

GUIDANCE ON INTERACTION WITH STUDENTS		
Date	Review Date	Contact
01.09.18	01.09.19	Principal

This guidance is offered in order to assist staff in ensuring their interaction with students is appropriate and professional. All staff are expected to exercise caution in all their dealings with students to avoid any behaviour that could be misunderstood or misconstrued. This guidance takes into account the DCSF *Guidance for safer working practice for adults who work with children and young people in education settings*

The guidelines are intended to cover staff relationships with students encompassing physical contact, social meetings, telephone, email and social networking sites.

One to One Meetings

For their own safety and protection, staff should exercise caution in situations where they are alone with students, ensuring, wherever practicable, that another member of staff is within earshot. There may be occasions when a confidential interview or one to one meeting is necessary but staff should first consider who is the most appropriate person to conduct the meeting. A meeting with a student away from the school premises should only be arranged with the specific approval of the Principal.

If a one to one meeting has been planned, staff should take particular care in the following ways:

- Use a room with sufficient windows onto a corridor so the occupants can be clearly seen, or keep the door open
- Inform a colleague that the meeting is taking place
- Arrange the meeting in normal school hours when there are plenty of staff around
- Do not continue the meeting for longer than is necessary to achieve its purposes
- Avoid sitting or standing in close proximity to the student (except as is necessary to check work)
- Avoid any unnecessary physical contact and apologise straight away if there is any accidental physical contact
- Avoid any conduct that could be taken as a sexual advance
- Report any incident that causes you concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and make a written record using the 'Reporting Concerns' form
- Report any situation where a student becomes distressed or angry to a colleague.

Physical Contact

Any physical contact should be the minimum required for care, instruction or restraint. While it would be unrealistic and undesirable to preclude all physical contact between adults and students, staff are expected to avoid placing themselves in a position where their actions might be open to criticism or misinterpretation. It should be understood that a student, member of staff or external observer may misconstrue physical contact – touching students, including well intentioned informal or formal gestures such as putting a hand on an arm can lead to questions being raised.

Where incidents occur which might otherwise be misconstrued, or in exceptional circumstances where it becomes necessary physically to restrain a student for his/her own protection or others' safety, this will be appropriately recorded and reported to the Principal. In cases of restraint a member of staff is only permitted to interpose his or her person if s/he feels it safe to do so and any physical restraint used will comply with the DCSF guidance *The use of force to control or restrain pupils: Guidance for Schools in England*.

There may be occasions where a distressed student needs comfort and reassurance which may include physical comforting such as a caring parent would give. Staff should use their discretion in such cases to ensure that what is, and what is seen to others present, a normal and natural caring response does not become unnecessary, unjustified and repeated over a period of time. If a member of staff has a particular concern or needs reassurance regarding contact with a distressed student s/he should seek the advice of the Principal.

Caring for Students with Specific Physical Needs

Staff who have to administer first aid should ensure wherever possible that another staff member is present if they are in any doubt as to whether necessary physical contact could be misconstrued.

Wherever possible staff who have to help children with toileting difficulties should be accompanied by another adult, and students should, wherever possible, be encouraged to change themselves. It is accepted that there will be some situations where students will present particular problems for staff and the emphasis will be on what is reasonable in all the circumstances.

Caring for Students with Cultural and Linguistic Barriers

Staff should pay attention to the specific needs of international students and consider their interaction in the following ways;

- Exercise an understanding of the cultural and linguistic barriers that international students can face
- Consider how their comments and gestures could be misinterpreted in light of cultural and linguistic differences.
- Be careful to appreciate that students with low level language skills may not be able to fully communicate their feelings.
- Have due regard and sensitivity to issues that may have a greater significance for International students such as discipline, deference and expectations

Home Stay Care and Accommodation

Home Stay families share the School's duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children they host. The family members are in a position of trust and are required to maintain the same high standards as Newbury Hall staff in regards to Child Protection. The School acknowledges that a family environment is more informal than the school environment however appropriate boundaries must be maintained and the guidelines for interaction followed.

Newbury Hall requires DBS checks on all adult members of a Home Stay family and Home Stay hosts have a responsibility to inform the School of any changes concerning people living in their home, eg a police conviction, a son or daughter reaching their 16th birthday, an adult lodger starting to live in the home, a new partner staying overnight.

Home Stay families should take particular care in managing the confidentiality of a student's personal contact information and ensure that all communication between family members and the student is of an appropriate nature. Student access to the home computer and internet must be monitored and appropriate firewalls must be in place.

Transporting Students

When staff are required by the school to transport students, staff should take particular care in the following ways:

- Ensure that they are fit to drive and free from any substances that may impair judgement or ability to drive
- Be aware that until the student is passed to a parent/guardian or back on school premises the staff member has responsibility for the student's health and safety
- Ensure that there are proper arrangements in place to ensure vehicle, passenger and driver safety, including appropriate insurance, seatbelts, adherence to capacity guidelines

Staff should not offer 'lifts' or transportation to a student without specific request or authorisation from the school.

Home Visits

Home visits to students or private tuition of students should take place only with the knowledge and approval of the Principal. Where a member of staff visits a home and the parent or Host Family is not available the visit should be deferred.

Visits and telephone calls by students to the homes of staff members should only occur in exceptional circumstances and with the prior knowledge and approval of the Principal.

Staff should not become overly familiar with students or their Host Families, a professional relationship should be maintained at all times.

Any unplanned contact of this nature must be reported to the Principal.

Contact Outside Of School

Staff should not give their personal mobile telephone numbers to students nor should they communicate with students via text, personal email or social media sites on a personal level. Staff should not disclose their personal email address but should always use their school email address and similarly send to a student's school email address.

Contact through email should be restricted to communication regarding work or curriculum specific issues and should not contain messages of a personal nature. Contact through personal notes, letters and cards is actively discouraged. If a staff member needs to speak to a student by telephone they should use one of the school's telephones.

Off Site Activities

The Group Leader on school excursions should be in possession of a school mobile phone and may ask students for their personal mobile numbers in case of emergencies during unsupervised periods. Similarly the Residential Welfare Staff should be in possession of a school mobile for the same reasons. Staff should be particularly careful while supervising/instructing students in extracurricular activities and be aware of the limits within which such contact should properly take place ie showing a student how to use a piece of apparatus or equipment, demonstrating a move or exercise during sport or contact activities during a club.

Behaviour of staff during educational visits/ camps away from school premises is expected to be of the same professional standard as on school grounds.

Relationships With Students

Staff must ensure that their relationships with students are professional at all times. They should clearly understand they are in a position of trust and the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their dealings with students.

All staff should ensure that their relationships with students are appropriate to the age and gender of the students, and take care that their language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when members of staff of either sex are dealing with adolescent boys and girls. The *Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000 and 2003* makes it an offence to engage inappropriately with a young person (even with consent) under the age of 18 with whom they are in a position of trust. From time to time staff may encounter students who display attention-seeking behaviour, or profess to be attracted to them. Staff should aim to deal with those situations sensitively and appropriately, and must ensure that their behaviour cannot be misinterpreted. The onus is on the Staff member to distance themselves from any potential situation. Any suspected infatuations or 'crushes' must be reported to the Principal. Suggestions that a student has developed a crush should be recorded. Staff should avoid being alone with students who have developed a crush on them and if the student sends personal communications to the member of staff this should be reported to the Principal and recorded.

Some staff have a pastoral responsibility for students and in order to fulfil that role effectively there will be occasions where conversations will cover particularly sensitive matters. Staff must, in these circumstances, use their discretion to ensure that, for example, any probing for details cannot be construed as unjustified intrusion.

Other staff may, from time to time, be approached by students for advice. Students may also appear distressed and staff may feel the need to ask if all is well. In such cases staff must judge whether it is appropriate for them to offer counselling and advice or whether to refer the student to another member of staff with acknowledged pastoral responsibility for the particular student.

As with physical contact, comments by staff to students, either individually or in groups, can be misconstrued. As a general principle therefore staff must not make unnecessary comments to and/or about students which could be interpreted as having a sexual connotation. It is also unacceptable for staff to introduce or to encourage debate amongst students in class, or elsewhere, which could be construed as having a sexual connotation that is unnecessary given the context of the lesson, or the circumstances. Sexuality should be a topic confined to PSHE classes and sessions with trained counsellors and should never be the subject of jokes or innuendo between staff and students. Any use of insensitive, disparaging or sarcastic comments should be avoided.

Signed:

Date: 01/09/18



Jon Crocker
Principal