

Staff Code of Conduct

This policy should be considered alongside and in conjunction with the suite of policies concerning the safety and welfare of students, including: Safeguarding and Promoting Welfare of Children; Behaviour and Discipline Policy; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy; Wellbeing Policy; Staff Handbook; and Halcyon's Mission

The Staff Code of Conduct is a component of the Halcyon Staff Handbook and is reproduced here.

Purpose

This policy aims to set out and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow, whether paid or voluntary. By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

School staff have an influential position in the school and will act as role models for students by consistently demonstrating high standards of conduct. We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teacher Standards (as set out in the Halcyon Staff Handbook). We expect all support staff, Trustees, volunteers and consultants to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

Any breaches of this code of conduct may lead to disciplinary procedures. Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive.

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 judgments about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of students, and so doing should be strongly persuasive as to acting reasonably in the circumstances. All such decisions should be reported to the Director or DSL, and where possible before any action is taken.

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.

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2. Duty of Care

All staff have a duty to safeguard students from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, or neglect. Staff should familiarise themselves with Halcyon's [Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children Policy](#) and procedures, and the Prevent initiative, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

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*
- *should 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 (download from the server, print or store) 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, for any time longer than is reasonably necessary to meet professional expectations.*
- *should never use confidential or personal information about a student or their 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*

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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 their 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:

- *should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role*
- *should 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*
- *should not make inappropriate remarks to, or about, a student, parent, colleague, trustee, or anyone in the school community (including email, text messages, phone or letter, etc.)*
- *should not discuss details of their personal lives, including sexual relationships, with or in the presence of students*
- *should not discuss a student's sexual relationships in any setting or context except within a professionally-managed and -sanctioned wellbeing conversation.*
- *should not 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, personal web pages, or any other contact medium - 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 or their parents*
- *consider the appropriateness of the social contact according to their role and nature*

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of their work

- *always seek prior approval from the Director for any planned social contact with students; for example, as a part of student wellbeing outreach.*
- *inform 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. This includes situations which might be open to misrepresentation.*
- *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 will 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 discuss, engage in, or watch sexual activity or the production of pornographic material.

The 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.

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Staff must not pursue sexual relationships with students either in or out of school.

Staff should 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 parents 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 Leader, 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*

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- *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 Leader*
- *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. Gifts and Hospitality

- Staff must ensure that none of their dealings, directly or indirectly, could be deemed to be a gift, reward, favour or benefit in line with the [Bribery Act 2010](#). **Bribery** is defined, very generally, as giving a person a financial or other advantage to encourage that person to perform their functions or activities improperly or to reward that person for having already done so.
- Staff must not give or accept gifts or hospitality to or from a third party where it might be perceived that their personal integrity has the potential to be compromised, or that the School might be placed under any obligation as a result of acceptance, or that the School might suffer reputational damage
- Where a staff member is offered a gift, benefit or hospitality they should consider: (i) is this for a legitimate purpose? (for example, as a token of thanks, linked to the School); (ii) is it being done transparently? (in an open and honest context); (iii) the timing (could it be linked or seem to be linked to a decision or action you are going to take, like awarding a grade?); (iv) is it appropriate? (for example, monetary gifts, adult-themed, offensive or overtly politically themed items or lavish/extravagant items are unlikely to be appropriate).
- Generally, gifts of nominal value such as cards or small tokens of appreciation, will be acceptable. Members of staff are not required to research the value of gifts received (for example, a box of chocolates) beyond their face-value.
- If in doubt as to whether to accept something, guidance must be sought from the Finance and Operations Director or Director, who can also assist with any difficult or awkward discussions with parents or other donors. If you are concerned that you may have encountered an instance of actual, potential or attempted bribery you should report it immediately to the Director or Finance and Operations Director .

13. Media Liaison

Staff are not permitted to speak to the media regarding matters directly or indirectly related to Halcyon or to members of the Halcyon School community. Any media enquiries need to

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be referred immediately to Halcyon's Marketing Leader who will liaise with the Director and Board of Trustees to formulate a response.

14. 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.*

15. 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.

16. 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, misuse, or retain, at any time, any secret or confidential information, such as personal data relating to staff or 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.

17. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Staff must comply with the letter and intent of the School's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, which states that we intend to provide 'equality, fairness and respect for all in our community (including those employed temporarily, part-time or full-time) and to ensure that no person is victimised or subjected to any form of bullying, harassment or cyberbullying for any reason.'

18. Low-Level Safeguarding Concerns

This is defined as a concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' – that an adult working in or on behalf of the school *may have* acted in a way that:

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- is inconsistent with this Staff Code of Conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
- does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over-friendly with children
- having favourites
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or
- humiliating students.

Low-level concerns should be shared with the DSL, or Deputy DSL, or with the Director or another member of the SLT team.

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

