

AMDG



## **Donhead Preparatory School**

### **Code of Conduct**

#### **Aims, scope and principles**

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff at Donhead to follow. By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

Many of the principles in this code of conduct are based on the Teachers' Standards. Donhead staff have an influential position in the school and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards.

We expect all support staff, governors and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others. As a Jesuit School we role model the JPP values and take an active part in the Catholic life of the school.

Failure to follow the Donhead staff code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in our staff disciplinary procedures.

Please note that this Donhead staff code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils.

#### **Legislation and guidance**

In line with the statutory Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) we should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistle-blowing, as well as acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

#### **General obligations**

Donhead staff set an example to pupils. They will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school
- Treat pupils and others with dignity and respect
- Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Not express personal beliefs in a way that exploits pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to

break the law

- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within
- Adhere to the Teachers' Standards and Teaching Assistant Standards

## **Safeguarding**

Donhead staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect.

Staff will familiarise themselves with our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures, and the Prevent initiative, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child. Attend the mandatory annual Safeguarding training and complete all related/assigned training.

Our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures are available online and a hard copy is available on request of the school office. All staff will be asked to sign to say they have read and understood the updated annual policy.

## **Allegations that may meet the harm threshold**

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that anyone working in the school, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or

- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place inside or outside of school

We will deal with any such allegation quickly and in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be the headteacher, or the chair of governors where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation.

## **Low Level concerns about members of staff**

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harm threshold, is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt'. For example, this may include:

- Being over-friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on a personal device
- Engaging in 1-to-1 activities where they can't easily be seen
- Humiliating pupils

Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy. We also encourage staff to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would

be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage staff to report it. All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way.

Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed, and the staff member supported to correct it, at an early stage.

This creates and embeds a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff, while minimising the risk of abuse.

Reporting and responding to low-level concerns is covered in more detail in our Low Level Concerns and child protection and safeguarding policy.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

### **Whistle-blowing**

Whistle-blowing reports wrongdoing that it is “in the public interest” to report. Examples linked to safeguarding include:

- Pupils’ or staff members’ health and safety being put in danger
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement
- Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest

Staff are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. Their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and their confidentiality will be respected.

Staff should consider the examples above when deciding whether their concern is of a whistle-blowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or school procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

Staff should report their concern to the Headteacher. If the concern is about the Headteacher, or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to The Chair of Governors.

Concerns should be made in writing wherever possible. They should include names of those committing wrongdoing, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter.

For our school’s detailed whistle-blowing process, please refer to our whistle-blowing policy.

### **Staff-pupil relationships**

Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so.

If staff members and pupils must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

- This takes place in a public place that others can access
- Others can see into the room
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of school hours if possible.

Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes social media profiles. We advise against friends’ requests/ communicating through social media for staff

and parents.

While we are aware many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to pupils are not acceptable.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, or if a staff member is concerned at any point about a fellow staff member and a pupil, this should be reported in line with the procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

### **Acceptable Use of Technology**

Staff will not use technology in school or belonging to the school to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.

Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school equipment for personal use, in school hours or in front of pupils. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.

We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system and any monitoring and filtering concerns will be dealt with by the DSL and Head.

Generative AI tools can produce unreliable information, therefore any content produced requires professional judgement to check for appropriateness and accuracy.

### **Confidentiality**

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the school, staff, pupils and their parents.

This information should never be:

- Disclosed to anyone unless required by law or with consent from the relevant party or parties
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

This does not overrule their duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, as detailed further in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

### **Honesty and integrity**

Donhead staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes dealing with pupils, handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities.

Staff will not accept bribes. Gifts that are worth more than £100 must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the school is correct. This should include:

- Background information (including any past or current investigations/cautions related to conduct outside of school)
- Qualifications

- Professional experience

Where there are any updates to the information provided to the school, the member of staff will advise the school as soon as reasonably practicable. Consideration will then be given to the nature and circumstances of the matter and whether this may have an impact on the member of staff's employment.

## Dress Code

These guidelines and expectations for staff dress and appearance are intended to strike a balance between individual choice and the need to maintain role-sensitive high standards in dress and appearance.

A high standard of dress and overall appearance of staff is important in order to model the high standards expected from our children as well as presenting a professional image to our parents and the wider community.

### Overriding Principles

The way that staff present themselves, including their clothing, is an important part of their overall professional demeanour and is often the first indicator of others' perception of our professionalism.

Whilst we do not wish to be overly prescriptive, we nevertheless expect all staff to adhere to the following standards concerning their professional dress:

- Ensure they are in keeping with the professional image of the School.
- Dress appropriately for their job.
- Not wear anything which presents a risk to health and safety.
- Wear uniform provided to staff where appropriate (including Personal Protective Equipment).
- Not wear anything which is likely to bring the School into disrepute (i.e. potentially offensive badges, logos or motifs).
- Maintain high standards of personal hygiene.
- Ensure that clothing is clean and tidy.

### All clothing should be smart, business-like and appropriate.

Staff members who wish to wear appropriate religious and cultural dress may do so, unless it creates a health and safety risk to you or any other person, or otherwise breaches this policy.

### Standards of Staff Dress

#### Male Members of Staff:

- It is expected that all staff wear a collared shirt (not a polo shirt) with a suit or smart trousers (no denim or cargo) and a jacket for more formal events.

#### Female Members of Staff

- It is expected that all staff wear smart trousers (no denim, cargo, shorts or leggings) or smart skirts, dresses or tailored shorts (length of the skirt/dress/shorts should be considered as there is an expectation that these are modest, i.e.: close to knee-length).
- Consideration should be given to the style and length of tops worn. Very low (front or back) or strappy tops are not suitable.

Staff with individual concerns relating to the standards of dress above due to specific personal circumstances should feel free to discuss this with the Head so alternative arrangements can be

made.

### **Footwear**

Smart business-like shoes should be worn, which cover the toes and do not easily slip off. Other shoes appropriate to the role are acceptable. Flip-flops, sandals or similar are not suitable for health and safety reasons.

### **Accessories**

- Jewellery - staff are encouraged to use their professional discretion with regard to both how much jewellery is displayed/worn and the type of jewellery. Although the primary concern is that surrounding health and safety, an emphasis on a professional business-like appearance should be considered.
- Tattoos – it is recommended that any tattoos are covered during the normal working day.
- Sunglasses – these may be worn, but out of courtesy should be removed when speaking to children, staff or parents.
- Piercings - In order to maintain a sense of professional dress in keeping with the ethos and expectations of the school, facial piercings/tongue studs are not acceptable and it is expected that staff do not wear these items when working.

### **Conduct outside of work**

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school, or the teaching profession, into disrepute. This covers conduct including but not limited to relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school on social media.

### **Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher but can be revised as needed. Our Governing Body will ensure this code of conduct is implemented effectively, and will ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard children and deal with any concerns.

### **Links with other policies**

This policy links with our policies on:

- Staff disciplinary procedures.
- Staff Capability Policy.
- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Online safety policy
- Whistle-blowing policy

**March 2025 (subject to annual review)**