

Staff Code of Conduct

This policy should be considered alongside and in conjunction with the Staff Handbook and Halcyon's Mission: Innovation, Collaboration, Community.

Any breaches of this code of conduct may lead to disciplinary procedures.

This guidance can obviously not provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for staff. Instead it clarifies what is expected in terms of professional behaviour; it gives clear advice about what constitutes illegal behaviour and what might be considered as misconduct. It also describes safe practice and which behaviours should be avoided. The guidance is applicable to all staff, whether paid or voluntary.

There will be occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or take action in the best interests of the students which could contravene this guidance or where no guidance exists. Individuals are expected to make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of students, and in so doing will be seen to be acting reasonably.

1. Policies & Procedures

All staff are expected to maintain an up-to-date knowledge and understanding of, implement and comply with, the school's policies and procedures. The latest versions can be found via the Halcyon Resources site.

2. Duty of Care

All staff have a duty to keep young students safe and to protect them from physical and emotional harm.

Staff should:

- *understand the responsibilities, which are part of their employment or role, and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached*
- *always act, and be seen to act, in the student's best interests*
- *avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions*
- *take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour.*

3. Power and Positions of Trust

Staff have a responsibility to ensure that the unique and unequal balance of power and trust that exists between a member of staff and a student is not used for personal advantage or gratification.

Staff should:

- *always maintain appropriate professionalism*
- *avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others, reporting and recording any incident with this potential.*

4. Confidentiality

Staff:

- *are expected to treat information they receive about students in a discreet and confidential manner*
- *should never retain confidential or personal information, normally stored*

securely in the school's management information systems, in hard-copy or on personal or school-supplied computers, iPads, or any other storage device

- should never use confidential or personal information about a student or his/her family for their own, or others', advantage*
- should never use confidential information about students in casual conversation or share any such information with anyone other than on a need-to-know basis*
- should seek advice from the Director if they are in any doubt about sharing information they hold*
- have a duty to pass information on without delay in cases where there is a concern for the welfare of a child (eg: where abuse is alleged or suspected), but only to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (or in his absence, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead)*
- need to be aware that although it is important to listen to and support students, they must not promise confidentiality or request students to do the same under any circumstances*
- should treat as confidential concerns and allegations about adults and report these matters to the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay.*

5. Propriety and Behaviour

Staff:

- must be aware that their behaviour in their personal lives may impact upon their work with students*
- should not behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with students or act as a role model*
- should not drink alcohol with current students in public or private places, nor purchase alcohol for students*
- make inappropriate remarks to, or about, a student, parent or colleague (including email, text messages, phone or letter, etc.)*
- discuss details of their personal lives, including sexual relationships, with or in the presence of students*
- discuss a student's sexual relationships in inappropriate settings or contexts*
- make (or encourage others to make) unprofessional personal comments in any form of communication (email, conversations or social networking comments).*

6. Social Contact

Staff should not give their personal details, such as their home or email address, telephone number, social network sites, gamer tags or web pages, to students unless the need to do so is agreed with the Director. If students do become aware of personal details that are not appropriate to share then, where reasonably possible, these details must be changed

Staff should:

- have no secret social contact with students*
- consider the appropriateness of the social contact according to their role and nature of their work*
- always approve any planned social contact with the Director, for example when it is part of a student wellbeing programme*
- advise the Director of any regular social contact they have with a student or parent*
- report and record any situation, which they feel, might compromise the school*

- *or their own professional standing*
- *appreciate fully that the onus is upon them (not the student) to distance themselves from any potentially inappropriate situation.*

7. Physical Contact

Staff should use their professional judgement at all times about the appropriateness of any physical contact. When physical contact is deemed necessary, this should be in response to the needs at the time, be of limited duration and appropriate.

Physical contact should never be secretive, or 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 immediately be made clear to the Director.

Staff should:

- *be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the student, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described*
- *never touch a student in a way which may be considered indecent*
- *always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny.*

8. Sexual Contact with Students

Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with, or towards, a student is both inappropriate and illegal. Students are protected by the same laws as adults in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour. They are additionally protected by specific legal provisions regardless of whether the child or young person consents or not.

The sexual activity referred to does not just involve physical contact including penetrative and non-penetrative acts. It may also include non-contact activities, such as causing children to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of pornographic material.

Behaviour known as “grooming” (where the sole purpose is to gain the trust of a person, and manipulate that relationship so sexual abuse can take place) is an offence. Staff should be aware that conferring special attention and favour upon a student might be construed as being part of a “grooming” process.

Staff should:

- *not pursue sexual relationships with students either in or out of school*
- *avoid any form of communication with a student which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative (eg: verbal comments, letters, notes, email, phone calls, texts, social media, physical contact).*

9. One-to-One Situations

Staff working in one-to-one situations with students are more vulnerable to allegations. Staff should recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure the safety and security needs of both staff and students are met.

Pre-arranged meetings with students away from the school premises should not be permitted unless approval is obtained from their parent and the Director.

Staff should:

- *avoid meetings with students in remote, secluded areas of the school*
- *ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in one-to-one situations*
- *inform other staff of the meeting beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by*
- *consider the needs and circumstances of the student/s involved.*

10. Imagery

Staff need to be aware of the potential for photographs, videos and audio of students, to be misused for pornographic or “grooming” purposes. Careful consideration should be given as to how photography/videography is organised and undertaken.

Halcyon has the consent of parents to use images of their children for purposes of marketing the school and such use is overseen by Halcyon’s Marketing & Communications Coordinator. Images should not be displayed on other websites, in publications or in a public place without referring first to Halcyon’s Marketing & Communications Coordinator, who will evaluate the opportunity and seek any additional consent from parents if necessary.

Staff should:

- *be clear about what will happen to photographs, video or audio after capture*
- *ensure that all images are available for scrutiny in order to screen for acceptability*
- *be able to justify images of students in their possession*
- *avoid making images in one-to-one situations*
- *not take images of students on personal cameras or devices nor store images of students on personal cameras, devices or home computers*
- *not make photographs, video or audio of students available to others (apart from sharing on Drive, internally within the school) without permission of Halcyon’s Marketing & Communications Coordinator*
- *ensure that all images, video or audio of students stored on Halcyon computers or iPads or other digital devices, is not retained beyond reasonable professional purpose.*

11. Fiscal and Fiduciary Responsibilities

All staff should treat resources responsibly, and exercise due financial care.

12. Media Liaison

Staff are not permitted to speak to the media regarding matters directly or indirectly related to Halcyon. Any media enquiries need to be referred immediately to Halcyon’s Marketing & Communications Coordinator who will liaise with the Director and Board of Trustees to formulate a response.

13. Professional Opportunities

Halcyon is proud of its talented staff and encourages sharing of educational knowledge but there are times when such opportunities may conflict with Halcyon priorities.

Staff:

- *must be aware that activities in their personal and professional lives may impact upon the reputation of Halcyon*

- *should seek advice from the Director before agreeing to undertake any professional writing, speaking opportunity or the publication or use of the Halcyon brand in any public media.*

14. Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. Please refer to the school Whistleblowing procedure in Halcyon's Staff Handbook.

15. Data Protection

Any personal data processed by a member of staff, must be done in accordance with the Data Protection Act and Halcyon's Data Protection Policy.

Staff must not disclose, use, keep or take, at any time, any secret or confidential information, such as personal data relating to students and their families, costs, products, markets, sales, lists of anyone associated or doing business with Halcyon, or other information, which is not available to the public.

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This Code will be reviewed annually, or more regularly in light of any significant changes in statutory requirements and legislation.