

High Tunstall College of Science



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Staff Code of Conduct

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Aim of this code of conduct

High Tunstall College of Science expects all students to receive high-quality teaching and learning in a positive and respectful environment.

Employees at the college should ensure that their own behaviour, and the manner in which they conduct themselves with their colleagues, students, parents/carers and other stakeholders, sets a positive and professional example for students.

High Tunstall College of Science recognises that the majority of staff members act appropriately and treat each other with dignity and respect; however, we consider it important to clarify the expected standards.

This document forms part of a staff member's contract of employment and failure to comply with it, along with the associated college policies, may result in disciplinary action being taken, including legal action where this is warranted.

This document applies to all staff members who are:

- Employed by the college, including the Headteacher and volunteers.
- Employed in units or bases that are attached to the college.

This document does not apply to:

- Peripatetic staff members who are centrally employed by the LA.
- College catering and cleaning staff employed by Hartlepool Borough Council.
- Employees of external contractors.

These employees are governed by their employment contracts and any relevant laws pertaining to their activities within the college, for example, the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

1. Safeguarding students

In accordance with 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE)', all staff members have a responsibility to safeguard students and protect their welfare.

All staff members have a responsibility to ensure that they provide a learning environment in which students feel safe, secure and respected.

In order to effectively safeguard students, staff members are required to follow the procedures outlined in this Staff Code of Conduct, the Behaviour Policy and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, ensuring that they do not act in a way that may put students at risk of harm, or lead others to question their actions.

In accordance with the college's Behaviour Policy and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, staff members will be prepared to identify students who may be subject to, or at risk of, various types of abuse and neglect, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Child-on-child abuse
- Serious violence
- FGM
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Child criminal exploitation (CCE)
- Bullying; this includes cyberbullying, and prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying

Copies of policies and a copy of Part one (or, where appropriate Annex A for staff members not working directly with children) of KCSIE will be provided to staff at induction (via the School Bus). Staff will have a clear understanding of the college's policies and procedures with regards to safeguarding issues, e.g. abuse, and the important role they play in preventing harm against students.

In accordance with the college's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, staff will also be aware of the factors that could increase a student's risk of being subject to safeguarding issues, including but not limited to:

- Students who need a social worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans).
- Students requiring mental health support.
- LAC and previously LAC.
- Students with SEND.
- Identify as or are perceived to be LBGTQ+
- Students with mental health needs.
- Students who have a family member in prison, or who are affected by parental offending.

- Students that are frequently absent or permanently excluded from college.

If a staff member identifies a student who is subject to, or at risk of, abuse and neglect, they will follow the necessary reporting and referral procedures outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Staff will be aware of the procedures to follow if a student tells them they are experiencing abuse, exploitation or neglect.

In all cases, if a staff member feels unsure as to whether an incident or student would be classed as a safeguarding concern, they will speak directly to the DSL. Staff will not assume a colleague will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe.

Staff will understand that even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse in the college, this does not mean it is not happening. Staff will report any concerns regarding any form of abuse to the DSL without undue delay. Staff will understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers that are abusive in nature.

Any staff member that has concerns about another staff member's (including volunteers and supply staff) actions or intent, or believes these actions may lead to a student being put at risk of harm, will report this in line with the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy or Whistleblowing Policy immediately so appropriate action can be taken.

Upskirting is not tolerated by the college and any incidents of upskirting must be reported to the DSL who will decide on the next steps to take, which may include involving the police.

If a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with the college, they will use other whistleblowing channels, including contacting the NSPCC's helpline on 0800 028 0285 (between the hours of 8:00am and 8:00pm Monday to Friday) or email address help@nspcc.org.uk. Staff members can also access guidance at www.gov.uk/whistleblowing. Fear about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of students.

If the concern is regarding the headteacher, staff will report this to the chair of the governing body.

Staff will partake in the appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, which will include online safety; additionally, staff will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates at least annually.

Staff will recognise that, when teaching students about safeguarding and online safety, a one-size-fits-all approach may not be appropriate for every student, and a more personalised or contextualised approach may be needed for students who are vulnerable, victims of abuse and/or have SEND.

Staff will be aware of their local early help process and understand their role in it. Staff will also be aware of the process for making referrals to children's social care service (CSCS) and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, along with the role they may be expected to play in such assessments.

Staff will reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe by the college. Staff will never give the impression that students are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment, nor should a student ever be made to feel ashamed for reporting an incident.

Staff will be aware that confidentiality must never be promised to a student – staff will understand the procedure for if a student discloses a potential safeguarding issue, in accordance with the college's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Staff will be aware of the college's legal duty to refer anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm to, a child or vulnerable adult to the DBS – this includes where:

- The harm test is satisfied in respect of that individual.
- The individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence, or if there is reason to believe that the individual has committed a listed relevant offence.
- The individual has been removed from working in regulated activity or would have been removed if they had not left their post.

2. Approach and Ethos

High Tunstall College of Science is a student-centred community of learners.

All members of the High Tunstall Community should strive to inspire, support and achieve.

Members of staff and students will be ready, respectful and safe in carrying out their responsibilities while representing the College.

Members of staff are expected to be proactive at all times within their duties and responsibilities, ensuing effective implementation of all College policies.

Staff members are expected to form supportive, caring and positive relationships with students; where relationships become strained, members of staff are expected to be proactive in restoring a positive relationship with the individual concerned.

Staff should seek to co-operate with their colleagues, providing support, help and guidance as required by them and their line manager, and enable effective communication throughout the College.

Staff should take responsibility for and have a proactive approach to the management of behaviour, and conduct of students, in the classroom elsewhere on the premises.

Staff should be looking for positives - 'catch students being good', and celebrating successes of all within the High Tunstall Community.

3. Appearance and dress

An effective member of staff will dress appropriately as a professional to model the expectations we have of our young people. Respect in the classroom begins with appearance and staff should strive to be a positive role model for each student.

Making a good impression upon parents/carers will help to foster a productive relationship to help students to excel in the classroom. Establishing themselves as an authoritative figure by following this staff code of conduct and the established college rules will help instil a sense of integrity with each student.

The college expects that staff members will:

- Ensure that their appearance is clean and neat when at work or representing the college.
- Dress in a manner that is appropriate to their role. Clothing must be professional attire, not casual wear. Male staff must wear a shirt, tie, trousers and shoes. Footwear should be appropriate. The college will make reasonable adjustments to dress code expectations to suit disabilities, medical conditions, and religious and cultural beliefs.
- Remember that they are role models for students, and that their dress and appearance should reflect this.
- Not dress in a way that would cause embarrassment to students, parents/carers, colleagues or other stakeholders.
- Wear protective clothing where applicable to their role.
- Wear their ID badge at all times for identification purposes
- Cover any tattoos or body art whilst in college.

The following may be helpful in clarifying what is and what is not appropriate:

- No denim
- No revealing clothes
- No sports t-shirts (except PE staff)
- No shorts (except PE staff)
- Ladies tops should not be strapless
- No extreme hairstyles or colours

During college holidays and on PD days, it is acceptable for staff to wear more casual clothing. However, staff who are provided with uniforms specifically for health and safety reasons must continue to wear their uniform (for example catering staff, site managers/supervisors etc).

Overly tight or revealing clothing or inappropriate slogans on clothing are not acceptable and must not be worn at any time.

4. Attendance

The college expects that staff members will:

- Attend work in accordance with their contract of employment and associated terms and conditions in relation to hours, days of work and holidays.
- Make routine medical and dental appointments outside of their working hours or during holidays, where possible.
- Refer to the college's Staff Leave of Absence Policy if they need time off for any reason other than personal illness.

- Follow the college's absence reporting procedure when they are absent from work due to illness or injury.

5. Professional behaviour and conduct

Staff members are expected to treat other colleagues, students, parents/carers, and external contacts with dignity and respect.

The use of foul and abusive language will not be tolerated. Discrimination, bullying, harassment or intimidation, including physical, sexual and verbal abuse, will not be tolerated.

Staff members will not misuse or misrepresent their position, qualifications or experience, or bring the college into disrepute.

Staff members will inform the Headteacher if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution.

Staff will be aware that professional behaviour and conduct is expected to be extended to extra-curricular trips and visits. Staff attending a trip or visit will act in accordance with this Code of conduct.

Staff will act appropriately in terms of the views they express (in particular political views) and the use of college resources at all times and will not use college resources for party political purposes.

6. Conduct outside of work

Staff may undertake work outside college, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the college. The nature of the work cannot be seen to bring the college into disrepute, nor be at a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance.

Staff will not engage in outside work which could damage the reputation and standing of the college or the employee's own reputation, or the reputation of other members of the college community. In particular, criminal offences that involve violence, possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are unacceptable.

Staff will not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the college, college community or employer into disrepute; this is explored further in section 15.

7. Smoking, alcohol and other substances

Staff will not smoke on, or around the perimeter of, the college premises and whenever in the sight of students, parents or visitors.

Staff will not smoke whilst working with or supervising students off-site, such as when on educational visits and trips.

The taking of illegal drugs or alcohol during working hours is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Staff members must never attend work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

If alcohol or drug usage impacts on a staff member's performance, the college has the right to discuss the matter with the employee and take appropriate action in accordance with the college's disciplinary procedures, including referral to the police.

8. Health and safety

Staff members will:

- Be familiar with and adhere to the college's Health and Safety Policy, and ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and everyone in the college environment safe and well.
- Comply with health and safety regulations and use any safety equipment and protective clothing which is supplied to them.
- Comply with hygiene requirements.
- Comply with accident reporting requirements.
- Inform the Headteacher of any paid work which is undertaken elsewhere, for compliance with The Working Time Regulations 1998 (as amended).

9. Declaration of interests

Staff members are required to declare their interests, both personal and financial, where the group or organisation they are affiliated with would be considered to be in conflict with the ethos of the college.

For the purpose of this policy, a financial conflict of interest is one where there is, or appears to be, opportunity for personal financial gain, financial gain for close relatives or friends, or where it may be reasonable for a third party to take the view that financial benefits may affect an individual's actions.

The term 'financial interest' means anything of monetary value, including:

- Payments for services
- Equity interests
- Intellectual property rights
- Hospitality or gifts

Examples of financial interests that must be declared include, but are not limited to, equity interests in services considered for use by the college.

Non-financial conflicts of interest can also come into conflict, or be perceived to come into conflict, with an individual's obligations or commitments to the college. These interests may include any benefit or advantage including, but not limited to, direct or indirect enhancement of an individual's career, or gain for immediate family or someone with whom the individual has a close relationship.

Examples of situations that could give rise to non-financial conflicts of interest include the following:

- Pressure or temptation to accept gifts, inducements or hospitality
- Participating in the appointment, hiring, promotion, supervision or evaluation of a person with whom the individual has a close personal relationship
- Where a member of staff has or develops a close personal relationship with a colleague

Membership to a trade union or staff representative group does not need to be declared.

Staff members will also carefully consider whether they need to declare their relationship with any individual where this might cause a conflict with college activities.

Failure to make a relevant declaration of interests is a very serious breach of trust and, therefore, if employees are in doubt about a declaration, they are advised to contact the college or trade union.

All declarations, including nil returns, will be submitted in writing to the Headteacher for inclusion on the Register of Business Interests.

10. Relationships with students

The college expects that staff will:

- Maintain professional boundaries and relationships with students at all times, and will consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and necessary.
- Act in an open and transparent way that would not lead to others questioning their actions.
- Ensure that they do not establish social contact with students for the purpose of securing a friendship, or to pursue or strengthen a relationship.
- Ensure that they do not develop personal or sexual relationships with students; this includes sexual remarks and discussing their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of, students.
- Only contact students via the college's established mechanisms; personal phone numbers, email addresses or social media platforms will not be used to contact students.

Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect to that child, even if the relationship is consensual.

11. Physical contact with students

The college understands that there are circumstances in which it is entirely necessary for staff to have physical contact with students, e.g. when applying first aid and

assisting with intimate care, but staff will only do so in a professional and appropriate manner in line with relevant college policies.

When physical contact is made with students, it is imperative that it is conducted in a way which is responsive to the student's needs, is of limited duration and is appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.

Staff will seek the student's permission, where possible, before initiating contact. Staff will always use their professional judgement when determining what physical contact is appropriate, as this may differ between students. As such, the student's feelings and wishes will always be taken into account. Staff will never touch a student in a way which is indecent, and will always be prepared to explain their actions. Staff will be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by a student, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described and, therefore, will be prepared to justify their actions.

Staff will not engage in rough play, tickling or fun fights with students.

Extra caution will be taken where it is known that a student has previously suffered from abuse or neglect.

Physical contact will never be secretive; if a member of staff believes an action could be misinterpreted, this will be reported to the Headteacher, or the chair of governors if the concern is about the headteacher, and appropriate procedures will be followed.

Where it is necessary in PE classes for teachers to demonstrate use of equipment, this will be conducted with another member of staff if possible; if a student is required to participate, their consent will be given before doing so.

If a child is in distress and in need of comfort as reassurance, staff may use age-appropriate physical contact, such as placing their hand on the student's shoulder. Staff will remain self-aware of their actions at all times and ensure that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

Staff may also use reasonable force as a means of physical contact with students for restraint purposes; such instances will always be in accordance with the college's Positive Handling Policy.

12. Showering and changing

Students are entitled to respect and privacy whilst they are changing, e.g. before/after PE; however, a level of supervision is required to ensure that students are safe, and that they are not subjected to bullying.

The supervision will be appropriate to the needs and ages of the students, and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

Where possible, female staff will supervise girls and male staff will supervise boys.

Staff will announce their intention of entering the changing room to allow students to maintain their privacy and will only remain in the changing room for as long as is necessary.

Staff will never change or shower in the same area as students.

13. Transporting students

When it is necessary to transport students off-site, staff will ensure that the transport arrangements of the vehicle meet all legal requirements, they have an appropriate license, and the vehicle is roadworthy, has a valid MOT certificate and is insured with business insurance.

Staff will gain consent from parents/carers before transporting students, and will be aware that the welfare of all students in the vehicle is their responsibility.

Two or more staff will be present in the vehicle to avoid any discrepancy regarding safeguarding concerns.

14. Financial inducements

Staff members will:

- Familiarise themselves and comply with the college's financial regulations and the Gifts, Hospitality and Anti-bribery policy.
- Declare to the governing body, in writing, any gifts received, with the exception of:
 - Low cost, functional items suitable for business rather than personal use and displaying the supplier's logo – these items may be accepted.
 - Non-excessive gifts offered by parents/carers or students to college staff to express their gratitude, but staff members should always refuse monetary gifts.
 - Hospitality in the form of meals and drinks where it is part of a normal business meeting.
 - Authorised visits to exhibitions, demonstrations, conferences, business meals and social functions in connection with the college's business, which shall be at the college's expense.
- Not accept a personal gift, payment, or other incentive from a business contact – any such gifts should be returned.
- Declare any gift to the Headteacher, who will decide how it will be used.
- Only accept offers to specific events after authorisation from the Headteacher.

15. Acceptable use of technology

Staff will adhere to the procedures outlined in the college's Online Safety Policy and ICT Acceptable Use Policy at all times.

Staff will be aware of how the use of technology can impact safeguarding and wellbeing issues, e.g. online abuse. Staff will be vigilant to ensure their own behaviour is respectful and that students are using technology appropriately while under their care.

Staff are required to employ the highest security settings on any personal profiles they may have.

Staff will not engage in inappropriate use of social networking sites including contacting students or their family members, accepting or inviting friend requests from students or their family members, or following students or their family members on social media.

The college understands that some staff members are also parents/carers of students at the college and, therefore, may wish to make contact with other parents/carers. When doing so, staff will exercise their professional judgement and will not contact family members on social media if this would lead to a conflict of interest.

Staff will remain mindful of their use of social media and their web-based presence including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed directly or indirectly which may bring themselves, the college or the college community into disrepute.

16. Premises, equipment and communication

College equipment and systems are available only for college-related activities and will not be used for the fulfilment of another job or for personal use, unless specifically authorised by the Headteacher.

Illegal, inappropriate or unacceptable use of college equipment or communication systems may result in disciplinary action and, in serious cases, could lead to an employee's dismissal.

Employees receiving inappropriate communication or material, or who are unsure about whether something he/she proposes to do might breach this policy, should seek advice from the Headteacher.

The college reserves the right to monitor emails, phone calls, internet activity or document production, principally in order to avoid offensive or nuisance material and to protect systems from viruses, but also to ensure proper and effective use of systems.

Communication systems may be accessed when the college suspects that the employee has been misusing systems or facilities, or for the investigation of suspected fraud or other irregularity. Access will be secured by the Senior ICT Technician, only with the permission of the governing body.

Passwords should not be shared and access to computer systems must be kept confidential except on the express request of the Headteacher or Senior ICT Technician. Breaches of this confidentiality may be subject to disciplinary action.

College equipment that is used outside the premises, e.g. laptops, will be returned to the college when the employee leaves employment, or if requested to do so by the Headteacher.

17. Photography and videos

Photographs and videos will be taken using college equipment whenever possible, though we recognise the use of personal mobile phones is an efficient way of

capturing the moment. When possible photographs and videos should be downloaded to the college network and deleted from personal devices in a reasonable time.

Consent will be obtained from parents/carers and students in the event of any images or videos of students which the college wishes to use, e.g. to publish on the website.

Students who have not provided consent, either personally or via their parents, to have their photograph taken or be filmed will have their wishes respected, in line with the Photography Policy and Data Protection Policy.

All photographs and videos will be available for scrutiny, and staff will be prepared to justify the images or footage taken.

Careful consideration will always be given to the activities which are being filmed or photographed, in order to ensure that images or videos are not indecent and cannot be misused.

18. Data protection and confidentiality

Regarding personal and sensitive data, staff members are required, under the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, to:

- Consider the legal basis for collecting the data, ensuring that this is documented.
- Ensure that the data is stored on a UK GDPR-compliant server, and that the data is not held for any longer than necessary.
- Securely dispose of the data when the relevant retention period ends.

Staff members will not disclose sensitive information about the college, its employees or the LA to other parties.

The only exception whereby it is acceptable for a staff member to disclose information which would otherwise be considered confidential is when the confidential information gives rise to concerns about the safety or welfare of a student.

Staff members have the right to request access to data that is held about them; such requests will be made to the Headteacher in writing, in accordance with the college's Data Protection Policy.

19. Probity of records

The deliberate falsification of documents, such as references, academic qualifications or legal documents, is unacceptable. Where a staff member falsifies records or other documents, including those held electronically, this will be regarded as a serious disciplinary matter and potentially a criminal offence.

20. Contacts

Staff members shall not use college business contacts for acquiring materials or services at trade/discount prices for non-college activities, unless participating in concessionary schemes arranged by trade unions or other such groups.

21. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Headteacher and any changes made will be communicated to all members of staff.

The next scheduled review date of this document is June 2025.

All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction programme.