



## **Bexley Grammar School Staff Professional Guidance Policy**

### **1. Purpose**

This Guidance Policy sets out the key principles and values for teachers at Bexley Grammar School. This Guidance Policy states not only to the profession, but also to members of the public, the standard of conduct and competence expected of our teachers. The Guidance Policy cannot address every possible circumstance in which teachers might find themselves. However, it is intended that teachers are mindful of the policy in relation to the judgements which they will be called upon to make in situations which may occur both within and away from the professional context. Although some of the behaviours described in this policy will be unthinkable to the vast majority of our teachers and members of the public, Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2023 places a duty on Bexley Grammar School to identify them so that the boundaries of professional behaviour and conduct are clear and public trust in our teachers is maintained.

### **2. Scope**

This guidance applies to Bexley Grammar School staff whatever their employment status and in whatever educational context they may work.

### **3. Status**

This is guidance and not a statutory code; therefore teachers must use their own judgement and common sense in applying the principles to the various situations in which they may find themselves. However, teachers must be aware that a serious breach or series of minor breaches of these principles could lead to action which may result in sanctions in line with the School's Disciplinary Policy.

At all times it is expected that teachers should embrace the notion of personal regulation based on common sense and good professional judgement.

This document is not intended to be an exhaustive list of unacceptable or unwise behaviours, rather it is designed to provide guidance and raise awareness of issues and situations which can potentially arise.

### **4. Standards of Teaching**

**(taken from the DfE June 2013 Teachers' Standards: Guidance for school leaders, school staff and governing bodies (updated December 2021))**

#### **4.1 Preamble**

Teachers make the education of their pupils their first 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 pupils.

**A teacher must:**

**a. Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils**

- establish a safe and stimulating environment for pupils, rooted in mutual respect
- set goals that stretch and challenge pupils of all backgrounds, abilities and dispositions
- demonstrate consistently the positive attitudes, values and behaviour which are expected of pupils.

**b. Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils**

- be accountable for pupils' attainment, progress and outcomes
- be aware of pupils' capabilities and their prior knowledge, and plan teaching to build on these
- guide pupils to reflect on the progress they have made and their emerging needs
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn and how this impacts on teaching
- encourage pupils to take a responsible and conscientious attitude to their own work and study.

**c. Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge**

- have a secure knowledge of the relevant subject(s) and curriculum areas, foster and maintain pupils' 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

**d. Plan and teach well-structured lessons**

- impart knowledge and develop understanding through effective use of lesson time
- promote a love of learning and children's intellectual curiosity
- set homework and plan other out-of-class activities to consolidate and extend the knowledge and understanding pupils 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).

**e. Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils**

- know when and how to differentiate appropriately, using approaches which enable pupils to be taught effectively
- have a secure understanding of how a range of factors can inhibit pupils' 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 pupils' education at different stages of development
- have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, 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.

**f. 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 pupils' progress
- use relevant data to monitor progress, set targets, and plan subsequent lessons
- give pupils regular feedback, both orally and through accurate marking, and encourage pupils to respond to the feedback.

**g. 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 policy
- 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 pupils' needs in order to involve and motivate them
- maintain good relationships with pupils, exercise appropriate authority, and act decisively when necessary.

**h. 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 with regard to pupils' achievements and well-being.

**5. Personal and professional conduct**

**(taken from the DfE June 2013 Teachers' Standards: Guidance for school leaders, school staff and governing bodies and the GTC Scotland Code of Professionalism and Conduct)**

A teacher is expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct throughout a teacher's career.

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:
- treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
- having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
- not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or

might lead them to break the law.

- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

## **6. Expectations of Bexley Grammar School Teachers**

Parents and carers in particular, and the public in general, place a very high degree of trust in those who are educating pupils, and rely upon teachers to interpret what is right and what is wrong.

Teachers are often called upon to make difficult decisions regarding pupils and therefore, in exercising judgement, you should think very carefully of the implication and potential consequences of the options open to you.

As a teacher, you should also bear in mind how your decision and subsequent action may appear or be interpreted by others not fully aware of all of the circumstances.

Bexley Grammar School Staff are expected to adhere to other school policies regarding discipline, safeguarding, e-Safety, British values, bullying and other expectations of teachers outlined in the Staff Handbook. All staff are expected to follow best practice in all areas of data protection: high standards of professionalism and discretion should be maintained when controlling data belonging to students, parents, colleagues and other third parties with whom you interact in the course of your duties.

When working with students, staff are expected to dress in a professional way according to the School Dress Code, which reflects the seriousness and professionalism of their role, and which avoids conveying confusing or inappropriate messages. A standard of dress which at least reflects the personal presentation demanded of students is required. This means, practical considerations in some subject areas notwithstanding, normal smart business dress (formal jacket and trousers/skirt – no jeans) for both male and female colleagues.

### **6.1 Pupils**

Teachers should establish professional boundaries, and recognise the negative impact that actual or perceived breaches of these would have upon pupils and the confidence of the public.

With regard to relationships with pupils, you should:

- In managing behaviour:
  - be aware of and adhere to behaviour management protocols and strategies and not harm or use physical violence against a child or pupil in or away from the educational establishment context;
  - take into account reasonable norms and best practice when conducting interviews with pupils, in a disciplinary context, and have due regard to their age, stage and individual circumstances;
  - appreciate fully that the onus is upon you as the teacher and not the pupil to distance yourself from any potentially inappropriate situation;
  - avoid sexual contact with or remarks towards a pupil of school age, regardless of the apparent consent of the individual concerned;
  - be mindful that professional boundaries can be perceived to extend beyond a pupil's educational establishment leaving date; therefore, in situations of this nature, you should

exercise great care and professional judgement, taking into account all the factors involved;

- not attempt to establish an inappropriate relationship with any pupil by means which might include (but are not limited to):

- communication of a personal nature;
- engaging in an inappropriate way through the internet or by other means with pupils;
- sending emails or text messages to pupils, of an inappropriate nature.

As a teacher you must:

- not discuss with pupils your own intimate and personal relationships and be mindful to maintain an appropriate balance between formality and informality when you are dealing with pupils;
- take care to avoid becoming personally involved in a pupil's personal affairs;
- be aware of the potential dangers of being alone with a pupil (in particular under 18 years of age) in a private or isolated situation, using common sense and professional judgement to avoid circumstances which are, or could be, perceived to be of an inappropriate nature. This is also the case in connection with social networking websites, away from the setting of the educational establishment and in subject areas such as music, physical education and drama;
- be mindful that the internet and social networking can quickly blur the professional boundary between teacher and pupil. Teachers need to be alert to the risk that actions which might, on the face of it, seem quite innocent, can be misunderstood and misconstrued by others;
- avoid inappropriate communication (including via social networking) with individuals under 18 or in relation to whom you may be in a position of trust or have a professional relationship;
- not by any means or in any circumstances, make, view or access illegal or inappropriate images of children or protected adults;
- be responsible for your digital footprint, and aware that if the wider school community becomes aware of online and / or offline interests which undermine the position of trust which a teacher holds the school may need to take disciplinary action;
- be mindful of the negative impact of being under the influence of alcohol in the professional setting.

## **6.2 Educational Excursions**

Excursions have an important part to play in the life of pupils, and can greatly enrich the educational experience of pupils taking part.

Physical safety is of prime importance. However, particularly in the residential setting, relationships tend to be less formal and the environment is very different from that in an educational establishment. You should not allow yourself to overstep the professional boundaries and remember that the professional standard of behaviour expected of you on an educational excursion away from the structure of the normal working day is no different from that of the professional norm.

Accordingly you should ensure, for example, that you:

- have a full knowledge of, and comply with, the procedures and guidelines laid down for these activities by your educational establishment and the requirements of health and safety;
- are always mindful of the need to maintain an appropriate balance between formality and informality and avoid situations which are or could be reasonably perceived to be of an

inappropriate nature.

### **6.3 Honesty and Integrity**

As a teacher you must:

- not engage in behaviour of a criminal nature, especially related to sex, dishonesty, firearms, misuse of drugs and violence against a person or property or serious public order offences, which would be of particular concern in regard to a teacher's professional status and fitness to teach;
- be honest and trustworthy, especially avoiding offences such as theft, dishonesty, extortion, fraud or misuse of drugs;
- have due regard to the trust in you as a teacher and therefore act with integrity and honesty in making declarations and undertakings in professional applications/submissions, in the writing of references for colleagues or pupils and in the conduct of tasks in connection with examinations and/or assessments;
- declare to the Headteacher and the Governing Body if you are arrested and / or charged with a criminal offence, regardless of the circumstances;
- not knowingly hinder, or refuse to engage with the Governing Body of Bexley Grammar School in the discharge of its regulatory functions;
- be mindful that you have a professional responsibility to ensure that your contact details held by Bexley Grammar School are correct and up-to-date.

### **7. Professional Responsibilities towards Pupils**

As a teacher:

- you must treat sensitive, personal information about pupils with respect and confidentiality and not disclose it unless required to do so by your employer or by law;
  - you must be truthful, honest and fair in relation to information you provide about pupils;
  - you should aim to be a positive role model to pupils and motivate and inspire them to realise their full potential;
  - you must maintain an up-to-date knowledge and understanding of, implement, and comply with, child and protected adult procedures as they may currently apply in your workplace;
  - you should recognise your role as a professional in delivering better outcomes for children and young people;
  - you must raise any concerns which you may have about the behaviour of any colleague in connection with a child or protected adult, using the appropriate procedures in place;
  - you should be aware of the general principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, regarding equal treatment, the child's best interests, and giving appropriate weight to the views of the child.
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- You should display a sensitive and positive attitude towards differences among pupils and identify and respond appropriately to those with difficulties in, or barriers to, learning. When necessary, you should seek advice in relation to their additional support needs.
  - You should identify and respond appropriately to indicators of the well-being and welfare of pupils, including bullying and discrimination, ensuring that their initiative and independent

learning are encouraged and nurtured.

- As a teacher, you should have high expectations of and provide realistic challenges for pupils, ensuring that learning tasks are varied in form, differentiated and devised to build confidence in and promote self-worth for all your pupils.
- Pupils of school age spend a large proportion of their lives within the educational setting, and therefore teachers play a pivotal role in child protection as they are well placed to see symptoms and signs.
- In keeping with “Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022” teachers should keep up-to-date with their employer’s child protection procedures and operate within them.
- The protection of children and protected adults is of the utmost importance. A teacher cannot ignore the behaviour of any colleague which he or she may genuinely feel falls short of norms and standards in this regard and such concerns should be raised through the procedures available.

## **8. Professional Values and Personal Commitment**

As a Bexley Grammar School teacher you should:

- be able to show in your day-to-day practise a commitment to social justice and inclusion, take responsibility for your own professional learning and development and be an active partner in the communities in which you work.

## **9. Professionalism towards Colleagues, Parents and Carers**

As a teacher:

- you should work in a collegiate and co-operative manner with colleagues and members of other relevant professions;
- you must treat all colleagues and parents and carers fairly and with respect, without discrimination;
- you should not make malicious or unfounded criticisms of, or accusations about, colleagues that may undermine them professionally or in the professional judgements they make;
- you should promote good relationships between home and school/college and, as such, respect the role of parents and carers in the learning experiences appropriate;
- you should exercise great care when expressing opinions in public about your employer and be mindful of GDPR requirements concerning handling information about parents, carers and pupils.

### **9.1 Colleagues**

- Everyone in the workplace should be able to work in an environment which is free from discrimination and harassment. A teacher should work in a collegiate way, treating all colleagues professionally.

As a teacher you should:

- avoid undermining a colleague by remarks which are or could be perceived as being malicious, unfounded or unprofessional. This is of particular importance when in contact with parents, carers and pupils;
- guard against inappropriate e-communication with, or behaviour towards, colleagues which is

or could be perceived as being of an unprofessional, discriminatory or harassing nature.

## **9.2 Parents and Carers**

- Success in the education of pupils is greatly enhanced by the active involvement of their parents or carers or key adults in their lives.

As appropriate, parents and carers should be seen as vital partners in the learning experience and therefore as a teacher you should:

- be professional in dealings with parents and carers and avoid making comments, being drawn into inappropriate discussions or divulging confidential information about other pupils, colleagues, or the educational establishment;
- encourage the involvement of parents and carers as appropriate in the learning experience, welcoming them as active participants in the life of the educational establishment, and working in partnership with it.

## **10. Equality and Diversity**

In line with the Equality Act 2010, the School promotes equality and diversity and respects and values difference.

Bexley Grammar School wants to promote an inclusive profession that incorporates people from a range of diverse backgrounds. Through respecting the principle of equal treatment, this will benefit both the teaching profession and pupils alike.

As a teacher you should:

- engage and work positively with pupils, colleagues, parents and carers in an open, inclusive and respectful way, in line with the law and with a non-judgemental approach whatever their background, personal circumstances, cultural differences, values and beliefs;
- help pupils to understand different views, perspectives, and experiences and develop positive relationships both within the educational establishment and in the local community;
- recognise that you are a role model and therefore should be aware of the potentially serious impact which any demonstration by you of intolerance or prejudice could have upon your standing as a teacher and your fitness to teach.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Staff Handbook, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, e-Safety Policy, Behaviour Policies, Performance Management and Pay Policies.

Staff should be aware of their responsibilities regarding:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2022
- The Sexual Offences Act 2003 (section 16)
- Teacher misconduct: The prohibition of teachers October 2015

This policy was updated on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2023.