



Godalming Junior School

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. If you have any concerns, you should contact our Designated Safeguard Lead, Adam Samson or Deputy Designated Safeguard Leads Erin Coleman, Louise Munz, Kate Wilkinson and Andrea Crook

CODE OF CONDUCT

Governors' Committee Responsible:	Resources Committee
Governor Lead:	John Warren - Chair
Nominated Lead Member of Staff:	Adam Samson - Headteacher
Status & Review Cycle:	Statutory - Annual
Next Review Date:	Summer 2026

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out clear guidance on the standards of behaviour expected from all staff at Godalming Junior School. The principles underlying the guidance aim to encourage all staff to achieve the highest possible standards of conduct and minimise the risk of inappropriate conduct occurring.
- 1.2 School staff are in a unique position of trust and influence as role models for the children. Therefore, staff must adhere to behaviour that sets the best example to all children within the school at all times.
- 1.3 Staff also have an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, both inside and outside working hours and work setting.
- 1.4 This policy applies to all staff and volunteers in the school regardless of their position, role or responsibility. References to 'staff' throughout the policy relate to all of the following groups:
 - 1.4.1 All members of staff including teaching and support staff
 - 1.4.2 Volunteers, including governors
 - 1.4.3 Casual workers
 - 1.4.4 Temporary and supply staff, either from agencies or engaged directly
 - 1.4.5 Student placements, including those undertaking initial teacher training and apprentices.
 - 1.4.6 External clubs
- 1.5 Godalming Junior School requires that all staff have read and agree to comply with this policy.
- 1.6 Breach or failure to observe this policy will result in action being taken under the school disciplinary procedures including, but not limited to, dismissal.
- 1.7 This code of conduct is not an exhaustive list of acceptable and unacceptable standards of behaviour. In situations where guidance does not exist in this

policy staff are expected to exercise their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the children and the school.

2.0 Professional Behaviour and Conduct

- 2.1 Staff are expected to demonstrate the highest possible standards of personal and professional conduct and behaviour and consistently act with honesty and integrity. This includes being clear on any declarations of interest which avoids any 'conflicts of interest' in their school role with any outside links and/or business interests
- 2.2 In accordance with the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 Godalming Junior School expects all staff to treat each other, children, parents and the wider community with dignity and respect at all times by not engaging in any form of harassment towards colleagues. This includes during the working day, on school trips/residential visits, social events and when staff are in school working during school holidays
- 2.2 Staff must act in accordance with their duty of care to the children and staff and ensure that the safety and welfare of the children are accorded the highest priority.
- 2.3 Staff show fairness in their treatment of children and avoid behaviours such as embarrassing or humiliating children, making jokes at the expense of the children, discriminating against or favouring children.
- 2.4 Staff must have regard for the ethos and values of the school and must not do or say anything, which may bring the school or governing body into disrepute. This includes being responsible online, including social media profile and posts and includes members of staff who are related or in a consensual relationship. Care must be taken by staff to avoid any conflict of interest between activities undertaken outside school and responsibilities within school. Staff are expected to act in accordance with the school's policies and procedures at all times.
- 2.5 Staff are expected to be punctual and make contact with the appropriate line manager if they are unable to attend no later than 8.00am and to adhere to the school's requirements for absence reporting as set out in the school's Staff Leave of Absence Policy.
- 2.6 No holidays are authorised during term time and the Headteacher will only authorise time off if he/she deems it an exceptional circumstance in line with the school's Staff Leave of Absence Policy. Any additional time off during term time will be at the headteacher's discretion and unpaid. **The Headteacher will refer to the line manager of the member of staff, if appropriate, and consult as to how the role, if appropriate or necessary can or cannot be covered internally. This will only apply to fractions of the school week such as long weekends not full working weeks.**
- 2.7 When GJS 'Green Tickets' are in operation, these are wellbeing days out of school, paid at a point within the year. ALL applications are through the Headteacher and in person. Dates must not clash with other Green Ticket requests from other members of staff and cannot be at 'pinch points' in the year, such as: Sports Days, Christmas or Summer Fair dates, Transition dates or when there are residential trips - as examples. Requests are approved at the headteachers discretion and the staff member is expected to have a 90%+ attendance rate at the time of the request.

3.0 Dress and Appearance

- 3.1 Godalming Junior School recognise that dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. **However, all staff must dress in a manner that is appropriate to a professional role and that promotes a professional image.** This includes no jeans, 'spaghetti strap' tops, flip-flops, trainers/plimsolls (if not leading PE sessions or clubs requiring this footwear)
- 3.2 Staff should dress in a manner that is not offensive, revealing or sexually provocative and in a manner that is absent from political or contentious slogans.
- 3.3 Staff should dress safely and appropriately, for the tasks they undertake and avoid clothing that is 'overly casual'.
- 3.4 Tattoos and body art must be discreet while staff are in school. Discreet earrings and other body piercings are acceptable. As an operational matter, **it will be the Headteacher's discretion if piercings are to be removed while on school premises.**

4.0 Smoking, alcohol and other substances

- 4.1 Godalming Junior School is a non-smoking/vaping site. Staff must not smoke on school premises or outside school gates. Any member of staff wishing to smoke must leave the school grounds.
- 4.2 Staff must not smoke whilst working with or supervising children offsite.
- 4.3 Staff must not consume or be under the influence of alcohol, illicit drugs or other illegal substances on or near school premises during school working hours or outside of school when children are in staff care.

5.0 Relationships with Pupils/Students

- 5.1 Staff must maintain professional boundaries with children appropriate to their position and must always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably. Staff should act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to question their actions or intent. Staff should think carefully about their conduct so that misinterpretations are minimised.
- 5.2 Staff must not establish or seek to establish social contact with children for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. If a young person seeks to establish social contact, you should exercise your professional judgement in making a response and be aware that such social contact could be misconstrued.
- 5.3 Staff must not develop personal relationships with children.
- 5.4 Staff should be mindful of section 16 of The Sexual Offences Act 2003¹.
- 5.5 Staff must not make sexual remarks to a child or discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of, children.

¹ Section 16 of The Sexual Offences Act 2003 provides that it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over (e.g. teacher, youth worker) to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual. A situation where a person is in a position of trust could arise where the child is in full-time education and the person looks after children under 18 in the same establishment as the child, even if s/he does not teach the child.

- 5.6 Godalming Junior School staff must not accept friend invitations or become friends with any child of Godalming Junior School on any social media platform. Staff should also refrain from following the Twitter or other similar social media accounts of children or their parents. Staff must read the school's e-safety policy carefully and follow all advice and guidance contained within it.

6.0 Infatuations

- 6.1 It is not unusual for pupils or, sometimes, their parents to develop infatuations towards members of staff. All such situations must be responded to sensitively to maintain the dignity of those concerned.
- 6.2 Staff should also be aware that such circumstances carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against staff. Any indications of an infatuation towards yourself or another member of staff must be reported to your line manager.

7.0 Gifts/Hospitality

- 7.1 Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift/offer of hospitality that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. However, there may be occasions where children or parents wish to give a small token of appreciation to staff, for example at religious festivities or at the end of the year.
- 7.2 It is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or to suggest to children that gifts are appropriate or desired. Money must not be accepted as a gift. If you are unsure whether to accept a gift, you should consult your line manager.
- 7.3 Personal gifts must not be given by staff to children and any reward to children should be in accordance with Godalming Junior School's Behaviour Policy, recorded and not based on favouritism.

8.0 Physical Contact with Pupils

- 8.1 There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with children, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. A 'no touch' approach is impractical for most staff and may in some circumstances be inappropriate. When physical contact is made with children, it should be in response to their needs at that time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.
- 8.2 Where feasible, staff should seek the child's permission before initiating contact. Staff should listen, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and, so far as is possible, use a level of contact, which is acceptable to the child for the minimum time necessary.
- 8.3 It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. **Staff should therefore, use their professional judgement at all times.**
- 8.4 Staff should be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described. Staff should never touch a child in a way that may be considered indecent. Always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical

contact be open to scrutiny. Staff must not engage in rough play, tickling or fun fights with children.

- 8.5 Extra caution should be exercised where a child is known to have suffered previous abuse or neglect. Such experiences may sometimes make a child exceptionally needy and demanding of physical contact and staff should respond sensitively by deterring the child through helping them to understand the importance of personal boundaries.
- 8.6 Staff supervising PE and games or providing musical tuition should demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument on another member of staff if possible. However, they may be required to initiate physical contact with children to support a child to perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument or to assist them with an exercise. Contact under these circumstances should be done with the child's agreement, for the minimum time necessary and in an open environment. Staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the child.
- 8.7 Physical contact must never be secretive, for the gratification of the adult or represent a misuse of authority.
- 8.8 If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported to your line manager, recorded and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the child's file.

9.0 Child in distress

- 9.1 There may be occasions when a child is in distress and in need of comfort as a reassurance. This may include age appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.
- 9.2 Such incidents should always be recorded and shared with your line manager. If you have a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance you should seek further advice from your line manager.

10.0 Showers and changing

- 10.0 Children are entitled to respect and privacy whilst they are changing after PE/games or swimming. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard young people, meet health and safety requirements and to ensure that bullying does not take place. The supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the children and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.
- 10.1 Staff should be vigilant about their own behaviour and announce their intention of entering a changing room. Staff must not change or shower in the same place as children.

11.0 One to one situations

- 11.1 Staff working individually with children should be aware of the potential vulnerability of them and staff in such situations. Staff should manage these situations with regard to the safety of the child and to themselves.
- 11.2 Individual work with children should not be undertaken in isolated areas or rooms where there is no external viewing panel. Where it is necessary to close doors for reasons of confidentiality a colleague should be made aware of this and asked to remain vigilant.

12.0 Transporting pupils

- 12.1 In certain circumstances it may be appropriate for staff to transport children offsite, for example sports fixtures, swimming lessons or other out of school activities.
- 12.2 Staff should ensure that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. Staff should ensure that the driver has the appropriate license for the vehicle, that the vehicle is roadworthy, has a valid MOT certificate and is appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.
- 12.3 Staff should ensure that the driver is not distracted while the vehicle is in motion for any reason other than an emergency and should ensure all passengers are wearing correctly fastened seatbelts. Staff should never transport children while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Where possible, it may be considered more appropriate to transport more than one child.
- 12.4 Prior to transporting children offsite consent must be obtained from parents/guardians and staff should be aware that the safety and welfare of the children is their responsibility until this is safely passed back to their parent/carer.

13.0 E-Safety

- 13.1 Staff should follow Godalming Junior School's E-Safety policy for staff and the Acceptable Use Policy at all times and have regard for the school's E-Safety policy for children.
- 13.2 Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites that may bring himself or herself, the school or the school community into disrepute. Staff should adopt the highest security settings on any personal profiles they have.
- 13.3 Staff should remain mindful of their digital footprint and exercise caution in all their use of social media or any other web based presence they have. This includes written content, videos or photographs and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts or following certain individuals or groups.
- 13.4 Staff must not make contact with children, must not accept or initiate friend requests nor follow children's accounts on any social media platform. Staff must not communicate with children via social media, websites, instant messenger accounts or text message.
- 13.5 Staff should not make contact with child's family members, accept or initiate friend requests or follow pupils' family member's account on any social media platform.
- 13.6 However, Godalming Junior School acknowledges that staff who are also parents may wish to make contact with other parents, who are friends, over social media. Staff must exercise caution and professional judgement in these circumstances and should not have any contact with a child's family member/s via social media if that contact is likely to constitute a conflict of interest or call into question their objectivity.
- 13.7 Mobile phones and personally-owned devices may not be used during lessons or formal school time. They should be switched off (or silent) at all times.

The Bluetooth functionality of a mobile phone should be switched off at all times and may not be used to send images or files to other mobile phones. Mobile phones and personal devices are not permitted to be used in certain areas within the school site such as changing rooms and toilets.

- 13.8 Mobile phones and personally-owned mobile devices brought in to school are the responsibility of the device owner. Godalming Junior School accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of personally-owned mobile phones or mobile devices.

14.0 Photography, video and images of children

- 14.1 Many school activities involve recording images as part of the curriculum, extra school activities, publicity or to celebrate an achievement. In accordance with The Data Protection Act 1998, the image of a child is personal data. Therefore, it is a requirement under the Act for consent to be obtained from the parent/guardian of a child for any images made. It is also important to take into account the wishes of the child, remembering that some children do not wish to have their photograph taken or be filmed.

- 14.2 Using images for publicity purposes will require the age-appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their parent/guardian. Images should not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without their consent. Staff should also be clear about the purpose of the activity and what will happen to the photographs/images/video footage when the lesson or activity is concluded.

- 14.3 Photographs/stills or video footage of children should only be taken using school equipment for purposes authorised by the school and should be stored securely and only on school equipment.

- 14.4 Staff should ensure that a member of the Senior Leadership Team is aware of the proposed use of photographic/video equipment and that this is recorded in lesson plans. All photographs/stills and video footage should be available for scrutiny and staff should be able to justify all images/video footage made.

- 14.5 Staff should remain aware of the potential for images of children to be misused to create indecent images of children and/or for grooming purposes. Therefore, careful consideration should be given to how activities which are being filmed or photographed are organised and undertaken. Particular care should be given when filming or photographing young or vulnerable children who may be unable to question how or why the activities are taking place. Staff should also be mindful that children who have been abused through the use of video or photography may feel threatened by its use in a teaching environment.

15.0 Confidentiality

- 15.1 Members of staff may have access to confidential information about children, their parents/carers or their siblings. Staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the child on a need to know basis.
- 15.2 Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a child or her/his family for their own, or others' advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other organisations). Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the child.

- 15.3 All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a child is bullied by another child, this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate school procedure. It must not be discussed outside the school, including with the child's parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the school except by a senior member of staff with the appropriate authority to deal with the matter.
- 15.4 Staff have a statutory obligation to share with Godalming Junior School's Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead any information which gives rise to concern about the welfare or safety of a child or that might suggest a child is in need or at risk of significant harm. Staff should pass on information without delay in accordance with Godalming Junior School's Safeguarding Policy and procedures and this should be recorded. Staff must never promise a child that they will not act on or pass on any information that they are told by the child.
- 15.5 Staff should refer to the Department of Education's document Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services² for further guidance on information sharing. If you are in any doubt about whether to share you should seek guidance from a member of the senior leadership team.
- 15.6 Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the senior leadership team and only approved staff and Governors should communicate to the media about the school.

16.0 Whistleblowing

- 16.1 Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, without fear of repercussion.
- 16.2 All school staff have a duty to report any behaviour by a colleague which raises concern. Staff should refer to Godalming Junior School's Whistleblowing Policy for further guidance. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

17.0 Compliance

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

²https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419628/Information_sharing_advice_safeguarding_practitioners.pdf

Appendix 1

Confirmation of compliance

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with Godalming Junior School's Code of Conduct.

Name

Position/Post Held.....

Signed

Date

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Headteacher

