

Introduction

Everyone who works with our pupils in a paid or voluntary capacity has a responsibility to always act in the best interests of those in their care and to protect them from harm. They are also expected to show exemplary standards of professionalism and behaviour in their work for George Watson's College (the School) and to uphold its good name and reputation at all times.

Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to all employees, supply and casual workers, and volunteers at our School.

For clarity and ease of reference, this Code of Conduct generally uses the terms “you” or “colleague” throughout to indicate everyone who works in our School, irrespective of their employment status and whether working on a paid or voluntary basis.

The Code of Conduct is also intended to guide the behaviour of those who work in or for the school as temporary and agency workers, contractors and their employees.

Purpose and Principles of the Code of Conduct

This relationship between you and the School is based on mutual respect, trust and confidence. This Code of Conduct sets out the values and standards on which this relationship is based, and clarifies what is expected of all our colleagues and volunteers during their employment or engagement with the School.

It provides guidance on our school's values and your expected behaviours in a wide range of situations, including out of hours activities and social events that may directly reflect on our School.

The School expects everyone to adhere to the following general principles:

- Uphold the School's Mission, Motto, and Values
- Maintain professional standards at all times
- Comply with laws and regulations
- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion and treat others fairly and with respect
- Ensure safer relationships, acceptable standards of behaviour, and good practice in all interactions with our pupils, children and young people
- Maintain a healthy and safe environment for all
- Avoid conflicts of interest
- Reject bribery, corruption, and fraud
- Respect confidentiality of personal and corporate information
- Demonstrate and model good behaviour for our pupils to follow

All of these principles are outlined in more detail throughout this Code of Conduct.

No Code of Conduct can hope to spell out the appropriate behaviour for every situation. If you require any guidance about the information provided in the Code, are unsure about “the right thing to do”, or require any additional details about the behaviour and standards expected of you, you should speak to your line manager in the first instance. Further support and advice are also available from the Human Resources Team.

Failure to follow the Code of Conduct

It is your responsibility to read and familiarise yourself with this Code of Conduct and to sign it to confirm your understanding and acceptance of the standards set out within it.

The Code of Conduct forms part of your contract of employment or terms of engagement with the School. You are expected to comply with the Code and to behave, work, and act in accordance with it at all times.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action being taken, in line with the procedures set out in the School’s [Disciplinary Policy and Procedure](#). You should be aware that serious breaches of the Code may be found to be Gross Misconduct, and in these circumstances, such disciplinary action may include dismissal for a first offence, and without notice.

Whether you are an employee, supply or casual worker, or volunteer, it is your responsibility to read the School's various rules, policies and guidance that this Code refers to. To make this easier, links to each of them are highlighted in this Code.

School Strategy, Values and Key Behaviours

During your employment or assignments with the School, you are expected to behave in a way that fully supports our mission, our motto, and our values, and to encourage others to do the same (i.e. other adults and children)

- **Our Mission**

At our School, we aim to provide a world class education for children and young people from Preschool to S6. We encourage our pupils to develop a love of real learning through an inspiring curriculum and an extensive and inclusive enrichment programme.

We challenge and support pupils to discover their own limitless potential. We nurture the knowledge, skills and confidence they will need to become engaged and successful citizens and make their own unique contribution to the world. We are proud of our heritage and passionate about our plans for the future.

- **Our Motto**

Ex Corde Caritas: Love From The Heart

- **Our Values**

Our values sit at the heart of the School. They are who we are. They are what we do. They are the standard we set to measure ourselves and the contribution we make to the strength of our community.

- **Aim High:** We challenge ourselves and encourage excellence
- **Be Kind:** We support each other to be confident, engaged and ambitious
- **Join In:** We create a diverse range of opportunities and enjoy the freedom to discover who we really are

- **Respect All:** We care for other in an environment where all of our voices are valued and respected

You must always perform your duties to the best of your ability and use your best endeavours, remembering that the interests of our pupils are paramount. You are expected to cooperate with colleagues and other adults as required and contribute to the creation of a pleasant and productive working environment for everyone in our school community.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We all have an individual responsibility to observe the various requirements set out in all the School's [Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility policy](#) and practices.

Our policies are guided by the Equality Act 2010, which protects people from discrimination, harassment and victimisation because of their protected characteristics, specifically age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

You must not demean or undermine pupils, their parents or carers, colleagues, or other stakeholders or act towards anyone in a manner which is discriminatory or disrespectful of any of these protected characteristics.

You are expected to positively uphold our commitment to creating and sustaining an environment at school which welcomes, includes, supports and celebrates pupils and their families, colleagues, and visitors from all backgrounds.

You must undertake equality, diversity and inclusion training as requested by the School, and any regular updates, as required.

Dignity and Respect

The School has a [Dignity and Respect Policy](#) which promotes an enabling and inclusive environment where all individuals – adults and children - are treated with dignity and respect. You are expected to participate in the life of the School in a way which positively upholds its aims, to ensure that unacceptable behaviour is challenged and not tolerated, and to report any concerns.

The School will not tolerate bullying, discriminatory, offensive, violent, and inappropriate behaviours of any kind.

The Dignity and Respect Policy provides a clear framework to support the prevention of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and other inappropriate behaviour, and clarifies the procedures for raising, addressing and resolving any concerns.

You must undertake dignity and respect training as requested by the School, and any regular updates, as required.

Health and Safety

The School places a high priority on providing a safe environment for colleagues and pupils and minimising the risks identified by the Health and Safety at Work Etc Act 1974 and associated legislation. Effective health and safety management requires the active involvement of every

colleague, and under the Act, you have a legal duty to look after your own health, safety and welfare, and that of those around you.

You have a responsibility to adhere to the School's Health and Safety Policy, follow any direct instruction regarding Health and Safety procedures, attend any necessary training, report any hazards or failings in safety procedures, and be proactive in your approach to upholding health and safety standards.

Any of your behaviour which endangers or might endanger the health and safety of you or others may be regarded as gross misconduct and may result in the termination of your employment.

You should refer to the School's [Health and Safety Policy](#) for further information.

Environment and Sustainability

The School is fully committed to reduce the environmental impact of the School and to improve the positive contribution that we make to the sustainability of the planet.

You are expected to conduct your work in accordance with the School's [Sustainability Framework](#), to promote and encourage good environmental practice wherever possible, and to engage with our School's objectives and actions.

Training, Professional Learning, and Development

The School is committed to supporting training, professional learning and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for all colleagues, as appropriate to their role.

Throughout your employment, you are required to undertake all training that is deemed relevant or necessary for your role, including compulsory training in Child Protection, GDPR, IT Security, Equality and Diversity, and Health and Safety, and any regular updates of these, as required.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

The School fully recognises its statutory, regulatory, contractual, and professional responsibilities to safeguard and promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of all our pupils. The School therefore has a comprehensive [Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#) and a suite of associated policies, procedures and guidance so that everyone is clear about their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and child protection.

Working in a school places you in a position of trust and authority. You are likely to be seen as a role model by children and young people, and you must behave and work within appropriate professional boundaries at all times. This expectation also applies to behaviour that takes place out of school and online.

You are expected to adhere to the requirements of the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and must attend the appropriate level of child protection training for your role (including any regular updates), which will make clear your personal obligations.

In addition to the information provided in the policies and at training, the following key points in relation to behaviour and conduct apply to everyone.

- The welfare of our children and young people is paramount

- You have a duty of care to all our pupils and must act at all times in a way which safeguards and promotes their physical, emotional and moral welfare. This duty of care provision applies equally in the case of all pupils (whether or not they are legally classed as adults) and also apply in any situation where you may be working with vulnerable adults
- If you believe that a pupil may be at risk of physical or sexual abuse (whether by an adult or another child) or at risk of neglect, you have an immediate duty to report the matter to the Child Protection Coordinator (i.e. that day)
- You should respect a pupil's right to privacy as far as possible, but as you may need to break this in order to follow child protection procedures, you should not give assurances of confidentiality when speaking with pupils. However, if you do need to break confidentiality, this should be explained to the child or young person at the earliest opportunity
- You must not seek physical, emotional or sexual gratification from your relationships with pupils, nor give the impression that you may be doing so. Any sexual contact or relationship with a pupil at the school would be covered by Part 5 of the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009
- You must always be careful about using language or exhibiting behaviour which may be misinterpreted as inappropriate, and avoid situations where your integrity may appear compromised. This expectation also applies to your personal use of social media (e.g. social networking sites, blogs, etc) and any other communication via the internet, digital and mobile devices
- You should not share your personal contact details with pupils or contact them by phone, email, or via social media. The only exception to this may be the for the purpose of participating in an officially authorised school contact group or account, when this has been approved by a member of PLT
- You should be careful to not show favouritism or unfairness when dealing with children, e.g. when selecting pupils for, or excluding them from, specific activities, tasks or privileges
- You must not accept high value gifts from, or give such gifts to, children, their parents, families or carers
- Physical contact should only ever be for the purpose of care, instruction, health and safety, physical intervention or restraining. Except in cases of emergency, the reason for physical contact should be explained to pupils before it takes place and their consent obtained
- You should only provide personal care in an emergency (and make sure that there is more than one adult present if possible) unless the provision of personal care is part of your role and you have been trained to do this safely (i.e. ensuring the personal privacy and dignity of the pupil)
- Minimum appropriate and proportionate force may be used in a situation to protect a pupil, colleague, or any other person from physical harm. You must immediately report any incident where force is used to the Principal
- The use of physical sanctions or physical punishment of pupils is **forbidden by law**
- The School acknowledges that there are circumstances where there may be a genuine friendship or social relationship with a pupil or their parents/families/carers that is independent of working with our School. You should be careful to always maintain appropriate personal and professional boundaries in these circumstances

- Positive relationships between colleagues and pupils often involve warmth and humour, but you should be aware that there can be a narrow line between remarks which an adult perceives as fair and humorous, but which can be hurtful and embarrassing to a pupil
- You must never make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to, or in the presence of children and young people. (e.g. remarks about a child's physical characteristics or development would fall into this category).

You must follow this Code of Conduct and the requirements of the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection policies at all times. If you fail to do so, behave inappropriately, or fail to report any breaches of the Code that you are aware of in relation to any child protection or safeguarding issues, you will be subject to the School's disciplinary procedures.

If you have any questions about safeguarding and child protection, you should contact one of the Child Protection Coordinators (or their Deputies) in either the Junior or Senior School.

Personal Conduct and Professional Behaviour

This section of the Code of Conduct sets out some standards of personal conduct and professional behaviour that the School expects every employee, worker and volunteer to follow.

You are expected to behave professionally and courteously at all times, to display honesty and integrity, and to generally behave in a manner that maintains our School's good reputation.

You are expected to comply with the reasonable instructions of your line manager, any member of the Principal's Leadership Team (PLT), or other senior manager.

Timekeeping and attendance

You are required to be punctual and to attend work in line with the contractual expectations set out in your individual contract of employment. You should ensure that any absence from school (e.g. sickness absence, special leave, annual leave etc) is authorised in line with the requirements of the relevant policy.

You should be aware that unsatisfactory attendance at work, including unauthorised or unreported absence, and/or poor timekeeping or attendance may be dealt with under the relevant policy and procedures (e.g. Disciplinary Policy, Sickness Absence Management, Management Guidance for Probation, etc).

Standards of dress

You must adopt suitable professional dress during the school day as appropriate to your role, and set a good example to pupils concerning appearance (as well as behaviour) at all times.

Some roles necessitate colleagues to wear uniforms, or items of protective clothing or equipment (i.e. PPE) in the interests of health and safety. Such items will be provided by the School, and should be worn at all times, as required.

Theft and Damage to School Property

If you are suspected of, or caught, stealing any property or assets of the School, other employees, or a third party, you will be subject to disciplinary investigation and action.

You are expected to use and take care of all equipment provided to you in the course of your employment in the way it was intended. If you are suspected of, or caught, causing deliberate

damage to any School property, IT assets, vehicles, or premises (including third party property, belongings or equipment), you will be subject to disciplinary investigation and action.

Depending on the circumstances of the theft or damage, the Police may be informed.

Conduct and Inappropriate Behaviour Outside of Work

As a general rule, what you do outwith working hours and away from school is a personal matter. However, any unlawful, anti-social or other inappropriate conduct which may jeopardise the School's good reputation and name may be dealt with through the Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

For the avoidance of doubt, School policies will continue to apply at all the following events:

- School "office" parties, drinks events and other work-related social occasions
- Third party occasions (e.g. clients, contractors etc) where you have been invited to attend in your capacity as a representative of the School
- Any work-related conferences and training courses
- Any occasions when you are away on business on behalf of the School, including school trips.

Personal Relationships

The School fully supports every colleague's right to a private and family life (*Human Rights Acts 1998*), and so does not **generally** concern itself with the personal relationships of its staff.

However, the School also recognises that personal relationships at work need to be managed with care and sensitivity and that there are certain circumstances where personal relationships have the potential to directly affect the School's effective operation or reputation.

A close personal relationship may include (*but is not limited to*) current and former:

- Family relationships (including family by marriage/civil partnership etc)
- Romantic/intimate/sexual/emotional relationships
- Close personal friendships and social/extracurricular relationships
- Business/commercial relationships
- Financial relationships

If a close personal relationship exists or develops with another employee, supplier/contractor, or other stakeholder of the School (e.g. Governor, donor, parent of a current pupil, etc) which could be considered by colleagues or others to be:

- influencing how you conduct yourself at work,
- affecting the School's good reputation or perception of the School's professionalism and fairness,
- impacting the effective operation of the School,
- affecting the education or welfare of a pupil/pupils
- affecting colleagues or working relationships within a team/department (e.g. through perceived preferential treatment, difficulties if the relationship breaks down, etc) or
- creating a real or perceived conflict of interest

you should inform your line manager or the Head of Human Resources, in confidence, and at the earliest opportunity. The requirement for staff to declare a close personal relationship is always intended purely for the long-term protection of both parties and to help avoid any accusations of

bias, favouritism, impropriety or prejudice, allegations of abuse of authority, or conflict of interest concerns.

There are certain situations at work where it should be assumed that a conflict of interest will occur and should be managed accordingly. These are:

- recruitment and selection (including promotion)
- line management or supervisory responsibilities e.g. appraisal or assessment, performance management, allocation of duties/shifts, reward decisions etc
- disciplinary or grievance procedures, including discipline of pupils
- financial transactions (including the authorisation of invoices, salaries, expenses, etc) and,
- tendering processes or the appointment of suppliers/contractors

These are all examples where the employee is undertaking a function with particular regulatory, statutory or financial responsibilities. Other circumstances may also come into this category. Further information about conflict of interest in relation to goods and services, suppliers and tendering processes etc is provided in the School's [Procurement Policy](#).

Criminal Charges and Convictions

For the avoidance of doubt, you **must** inform your line manager and the Head of HR immediately of any criminal charges or legal proceedings being taken against you which may reasonably be considered either relevant to the performance of your job or potentially damaging to the School's reputation. If you are remanded in custody pending charges, you should arrange for your line manager and the Head of HR to be informed at the earliest possible opportunity.

You must inform the Principal, immediately and in writing, if you have been found guilty or convicted of any offence (other than a fixed penalty traffic offence), or have received a police caution. Failure to disclose this information may be treated as a disciplinary offence.

Criminal offences outside employment will not be treated as automatic reasons for the School to take disciplinary action. The School will always seek to establish the facts of the case and then consider if the matter warrants commencing this procedure.

Further information about how the School may deal with a colleague who is the subject of police enquiries or criminal charges, or investigation by another statutory authority, can be found in the [Disciplinary Policy and Procedures](#).

Other Work and Volunteering

If the School is your primary employer, you must make your line manager aware, and secure the permission of the relevant member of the Principal's Leadership Team, before continuing or accepting any additional paid work, including any work undertaken in a self-employed capacity.

It is your responsibility to ensure that this additional work does not adversely affect your job performance and/or wellbeing or breach the Working Time Regulations. You must also ensure that there is no perceived conflict of interest associated with your additional work.

No-one employed by the School, in whatever capacity, may provide private tutoring for any pupil of our school, other than in exceptional circumstances and with the express advance agreement of the Principal. Please refer to the [Private Tutoring and Advisors Policy](#) for further details.

Smoking, Drinking and Substance Misuse

You must not attend work under the influence of any substance, including alcohol, illegal drugs, and/or solvents. If you have been prescribed medication by a healthcare professional which may have an adverse effect on your ability to carry out your duties, you should inform your line manager.

You must not smoke, use e-cigarettes (vaping), or use illegal or inappropriate substances on the School site, or be under the influence of the same. Alcohol must not be consumed on site, other than at an approved event. During times at which you are responsible for pupils, e.g. on a School trip, you must not drink alcohol, smoke, use e-cigarettes or take illegal substances, or be under the influence of the same.

The School's [Alcohol and Drugs Policy and Procedures](#) further outline the standards expected in relation to drug and alcohol use and misuse, and action that will be taken in cases of non-compliance.

Confidentiality and Reputation of the School

You must not act in a way that is likely to bring the School into disrepute at any time.

You are reminded that you have a duty of confidentiality to the School as your employer and must not divulge information concerning the School or any pupil to third parties, except in relation to your professional duties. If you are unsure about whether you should disclose information which you consider to be, or might be, confidential, you should seek guidance from your line manager in the first instance.

Only the Principal, or a person acting under the authority of the Principal, is entitled to speak to the media on behalf of the School.

You must not misuse or misrepresent your professional position, qualifications or experience, or your role in the School for any reason and at any time, and particularly not to seek preferential treatment for yourself, relatives, or personal contacts.

Professional Registration and associated statutory requirements

The conduct of teachers is regulated by the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS). Teachers at the School must maintain registration with the GTCS. Details of the [Professional Standards for Teachers](#) and the [Code of Professionalism and Conduct \(CoPaC\)](#) can both be found on the GTCS website.

Certain members of professional services staff are required to be registered with a relevant regulatory body in order to undertake their role. For example, preschool colleagues and those working in wraparound care are required to be registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and school nurses with the Nursing and Midwifery Council. Registration requirements will be specified in the Job Description for relevant roles, and these colleagues will be subject to the codes of conduct relating to that registration and/or the membership of relevant professional bodies.

Any colleague who is a member of a recognised professional body is expected to adhere to the guidance set by that professional body in addition to this guidance.

You must comply with relevant statutory and contractual provisions and other instructions which support the well-being and development of pupils, including where these require cooperation and collaboration with outside agencies. They must comply with the requirements of statutory bodies relating to the examination, assessment and evaluation of pupil achievement and attainment.

Compliance and Accountability

IT Security

You must make yourself aware of the suite of [Information Security policies](#) (see list in Overarching Policy) on the Staff Portal and comply with the particular requirements confirmed in these documents. You must also undertake all necessary IT training (e.g. IT Security) as requested by the School, and any regular updates, as required.

Information and Communication Technology facilities are provided for the better performance of our colleagues' duties. They may also be used for personal purposes provided that such use does not involve the School in any additional cost, compromise the integrity of the School's data, systems, impede their efficient operation or interfere with the performance of your duties.

You must observe professional standards when using digital and electronic means of communication, whether or not the equipment is provided by the School or you are utilising a School system. In particular, you must not access or attempt to access pornographic or otherwise inappropriate material from the internet. You must not interact with pupils or otherwise use digital or electronic media in any way that may compromise their integrity or bring yourself or the School into disrepute.

You must take every precaution to protect the School's data, including sharing data with 3rd parties and protecting the privacy of colleagues, pupils, parents and carers through strict compliance with UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Sharing: Code of Practice as detailed in the Data Protection Act, 2018.

In addition, you should not engage any 3rd party system, organisation or person to process School data without explicit consent from the School. You must declare any processing of School data outside of any of the authorised School systems.

Data Protection

The School has a number of [Data Protection and Privacy policies](#) and procedures in place to ensure that the School and its employees process personal and sensitive data in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

You are required to undergo relevant training in relation to Data Protection, to comply with the provisions of these School policies and the associated Data Protection legislation, and where you have access to personal data and sensitive personal data in the course of your employment you will ensure that it is processed and stored correctly and that you take adequate precautions to ensure confidentiality, integrity and security of this data.

You must inform Human Resources of changes to your own personal data as soon as possible after the change occurs.

Social Media

The School has a comprehensive **Social Media Policy** which provides specific guidance in relation to the use of social media both in and outside of School. You are expected to observe these professional standards at all times when using social media on behalf of the School, and should also carefully consider the policy and associated guidelines when using social media in a personal capacity, as misuse may potentially impact on your employment.

Financial and Ethical Probity

You are expected to maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in management and administrative duties, including in the use of School property and finances. You must not use the resources of the School for your own benefit, whether financial or otherwise.

You must comply with the School's [Anti-Bribery Policy](#) which has been developed to meet the requirements of the Bribery Act 2010. In particular, you must declare to the Bursar any gifts valued at more than £100 from any one source.

If you are making decisions concerning the procurement of goods or services, you must declare any conflict of interest that may arise. Full details of all the requirements and procedures can be found in the School's [Procurement Policy](#) and you should make yourself aware of the obligations on colleagues detailed in this policy.

Raising Concerns

If you believe that your own or another employee's behaviour contravenes the standards set out in this Code of Conduct, you should raise the issue with the appropriate person (e.g. your line manager). If your concern relates to your line manager, you should raise the issue with their line manager, any member of PLT, or the Head of HR.

If you have any concerns about another employee's behaviour in relation to child protection or safeguarding, you should raise the issue immediately with the Child Protection Coordinator.

Whistleblowing

If you believe that criminal activity or wrongdoing of any other serious nature is taking place in the School, you must report the matter to their line manager or the Head of HR at the earliest opportunity. Full details of how to raise any concerns about any qualifying disclosures can be found in the School's [Whistleblowing Policy](#) on the Staff Portal.

Any colleague who raises such a concern in good faith and in line with the Whistleblowing Policy will not suffer any detriment or be penalised in any other way.

Review

The owner of this document is the Head of Human Resources.

It is approved by the Principal's Leadership Team.

Code of Conduct Agreement

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| I hereby acknowledge that I have read and understood the content of this Code of Conduct and accept that this forms part of my contract of employment or voluntary engagement at George Watson's College. | |
| Name (Print): | |
| Signature: | |
| Job Title: | |
| Date: | |

The current version of the School's Code of Conduct and all the relevant policies and procedures that govern conduct at work and support our employees, workers and volunteers in the workplace are always available electronically on the Staff Portal or in hard copy or other accessible formats from Human Resources.

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed every year or more frequently if significant changes are required, for example to reflect changes in legislation. The review will be conducted by the end of summer term each year to ensure that any changes can be implemented for the start of each school session.

At each review, in order to support our commitment to effective Safeguarding and Child Protection across the School, we will seek input from pupils to ensure that section of this Code of Conduct continues to reflect their views.

Date of next review: By June 2025

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