

### Introduction

This policy sets out clear guidance on the standards of behaviour expected from all staff and volunteers<sup>1</sup> at Saturday Islamic School (SIS). 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.

Staff have an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, 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. 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.

### 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, and in accordance with the Qur'an and Sunnah. The school expects staff to treat each other, pupils, parents and the wider community with dignity, compassion and respect at all times.

Staff must act in accordance with their duty of care to pupils and ensure that the safety and welfare of pupils are accorded the highest priority. Staff should show fairness in their treatment of children and avoid behaviours such as embarrassing or humiliating pupils, making jokes at the expense of pupils, discriminating against or favouring pupils and sarcasm.

Staff must have regard for the Islamic ethos and values of the school and must not do or say 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 school and responsibilities within school. Staff should act in accordance with the school's policies and procedures at all times.

### Dress and Appearance

Saturday Islamic School recognises 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 in accordance with the beliefs and teaching of Islam. The staff dress code at SIS is underpinned by the following three principals (1) adherence to Islamic jurisprudence, (b) comfort, and (c) professionalism.

Staff dress code should act as a role-model for the pupils in the school. Staff should dress safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake. Female members who practise the wearing of 'Niqab' are encouraged to wear 'hijab' that exposes their eyes while they are on the school premises. Niqab should not be worn while teaching pupils.

All staff must knock and wait before entering any classrooms and designated spaces in the school.

### Smoking

All SIS school sites are no-smoking areas.

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<sup>1</sup> The word 'staff' is used to refer to staff members and volunteers

## **Relationships with Pupils**

Staff must maintain professional boundaries with pupils 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 pupils 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.

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 pupils. If contacted via an inappropriate route the member of staff must inform the Headteacher immediately.

SIS staff must not accept friend invitations or become friends with any pupil of the school on any social media platform. Staff should also refrain from following the Twitter or other similar social media accounts of pupils.

## **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 pupils or parents wish to give a small token of appreciation to staff, for example at during Eid or at the end of the year.

It is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or to suggest to pupils 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 Branch In-Charge.

Personal gifts must not be given by staff to pupils and any reward to pupils should be in accordance with the school's behaviour policy.

## **Physical Contact with Pupils**

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, 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 pupils 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 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.

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 which 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 pupils.

## **Child in Distress**

There may be occasions when a pupil 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 your line manager if no other adults are present during the situation. If you have a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance you should seek further advice from your Branch In-Charge.

## **Changing**

There are rare occasions at SIS when a pupil may need changing. Parents must be informed at the earliest opportunity to bring a change of clothes. Some spare clothes are kept for emergency changing - please ask the Branch In-Charge. Where possible, the pupils should try to change by themselves while under the supervision of a member of staff. A member of staff must not attempt to change a pupil without their consent and in the presence of another person (if can be a friend of the pupil).

Staff should be vigilant about their own behaviour and announce their intention of entering a room or a designated space by knocking or saying the salam.

## **One-to-one Situations**

Staff working individually with pupils should be aware of the potential vulnerability of pupils and staff in such situations. Staff should manage these situations with regard to the safety of the pupil and to themselves. Individual work with pupils 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.

## **E-Safety**

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school 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 must not make contact with pupils, must not accept or initiate friend requests nor follow pupils accounts on any social media platform. Staff must not communicate with pupils 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.

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 class rooms and toilets.

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

## **Photography, Video and Images of Children**

Some 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 pupil is personal data. Therefore, it is a requirement under the Act for consent to be obtained from the parent/guardian of a pupil for any images made. It is also important to take into account the wishes of the pupil as some pupils may 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. 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 pupils should only be taken using school equipment for purposes authorised by the school and should be stored securely and only on school equipment.

Staff members should avoid taking photographs/still of pupils when they are working on their own with pupils. If it is absolutely necessary then the Branch In-Charge should be informed preferably before or immediately after the event.

Staff should remain aware of the potential for images of pupils 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.

## **Confidentiality**

Members of staff may have access to confidential information about pupils, 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 pupil on a need to know basis. Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil 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.

Staff have a statutory obligation to share with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead any information which gives rise to concern about the welfare or safety of a pupil or that might suggest a pupil is in need or at risk of significant harm. If you are in any doubt about whether to share you should seek guidance from the Branch In-Charge.

Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the Headteacher and only approved staff and Governors 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 school staff have a duty to report any behaviour by a colleague which raises concern. Staff should refer to the school's whistleblowing policy for further guidance. This is particularly important where the welfare of pupils may be at risk.

## **Compliance**

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.

# Appendix 1

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## Confirmation of compliance

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with Saturday Islamic School's (SIS) staff behaviour policy (code of conduct).

Name of staff member .....

Position/Post Held .....

Signed .....

Date .....

**Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Branch In-Charge.**