



## CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

THIS POLICY IS REVIEWED ON AN ANNUAL BASIS

**Policy reviewed by:** John Maclean – Employee Relations Consultant

**Review date:** 01/06/2024

**Submission:** 01/06/2024

**Version:** v7.0

**Policy actioned from:** 01/06/2024

**Next review date:** 01/06/2025

**Reviewer's Signature:**



Please note: 'School' refers to Chatsworth Schools; 'parents' refers to parents, guardians and carers.

This is a whole school policy, which also applies to the Early Years Foundation Stage.



## Purpose

The purpose of this code is to provide a clear framework within which employees of Chatsworth Schools are expected to conduct themselves. Chatsworth Schools strives to maintain a work environment for its staff and a learning environment for its pupils in which honesty, integrity and respect for fellow employees, pupils and the customers/clients of Chatsworth Schools are constantly reflected in personal behaviour and standards of conduct.

## Principles

- Chatsworth Schools is a large complex organisation, and the actions and behaviour of its employees have an impact on the education and livelihood of thousands of people, as well as on the local environment and the community. Employees are expected to have regard for the impact of their personal behaviour on Chatsworth Schools, their school, colleagues, customers, the environment and our community.
- It is essential that all stakeholders can have confidence that Chatsworth Schools maintains the highest standards of conduct in financial matters and seeks to maintain high standards of probity and ethical behaviour. Stringent procedural and audit arrangements are in place and employees are expected to ensure that decision-making is open and fair.
- This code covers some of the most important issues relating to personal conduct, and gives a framework of standards and behaviour guidelines, but it is not intended to be exhaustive.

## Standards of Personal Behaviour

### Equality of Opportunity

One of Chatsworth Schools' core values is the promotion of inclusivity and valuing diversity. Chatsworth Schools seeks to ensure that the work environment for its employees is supportive, and one where individual respect is shown to all. All members of staff and pupils, regardless of their gender, race, ethnic background, culture, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, age, religion, socio-economic status or any other factor will be supported and encouraged to perform to their potential.

### Harassment and Bullying

To secure an environment in which pupils and members of staff are able to flourish and achieve their full potential, Chatsworth Schools is committed to ensuring that everyone is able to work and to participate in the life of their school/college/office without fear of harassment, bullying or intimidation. Everyone at Chatsworth Schools has a part to play by ensuring their own behaviour, whether intentional or unintentional, does not constitute harassment. Chatsworth Schools will take action against inappropriate behaviour which shows lack of respect for others or which leads people to feel threatened.

### Health and Safety

Chatsworth Schools places a high priority on providing a safe working and learning environment and will act positively to minimise the incidence of all workplace risks as required by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and other associated legislation. All activities should be carried out with the highest regard for the health and safety of employees, pupils, visitors and the public. Our aim is excellence in health and safety, by means of continuous improvement of standards, and the comprehensive use of risk assessments so as to systematically remove the causes of

accidents/incidents and ill-health. This, together with more specific aims and objectives, reflects Chatsworth Schools' commitment to promote employee well-being.

### Relationships with Other Members of Staff, Pupils and Other Clients and Customers of Chatsworth Schools

Chatsworth Schools does not concern itself with the private lives of its staff unless they affect its effective operation or its reputation.

Members of staff who are relatives or who have a close personal relationship should not normally have a supervisory, assessing or authorising relationship with each other.

Employees **must** inform their line manager if they have a close personal relationship with another employee, a pupil who is a relative, or a client or customer of Chatsworth Schools which could be considered or perceived by colleagues, pupils, or others, as impacting on the way they conduct themselves at work.

Pupils should be treated with dignity and respect in attitude, language use and actions. All who work with pupils must ensure that they feel equally valued; favouritism, real or inferred, causes feelings of alienation and can be misconstrued. Conversations and behaviour should be friendly but not over familiar. Young people are more comfortable with an adult in role than an adult who seeks to be 'one of the gang'. Staff should not take pupils out on their own and refrain from forming personal relationships exclusively with one individual. Romantic or sexual activity with pupils must be avoided, even if the pupil is over the age of consent and the relationship is consensual, since this constitutes an Abuse of Trust under the Sexual Offences Act (2000).

### One-to-one situations

Staff must ensure that correct safeguards are in place to cover 'one-to-one' situations with children. This may include individual coaching, instrumental music tuition, administering of first aid, nappy changing, conveying pupils by car etc. One-to-one situations have the potential to make a child more vulnerable to harm by those who seek to exploit their position of trust. Adults working in one-to-one situations with pupils may also be more vulnerable to unjust or unfounded allegations being made against them.

### Performance

Chatsworth Schools expects individuals to follow all reasonable rules and instructions given by those supervising or managing their activities and/or work areas.

### Medication and the Misuse of Drugs and Alcohol

It is a disciplinary offence to be on school/nursery premises and/or carrying out official duties when under the influence of alcohol or non-medically prescribed drugs. A member of staff taking medication whose side effects may affect the ability to fulfil his or her responsibilities (for example, medication which can cause drowsiness) must inform the headteacher, so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

### Gambling

Gambling activities must not be conducted on school/nursery premises; discretion may be used in relation to small raffles for charitable purposes, national lottery syndicates, occasional sweepstakes, etc.

## Conduct Outside Work

Chatsworth Schools does not seek to dictate how employees conduct themselves in their personal lives outside work. However, unlawful, anti-social or other conduct by employees which may jeopardise Chatsworth Schools' reputation or position will be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure.

## Dress Code

Chatsworth Schools does not operate a formal dress code for its employees, other than for those who are provided with uniform and/or protective clothing. However, employees must ensure that their dress is appropriate for the situation in which they are working and that they present a professional image, and one that reflects sensitivity to customer perceptions. This may reflect their ethnicity and lifestyle but should not be provocative or cause offence to those with whom they have contact. In particular, staff who work in an area with a higher level of potential hazards, such as sport, science and design technology, must ensure that clothing and jewellery are appropriate for the nature of the work being undertaken and that they present good, professional role models to the pupils in this respect.

## Financial Regulations

Chatsworth Schools' financial regulations create a framework of financial controls within which the staff of Chatsworth Schools must operate. These regulations are designed to protect Chatsworth Schools and individual members of staff. Failure to comply with these regulations may lead to the loss of assets, significant delays in payments to employees and suppliers, and additional work for colleagues.

Employees must not accept gifts or hospitality that could give rise to a suspicion that they have a conflict of interest or have been influenced in a decision.

Breaches of the regulations will normally be a serious disciplinary offence.

## Conflicts of Interest

The highest standards of behaviour are also expected in all areas of company life, especially where individuals are in positions to make decisions, which may have significant impact on others. In all such cases, it is important that decisions are taken in a fair and balanced way that can withstand external scrutiny. Conflicts of interest should be identified so that individuals are not involved in decisions where their actions could be seen as biased.

## Access to Confidential Information

Although Chatsworth Schools strives to conduct its business in an open fashion there will be times when individuals, through their positions as members of committees, selectors/recruiters, line managers, etc. become aware of confidential information, either about other individuals or in connection with Chatsworth Schools' activities. Individuals should be aware of the need to keep

such matters confidential and to respect the proper channels of communication for such information.

#### Bribery Act 2010

Please refer to Chatsworth Schools' Anti-bribery and Business Gifts policies.

#### Use of Equipment for Non-Work Purposes

Chatsworth Schools will allow employees reasonable use of company/school/nursery equipment and facilities, provided that authorisation has been obtained from the appropriate Head of Department, that the use does not interfere or conflict with the work of the company/school/nursery, and that any costs are met by the individual.

#### Private Telephone Calls

Employees may use Chatsworth Schools' facilities to make private calls for essential or urgent matters.

Employees who have company/school/nursery provided mobile phones must reimburse the company/school/nursery for the use of these phones for private calls and texts, etc.

#### Use of IT equipment, Internet and Social Media

Staff sign an acceptable use agreement in relation to IT and internet facilities, when they commence employment at the company/school/nursery. Users of Chatsworth Schools' IT and internet facilities must behave reasonably towards other users and the facilities and, in public areas, they must behave appropriately. Users who do not behave reasonably and appropriately may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with relevant procedures. The regulations give examples of reasonable and appropriate behaviour but are not exhaustive. For further information, please refer to the IT User policy in the staff handbook.

Employees may use Chatsworth Schools' internet facilities for occasional personal matters.

Staff should take care that any electronic communication with pupils is wholly appropriate, does not constitute a breach of trust and is in accordance with online safety guidance. Email and similar contact with pupils should be only from an official school email address or platform, and never from a personal email address. Staff must not befriend current or recent pupils on social networking sites. For further information, please refer to the school's Social Media Policy.

#### Positive Management of Pupils' behaviour

Behaviour management and the school's anti-bullying strategy are covered as part of the induction of new staff and through regular staff training. Staff must ensure that they are familiar with and adhere to the guidance as set out in the Positive Behaviour and Exclusion Policy and also the Anti-Bullying policy and the Physical Restraint and Use of Reasonable Force Policy. Any act of restraint involving physical contact must be recorded in writing and the Headteacher notified immediately. The headteacher will notify parents on the same day, or as soon as practicable thereafter. The school outlaws the use or threatening of corporal punishment and also of any punishment which may adversely affect a child's well-being.

### Dealing with Pupil Infatuation

It is not uncommon for a pupil to be attracted to a member of staff and/or develop a strong infatuation. All situations should be responded to sensitively to maintain the dignity of those concerned. Staff should be aware that such circumstances carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for unfounded or false allegations to be made. If you become aware that a pupil may be infatuated with you, you should immediately report the incident to the headteacher or designated safeguarding lead. Where the inappropriate behaviour continues, despite warnings, ensure full reporting to the headteacher so that steps under the positive behaviour policy or other relevant action (eg referral to the safeguarding team) can be taken. Always follow the school's procedures on being alone with pupils and take steps as far as possible to avoid one-to-one situations with a pupil in a place which is closed or away from other people. Promote respect between pupils and teachers at all times and in all situations.

### Accepting Gifts

Chatsworth Schools recognises that staff receiving gifts from parents can often occur during the Christmas period or at the end of the school year. While it can be nice to receive gifts, staff should ensure that they adhere to the rules outlined in the school's Anti-Bribery Policy. It is not the intention of the policy to prevent the appropriate receipt of gifts which recognise the gratitude of pupils and parents. Generally, it is fine to receive small gifts, although a gift over the value of £50 should be formally declared to the headteacher and recorded on the school's gifts register or declined. The DfE notes that staff must demonstrate appropriate standards of behaviour, including honesty and integrity, in order to ensure that public confidence and trust in the teaching profession is upheld. Similarly, gifts over the value of £50 from third parties or commercial suppliers should be declared to the headteacher. For further information, please refer to the Anti-Bribery Policy.

### Home Visits and Staff and Residential Accommodation

There may be a number of reasons why a member of staff may visit a child at home. For some it may be part of the job description. In particular, a visit may take place to children and their families to gather information prior to the child starting school. Home visits may also occur to provide tuition to pupils with medical conditions. The headteacher or a delegated senior member of staff may visit homes to deal with attendance or behaviour matters. Chatsworth Schools has a duty to maintain the health and safety of its staff who undertake home visits and such staff have a safeguarding responsibility towards the children they visit. Home visits should always be authorised by the headteacher and the member of staff should either be accompanied or undertake the visit in the presence of parents. The latter is more likely to be the case when visiting younger children prior to starting school.

In circumstances where staff have accommodation on the school site, and on residential trips, pupils must not be allowed access to staff accommodation. Occasional exceptions may be authorised by the headteacher, if access is to a communal area, such as a kitchen or lounge, and is for several pupils together, avoiding any implication of favouritism.

On occasion, a pupil may need overnight supervision, if he or she is scheduled to have more than 5½ hours of GCSE exams or 6 hours of GCE examinations on the same day, to provide secure



isolation from other candidates before one exam is taken on the following day. A member of staff or invigilator will be appointed to supervise the pupil overnight, including any journeys to and from school. The school will determine the method of supervision and ensure the candidate's safeguarding and well-being in accordance with relevant school policies.

### Information Security

Chatsworth Schools recognises that information and the associated processes, systems and networks are valuable assets and that the management of personal data has important implications for individuals. Through its security policies, procedures and structures, Chatsworth Schools will facilitate the secure and uninterrupted flow of information, both within the company/school/nursery and in external communications. Chatsworth Schools believes that security is an integral part of the information sharing which is essential to academic and corporate endeavour.

### Data Protection

Chatsworth Schools holds and processes information about employees, pupils, and other data subjects for academic, administrative and commercial purposes. When handling such information, the company, and all staff or others who process or use any personal information, must comply with the Data Protection Principles, which are set out in the Data Protection Act 2018. Please refer to Chatsworth Schools' Data Protection Policy.

### Use of personal mobile phones and cameras, and the storage of images

For details of requirements regarding the use of mobile phones, cameras and similar devices and information on the secure storage of images, please refer to the Safeguarding Policy, Mobile Phone Policy and the policy on the Use of Photographic and Video Images.

### Raising Matters of Concern

Employees have a right and a duty to raise concerns which they may have about breaches of the law or propriety by Chatsworth Schools. This should normally be through their Head of Department but in circumstances where this is not appropriate, they may approach Chatsworth Schools Central Team in confidence. No individual who expresses their views in good faith and in line with this guidance will be penalised for doing so.

Staff who have concerns about the conduct of others, in respect of their engagement with children, should have the confidence that they are safe to raise their concerns and their view will be taken seriously. Staff should refer to and follow the procedures detailed in the whistleblowing policy.

### The Prevent Duty, FGM and safeguarding concerns

Staff have an obligation to observe the Prevent Duty and to report any suspected cases of female genital mutilation (FGM). Staff also have a duty to report any safeguarding concerns about a child through the correct channels. For further details, please refer to the safeguarding policy.

### Transporting Pupils



Wherever possible, staff should avoid transporting pupils in their own vehicles. If this is unavoidable, parental permission should be obtained, the pupil(s) should sit in the back and staff should be mindful of the school's guidance on one-to-one situations.

#### Vetting Visiting Speakers

Please refer to the school's policy on Visitors and Visiting Speakers.

#### Breaches of this Code

This code of conduct has been drawn up to provide a source of guidance to Chatsworth Schools' employees. It is not a contractual document and can be amended at any time by Chatsworth Schools. All staff must comply with both the provisions of this code and Chatsworth Schools' policies and procedures, breaches of which will be taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

#### Interpretation

In this policy, the term "senior manager" means the School Head and their designated deputies.

This policy applies to all employees in all Schools (save for Schools with their own procedure which shall prevail) and other work environments within Chatsworth Schools.

This policy applies within all companies, which are wholly owned subsidiaries of Chatsworth Schools Ltd, a company registered in England, registered number 11552579.

The registered office of all companies is Crimea Office, The Great Tew Estate, Great Tew, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire, OX7 4AH. Any enquiries regarding the application of this policy should be addressed to the Director of Information at the above address.