

1.6.1 Staff Code of Conduct for all full-time and visiting members of staff (including Sports Coaches and Music Teachers).

Staff at Sussex House are expected to maintain high standards of professional conduct at all times. These include due regard for appearance, punctuality and behaviour during the school day and while on school business.

Dress

- **Teaching staff:** Teaching staff should dress smartly (to include a collar and tie for male staff) for normal teaching duties. Staff should not be less formally dressed than the pupils. Staff are expected to wear academic gowns for assembly and other formal occasions, with the addition of academic hoods for church services and Speech Day. Evening dress is required for the annual May Dinner.
- **Sport staff:** Sports staff should dress appropriately for the sport they are taking, as they seek to set positive examples to the boys, of presentation and readiness for the activity in hand. Where available, sports staff should wear the Sussex House sports staff kit provided.
- **Support staff:** Support staff should dress smartly, but with due regard to their designated functions i.e. Art technicians, Maintenance or Domestic staff.

Punctuality

Teaching and Administration staff are expected to be in school in good time to commence their designated duties. The timings of the school day are found in the red diary and in section 1.2.1 of the Staff Handbook

Behaviour

All staff are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and courteous way while on school business. Staff behaving in a way which brings the school into disrepute may face disciplinary action. This includes (but not exclusively) behaviour such as misuse of alcohol or drugs, participation in criminal activity or behaviour which places students or other staff in danger. Staff are provided with a copy of part 1 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2024* and are expected to be familiar with, and to observe the duties of care which it details. Special note should be taken of the policy regarding raising of 'low-level-concerns' in Safeguarding, with any such concerns being passed to the DSL. Staff also have a duty to report inappropriate conduct in others, as detailed in the Whistleblowing Policy (section 1.8 of the Staff Handbook).

Relationships with pupils

Staff will be well aware that cases of child abuse have become more numerous and more widely reported and that in their wake has been a plague of malicious allegations and threats. In a litigious and sensation-seeking age, colleagues are advised to exercise care and discretion in the way that they handle staff/ pupil relations. It is essential that pupils at Sussex House should continue to feel comfortable and secure in their relationships with members of staff. Actions which pupils may interpret as improper are unacceptable, no matter how good the intention. To this end the following guidelines are recommended:

- **Formality** - Staff should maintain appropriate adult – child relationships with students at all times. Teaching staff are to be formally addressed by pupils and whilst Games and Support staff may allow use of less formal terms, the need to maintain a professional distance from the boys should be borne in mind at all times.
- **Social media** - Under no circumstances may staff communicate with students via social media such as Facebook or Twitter. Staff using such media should also take appropriate security precautions to ensure their accounts do not allow browsing by unauthorised viewers.

- **Individual interviews with pupils** - One to one interviews in closed rooms should only take place during times when the immediate vicinity is well populated and as part of a general programme of activities. To carry out such interviews outside the normal school day or rehearsal/ practice schedule could cause anxiety to pupils and could place a member of staff in a compromising situation. If it is anticipated that that an interview may prove confrontational, the presence of a second adult is prudent.
- **Transport of pupils** - Staff should not give lifts in their cars to individual pupils unless written permission is obtained from a parent. Under such circumstances students should sit in the rear seat of the car wherever possible.
- **Home visiting** - Staff should not visit pupils at home unless a parent is present. Staff should not invite pupils to their home alone.
- **Outings** - Colleagues should not take individual pupils on any outings.
- **Technology** – It is not appropriate for staff to be in regular direct contact with pupils via email, telephone, texting or other forms of messaging. Any information that needs to be conveyed should be done so via parents. A major exception to this would be during periods of distance learning as experienced during the Coronavirus pandemic, during which staff taught and communicated with pupils via the secure remote learning platform provided by the school. The Teams platform is used to set weekly preps.
- **Physical Contact** - Staff should be mindful of the appropriateness of any physical contact they may have with pupils. Generally speaking it is not appropriate for staff to touch students other than to shake hands as a formal gesture. Exceptions to this could be during First Aid treatment, in assisting a boy who had fallen over, or in restraining a boy to prevent his causing harm to himself or others.
- **Sports or music staff** may need to make physical contact with a student to enable the teaching of correct posture or technique. This should only be done once permission has been granted by the pupil and should be as minimal as is practicable for the purpose. Staff conducting individual coaching or tuition sessions should be particularly attentive in this regard to protect both the student and themselves from any misunderstanding. Staff should address any concerns in this respect with the Deputy Head (Pastoral).