



YOUNG WOMEN'S HUB

Educate. Nurture. Inspire.

Staff code of conduct policy

March 2021

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Introduction

This policy sets out clear guidance on the standards of behaviour expected from all staff at YWH. The principles underlying the guidance aim to encourage staff to achieve the highest possible standards of conduct and minimise the risk of inappropriate conduct occurring.

The Young Women's Hub staff are in a unique position of trust and influence as role models for students. Therefore, staff must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all students within YWH.

Staff have an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of YWH, both inside and outside working hours and work setting.

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:

All members of staff including teaching and support staff, volunteers, including trustees and casual workers

- Temporary and supply staff, either from agencies or engaged directly
- Student placements, including those undertaking initial teacher training and apprenticeships

YWH requires that all staff have read and agree to comply with this policy.

Breach or failure to observe this policy will result in action being taken under the school disciplinary procedures including, but not limited to, dismissal.

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 student's and the Young Women's Hub.

Professional behaviour and conduct

- Staff are expected to demonstrate the highest possible standards of personal and professional conduct and behaviour and consistently act with honesty and integrity.
- The school expects staff to treat each other, students, parents and the wider community with dignity and respect at all times.
- Staff must act in accordance with their duty of care to students and ensure that the safety and welfare of students are accorded the highest priority.
- Staff should show fairness in their treatment of all students and avoid behaviours such as embarrassing or humiliating students, making jokes at the expense of students, discriminating against or favouring students and sarcasm.
- Staff must have regard for the ethos and values of the school and must not do or anything which may bring the school or governing body into disrepute.

Care should be taken by staff to avoid any conflict of interest between activities undertaken outside YWH and responsibilities within YWH.

Staff should act in accordance with YWH's policies and procedures at all times.

Dress and appearance

YWH 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.

- No caps or headscarves to be worn during school hours
- 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.
- No short shorts or short dresses, no cleavage on show,
- No ripped jeans
- Staff should dress safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake.
- Tattoos and body art should be covered whilst staff are in the school.
- Discreet earrings are acceptable but all other body piercings should be removed while on school premises.

Smoking, alcohol and other substances

YWH is a non-smoking site. Staff must not smoke on school premises or outside school gates. Any member of staff wishing to smoke must leave the YWH grounds and smoke at a distance away from the school (nearest bus stop).

- Staff must not smoke whilst working with or supervising students' offsite.
- Staff must not consume or be under the influence of alcohol, illicit drugs or other illegal substances on or near school premises.
- Staff must refrain from the consumption of alcohol and other substances at school/student events (i.e. educational residential visits) both within the school premises and outside the school setting.

Relationships with students

Staff must maintain professional boundaries with students 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.

Staff must not establish or seek to establish social contact with students for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. If a student 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.

Staff must not develop personal or sexual relationships with students and should not engage in any sexual activity with a student. Sexual activity does not just involve physical contact including penetrative and non-penetrative acts.

Working Together to Safeguard Children defines sexual abuse as ... 'forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high-level violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Staff should be mindful of section 16 of The Sexual Offences Act 2003¹.

Staff must not make sexual remarks to a student, discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of, students or discuss a student's sexual relationships in an inappropriate setting or context.

Contact with students should be through YWH's authorised mechanisms school mobile phone and or email.

Personal phone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via all social media platforms should not be used and staff should not share their home address with students. If contacted via an inappropriate route the member of staff must inform the head of school immediately.

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

Infatuations

It is not unusual for students or, sometimes, their parents/carers to develop infatuations towards members of staff. All such situations must be responded to sensitively to maintain the dignity of those concerned.

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.

Gifts/hospitality

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 students or parents wish to give a small token of appreciation to staff, for example at religious festivities or at the end of the year.

It is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or to suggest to students 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 the head of school.

Staff must not accept significant gifts [a sum to be assessed by the school] or hospitality from students, parents, carers, actual or potential contractors or outside suppliers. All such gifts/offers of hospitality should be reported to the head of school and recorded.

Personal gifts must not be given by staff to students and any reward to students should be in accordance with YWH behaviour policy, recorded and not based on favouritism.

Physical Contact with students

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with students, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. A 'no

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.

'touch' approach is impractical for most staff and may in some circumstances be inappropriate. When physical contact is made with students 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.

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.

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one young person in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different young person. **Staff should, therefore, use their professional judgement at all times.**

Staff should be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the young person, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described. Staff should never touch a young person in a way which may be considered indecent. Always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to school. Staff must not engage in rough play, tickling or fun fights with students.

Extra caution should be exercised where a young person is known to have suffered previous abuse or neglect. Such experiences may sometimes make a young person 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.

Staff supervising PE and games should demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment on another member of staff if possible. However, they may be required to initiate physical contact with students 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 student'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 student.

Physical contact must never be secretive, for the gratification of the adult or represent a misuse of authority.

If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported to the head of school, recorded and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the young person's file.

Student in distress

There may be occasions when a student 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. Such incidents should always be recorded and shared with the head of year. If you have a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance you should seek further advice from the head of school.

Showers and changing

Students are entitled to respect and privacy whilst they are changing or showering 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 students and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

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 the students.

One to one situation

Staff working individually with students should be aware of the potential vulnerability of students and staff in such situations. Staff should manage these situations with regard to the safety of the student and to themselves.

Individual work with students should not be undertaken in isolated areas or rooms unless the door is kept open.

Where it is necessary to close doors for reasons of confidentiality a colleague should be made aware of this and asked to remain vigilant.

Transporting students

No student should ever be transported in a staff's vehicle, alternative arrangements must be made.

Staff should ensure that the transport arrangements i.e. Mini Cabs 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.

Staff should ensure that the driver is not distracted while the vehicle is in motion for any reason other than an emergency and should also ensure all passengers are wearing correctly fastened seatbelts. Staff should never transport students while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Prior to transporting students offsite, consent must be obtained from student, parent/guardian and staff should be aware that the safety and welfare of the students is their responsibility until this is safely passed back to their parent/carer.

E-safety

Staff should follow YWH E-Safety policy for staff at all times and have regard for YWH E-Safety policy for students.

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, YWH or the school community into disrepute. Staff should adopt the highest security settings on any personal profiles they have.

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. Staff should exercise care when using dating websites where staff could encounter students.

Staff must not contact students, must not accept or initiate friend requests nor follow students' accounts on any social media platform. Staff must not communicate with students via social media, websites, instant messenger accounts or text message. The only acceptable method of contact is via the use of school email accounts or telephone equipment.

Staff should not contact the students' family members, accept or initiate friend requests or follow students' family members account on any social media platform.

However, YWH acknowledges that staff who are also parents may wish to contact 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 students' family members via social media if that contact is likely to constitute a conflict of interest or call into question their objectivity.

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 toilets.

Mobile phones and personally owned mobile devices brought into school are the responsibility of the device owner.

YWH accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of personally owned mobile phones or mobile devices.

Photography, video and images of children

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

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.

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

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.

Staff should remain aware of the potential for images of students 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 students who may be unable to question how or why the activities are taking place. Staff should also be mindful that students who have been abused through the use of video or photography may feel threatened by its use in a teaching environment.

Confidentiality

Members of staff may have access to confidential information about students, 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 student on a need-to-know basis.

Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a student 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 pupil/student.

All staff is likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a student is bullied by another pupil/student, this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate school procedure. It must not be discussed outside of YWH, including with the student'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.

Staff have a statutory obligation to share with YWH Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead any information which gives rise to concern about the welfare or safety of a student or that might suggest a student is in need or at risk of significant harm. Staff should pass on information without delay in accordance with YWH safeguarding policy and procedures and this should be recorded. Staff must never promise a student that they will not act on or pass on any information that they are told by the pupil/student.

Staff should refer to the Department of Education's document Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services 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.

Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the senior leadership team and only approved staff and trustees should communicate to the media about the school.

Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, without fear of repercussion.

All YWH staff have a duty to report any behaviour by a colleague which raises concern. Staff should refer to YWH whistleblowing policy for further guidance. This is particularly important where the welfare of student's may be at risk.

Curriculum planning

All tutors when planning lessons, must ensure that their views are balanced and non-biased in regard to their political views.

Compliance

All staff must complete the form to confirm they have read, understood and agree to comply with this policy.

Chair/Safeguarding Lead: Emma Moore
Head of School: Philippa Wall – Head of School /Director
Review: Annual
Next Review Date: October 2022

