

# Professional Relationships Policy

## Ellesmere Port Catholic High School



Approved by:	Mr J Coucill, Chair of Governors 
Lead of Review:	Mr C Jones, Business Manager
Last reviewed on:	August 2021
Next review due by:	August 2022

## **Status**

Recommended

## **Who was consulted?**

This policy has been developed from a LA model policy and comments from staff in school.

## **Relationship to other policies and documents**

The policy relates to Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings (Appendix 1), Cheshire West and Chester Code of Conduct for Employees (adopted by EPCHS) (Appendix 2). It also relates to Child Protection and Safeguarding, Behaviour Management and Whistleblowing policies, ICT Acceptable Use Policy, The Equality Act of 2010.

## **Roles and responsibilities of the Headteacher, staff and governors**

**The Headteacher** will ensure that:

- this policy is available to all staff who work at the school, including supply staff and contracted staff either electronically or in paper form.
- all staff are aware of their responsibility as adults to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people
- the application of this policy will take into consideration individual exemptions and reasonable interpretation of the policy for staff whose own children are pupils at the school. The Headteacher will also consider any concerns raised by staff who are in this position.

**The Governing Body** will:

- ensure the policy is reviewed annually or on receipt of updates from CW&C.

## **Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed annually and circulated to all staff at the start of the new academic year.

### **1. Introduction**

At Ellesmere Port Catholic High School we believe that all staff and pupils are members of a learning community where everyone deserves respect, where we all have rights and responsibilities and where we all achieve most when we work in partnership.

### **2. Aims/Principles**

The Relationships Policy is designed to underpin the standards of conduct for both staff and pupils and to foster clear professional boundaries as part of the school's commitment to pupil safety and the wellbeing of staff.

The policy is not exhaustive and does not attempt to describe every potential interaction, either professional or personal, between staff and pupils. Staff are required to exercise judgment at all times and to ensure that their conduct both in work and in their personal lives does not conflict with their role or professional duties.

### **3. Scope/Application**

It is the responsibility of all adults to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

This policy applies to all employees and workers at the school including those engaged via supply agencies or on contracts for service.

Application of the policy to staff whose own children are pupils at the school will be subject to reasonable interpretation and individual exemptions. Staff in this position should discuss any concerns with the Headteacher.

### **4. Relationships with pupils**

#### **4.1 Teaching Groups**

Good relationships with pupils are at the heart of effective teaching and learning. All members of staff should ensure that their actions demonstrate high expectations and clear professional standards.

Good practice includes punctuality for lessons, well planned lessons, assertiveness in the classroom situation e.g. seating plans for students, appropriately planned work and homework. These should be accompanied by clear follow-up if expectations are not fulfilled.

#### **4.2 Individual pupils**

All members of staff should insist that they are addressed by pupils by their proper name e.g. Mrs....., Mr..... Pupils should not be allowed to address staff by their first name or nickname.

Members of staff should not accept invitations to informal social occasions with their pupils, nor should they attend pupil parties unless these are family events and they have been specifically invited by the family.

Any member of staff arranging to meet a pupil(s) in a social setting should follow the procedure for school trips and gain authorisation from the Head teacher.

Staff who accompany pupils on residential activities must maintain their professional standing at all times and not be compromised by informal contact with pupils.

Members of staff on such activities have a duty of care to pupils at all times and must be able to exercise full responsibility for pupils when required. This may be at very short notice in an emergency.

Where members of staff have a responsibility to listen, support and advise pupils they should make no promises of complete confidentiality and must be cautious of pupils repeatedly seeking advice and support leading to dependency upon the member of staff.

All disclosures regarding issue of child protection should be reported immediately, without investigation or prejudice, to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Lead. Other personal disclosures should be recorded and passed to the Headteacher.

## **5. Communications with pupils**

### **5.1 General Communication**

Any private communication with an individual pupil concerning issues personal to the pupil should be recorded and copied to the pupil's file.

Personal telephone numbers, including mobile numbers should not be shared with pupils, other than in emergency situations. If a pupil continues to use these personal contacts, this should be reported immediately to the Headteacher.

Improper communication between a member of staff and a pupil is likely to result in disciplinary action.

### **5.2 Electronic Communication**

No e-mail communication should occur which does not pass through the school network mails boxes and addresses.

Staff should not participate in chat rooms, MSN or social networking sites with any pupils irrespective of age or with former pupils under the age of 18. In particular, staff should neither accept or request pupils or former pupils under the age of 18 as friends on Facebook. Staff should be mindful of the impact on younger siblings or friends of former pupils in any social contact.

No text conversation should take place between a member of staff and a pupil. In the event of this happening it should be recorded and placed on the pupil's file

Members of staff using social networking sites in a personal capacity should ensure that they do not conduct themselves in a way that is detrimental to the school. This will include

- Not allowing interaction on websites to damage or compromise working relationships with colleagues.
- Posting photographs of themselves, colleagues or students taken in school
- Never posting or sending abusive or defamatory messages

- Never recording any confidential information about school on any social networking site
- Never posting information which will disclose the identity of a student.

Accessing social networking sites during school time should be in accordance with the School's Acceptable Use Policy any breach of which may be a disciplinary issue.

## **6. Improper Behaviour**

Members of staff should take care not to put themselves at risk of accusations of improper behaviour towards pupils. They should be cautious when seeing a pupil alone in a room and should ensure they are fully visible to anyone passing, through a viewing panel or open door if necessary.

Members of staff should only take photographs or video pupils in accordance with school policy.

Members of staff should be very cautious when comforting a distressed pupil and offering any level of physical contact. All physical contact should be age appropriate.

Staff should not normally give lifts to pupils. In the event that a lift is necessary for the safety of pupils this should be reported to the Head teacher and recorded on the pupil's file as soon as possible after the event.

No member of staff should enter into an intimate (physical or emotional) relationship with a pupil. This will compromise their professional standing with the individual pupil and the wider pupil population. Such conduct may be subject to disciplinary action.

Sexual activity with a pupil or former pupil under the age of 18 is a criminal offence as members of staff are in a position of trust. Any member of staff conducting such a relationship will be liable to disciplinary proceedings for gross misconduct.

Members of staff should not disclose inappropriate private details about their personal lives or own activities.

## **7. Relationships with parents and families**

Members of staff should be conscious of any potential conflict in social relationships with parents or families of pupils or where their own children or children of relatives attend school.

## **8. Dress and appearance**

The school recognises that dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However members of staff should dress in ways which are appropriate to their role and the tasks they undertake; are not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative; does not distract pupils or cause embarrassment and is not considered to be discriminatory and is culturally sensitive. Details of appropriate dress can be found in the school Dress Code.

**9. Definitions**

Not Applicable

**10. See also**

Standards of Conduct; Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People; ICT Acceptable Use Policy, Dress Code.

**Appendix 1: Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings**

**Appendix 2: Cheshire West and Chester Code of Conduct for Employees (adopted by EPCHS).**