. Any press or other media inquiries concerning School business or information should be passed on to the Head of Communications or, in his absence, to the Headmaster, the Director of Admissions and Marketing or other member of the Senior Team.
- 20. Transporting Children:** There are many occasions when staff transport boys either in School or hired minibuses or in their own cars. The rules governing minibus use are dealt with separately, but there are certain important steps which all staff need to take in relation to transporting boys. The first is that no alcohol may be consumed prior to driving. If staff are faced with a sudden emergency but may have been drinking and were not expecting to have to drive, they should use a taxi. Secondly it is the staff member's responsibility when using their own car, to ensure that the vehicle is safe and meets all legal requirements, including properly working seatbelts. Most insurers cover occasional use of a car to drive boys, and the School has insurance in place to cover occasional business use of vehicles. Never exceed the maximum capacity of the vehicle or drive for hours longer than are reasonably considered safe. If staff are transporting just a single boy his parents, his Housemaster, or the Second Master should be informed in advance of the journey and the boy should sit in the back seat.
- 21. Professional Judgement:** There will inevitably be situations where the guidance given here is incomplete, and there may be situations where staff have to make decisions in the best interest of the boys that could contradict this guidance, or where no guidance exists. In these situations, staff should make judgements based on what they feel needs to happen to support the welfare of the boys. It is important to record why the judgement was made and that it is shared with the Second Master at the earliest possible opportunity.