



# KING'S HOUSE SCHOOL

RICHMOND



## **STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT (VOLUNTEERS)**

Member of staff responsible:	Head
Date of policy review:	September 2025
Date of next review:	September 2026
Approved by SMT:	September 2025



## INTRODUCTION

The ethos and the character of King's House School are set by the adults who work at the school. This should be both positive and professional and characterised by respect between volunteers, members of staff, with parents and, also, with the children. This Volunteer Code of Conduct applies to the School's volunteers. A separate Staff Code of Conduct applies to the School's paid members of staff.

Volunteers have a crucial role to play in shaping the lives of the children. They have a unique opportunity to interact with children in ways that are both affirming and inspiring. This policy is designed to help volunteers appreciate what the expectations are when dealing with members of the School community. It also gives advice on how to establish a safe working environment for the children, hence reducing the risk of volunteers being falsely accused of unprofessional conduct, which may have a bearing on child protection.

It is the duty of every volunteer to observe this Volunteer Code of Conduct and the guidance should be followed unless there is a good reason not to follow it in a particular case. The School also has a duty of care to its staff, volunteers, parents, guardians or carers and pupils and the implementation of the practices in this Volunteer Code of Conduct will help to discharge that duty.

## SAFEGUARDING

King's House School treats Safeguarding as a very high priority. All volunteers are trained during their induction and regularly thereafter and are regularly reminded of the procedures for reporting concerns. All volunteers are required to have read both the school's Safeguarding Children Policy and the relevant parts of *Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2025)*. If a volunteer has a concern, they should consult one of the following members of staff:

- Martin Shore, Deputy Head, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Mark Turner, Headmaster, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection (DDSL).
- Simon Gower, Head of the Junior Department, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead for The Junior Department (DDSL - JD).
- Jane O'Brien, Head of Nursery, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead for EYFS & Before and After School (DDSL - Nursery).

If volunteers feel that they are unsure about their training or the documentation they have read, they should consult one of the above. Please remember that the safety of the child is paramount.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

### **Principles for volunteers**

All volunteers should put the wellbeing, development and progress of all pupils first by:

- Following the directions and instructions given to them by the School's staff.
- Reporting any concerns about a child's behaviour to the School's staff.
- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils.
- Acting in the best interests of pupils in their care.
- Demonstrating self-awareness and taking responsibility for their own actions and for providing help and support to pupils.
- Raising concerns about the practices of teachers or other professionals where these may have a negative impact on pupils' learning or progress or may put pupils at risk.
- Raising concerns about suspected child on child abuse, including suspected sexual harassment and/or sexual violence;
- Being familiar with the School's Safeguarding procedures.
- Knowing the identity of the current Designated Safeguarding Lead and their Deputy.
- Being aware that they are in a position of trust (i.e. the adult is in a position of power or influence over the pupil due to his or her position as a volunteer); that the relationship is not a relationship between equals and that this position must never be used to intimidate, bully, humiliate, coerce or threaten pupils.

All volunteers should demonstrate respect for diversity and take steps to promote equality by:

- Acting appropriately and in accordance with this Volunteer Code of Conduct, towards all pupils, parents, guardians or carers and colleagues.
- Complying with the School's Anti-bullying, Equality of Opportunity Policy and this Volunteer Code of Conduct.
- Reporting to the School's staff issues of discrimination and bullying whenever they arise.
- Helping to create a fair and inclusive school environment.

## **GUIDANCE ON VOLUNTEER / PUPIL RELATIONSHIPS**

Allegations of unprofessional conduct or improper contact or words can arise at any time. Vigilance is required, so as to ensure the safety of children in our care and to reduce the risk of an allegation of impropriety against a volunteer.

Forming inappropriate relationships with children or young people who are pupils or students at another school will be treated as a low level concern or, if a child may have been harmed it will be escalated in accordance with paragraph 12 of the Safeguarding Children Policy. Such behaviour tends to bring the School into disrepute and gives rise to concern that the volunteer involved



cannot be trusted to maintain professional boundaries with pupils and students at the School.

You should be aware of the general guidance that will apply in all cases. In particular you must:

- exercise good judgement, but always act within the spirit of these guidelines. If you are involved in a situation where no specific guidance exists, you should ask for guidance from the Designated Safeguarding Lead. A written record should be kept that includes justification for any action taken.
- be familiar with procedures for handling allegations against staff/volunteers.
- be aware of the School's child protection procedures.
- seek guidance from the Designated Safeguarding Lead or one of the Deputies if you are in any doubt about appropriate conduct.
- under the Low Level Concerns Policy (located paragraph 13 of the Safeguarding Children Policy) report any actions which could be misinterpreted, any misunderstandings, accidents or threats involving you and a pupil or a group of pupils to the Head (or the Designated Safeguarding Lead when the circumstances render it more practical to approach the DSL). Any allegations against staff/volunteers where a child may have been harmed should be referred directly to the Head under paragraph 12 of the Safeguarding Children Policy.

You should take particular care when dealing with a pupil who:

- Appears to be emotionally distressed or generally vulnerable and / or who is seeking expressions of affection.
- Appears to hold a grudge against you.
- Acts in a sexually provocative way or who is inclined to make exaggerated claims about themselves and others or to fantasise or one whose manner with adults is over-familiar.
- May have reason to make up an allegation to cover the fact that he or she has not worked hard enough for public examinations.

Some of these behaviours may be indications that a child has been, or is currently being, abused and should, therefore, be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or one of the Deputies under the School's Safeguarding procedures.

It is vital that comprehensive records are kept and volunteers may be asked to assist in the maintenance of records where a volunteer has witnessed an incident that involves children that could give cause for concern.

Any safeguarding concern should be reported promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or one of the Deputies, or directly to the Head if there is an allegation against a member of staff/volunteer and a child may have been harmed.



## **GUIDANCE ON VOLUNTEER / PARENT RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNICATION**

The School is aware that there will be volunteers that have pre-existing relationships with parents. The School should be informed if an existing personal friendship or unavoidable relationship exists with a parent of a pupil which may cause any conflict of interest or create a situation that could bring the School into disrepute or put into question your suitability for your role at the School.

Any volunteer here at the School, including parent-volunteers, are expected to conduct all school-related business in a professional manner, as set out below. They must ensure that social contact with any parents upholds the boundary of their role as a volunteer at the School and that any social contact is not perceived as constituting a conflict of interest and does not impact the reputation of the School.

You should be aware of the general guidance that will apply to your role here at the School. In particular, you must:

- always maintain a professional tone and manner in all interactions with parents, guardians or carers;
- avoid creating relationships which could be perceived as overly familiar, exclusive, or secretive;
- ensure that communication focuses solely on matters relating to the child, school activities, or professional issues;
- ensure that contentious or sensitive matters are shared with the appropriate Class Teacher or Head of Department.
- exercise professional judgement to ensure that contact cannot be misinterpreted;
- ensure that conversations do not breach confidentiality, professional boundaries or safeguarding expectations.
- ensure gifts from parents should be managed in accordance with the Gifts, Rewards and Selection of Pupils section of this Code.
- ensure that impartiality and fairness can always be demonstrated.

Volunteers should not use their position at the school to:

- engage in discussions with parents which stray into personal or intimate aspects of the volunteer's or parents' private lives;
  - be mindful that personal information shared with parents may blur professional boundaries or can create safeguarding concerns.



- allow private friendships or social relationships with parents to compromise impartiality or give rise to perceptions of undue favour or advantage;
- engage in gossip, speculation, or disclosure of confidential information about pupils, colleagues or the School.
- use personal email addresses, personal telephone numbers or personal messaging apps (e.g., WhatsApp, SMS, social media messaging) to communicate with parents unless explicitly authorised by senior management and recorded;
- respond to messages from parents via private social media accounts — volunteers should instead redirect communication to the appropriate Class Teacher or Head of Department.
- arrange social meetings with parents for the purpose of developing a personal relationship;
- allow a personal relationship with a parent to influence decisions related to their child, or any other pupil;
- accept invitations to private events (e.g., parties, holidays, family gatherings) where this could be interpreted as creating a relationship of favouritism or indebtedness.
- offer gifts to parents or invite parents to their home or to social events

Any situation in which volunteers feel including, but not limited to the below list, must be reported to the Head / Deputy Head. A written record should be kept where appropriate:

- pressured into over-familiar communication,
- overwhelmed by parental expectations,
- uncomfortable due to tone, frequency or nature of contact, or
- inappropriate interaction in a social setting

This information will be treated in accordance with the School's complaints or disciplinary procedure. The School will act impartially to ensure a fair process has taken place.

## **ADDRESSING CHILDREN**

Volunteers should address pupils by their first names. Children should not be called by nicknames as, although this may not be intended to have ill effects, it may be construed as favouritism by other children. It goes without saying that children should never be referred to by a name that is undermining or hurtful.

## **ADDRESSING COLLEAGUES**

Volunteers must be sensitive to the feelings of others. Foul language, discriminatory references about sex, sexual orientation, age, race, colour, physical ability and so forth are obviously unacceptable. At all times volunteers are expected to be courteous to their colleagues.



## **DUTY OF CARE**

All volunteers have a duty of care and a duty to help keep young people safe and to protect them from sexual, physical and emotional harm. Children have a right to be safe and to be treated with respect and dignity. Adults are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and well being of pupils.

The duty of care is, in part, exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between staff, volunteers and pupils and behaviour from volunteers should demonstrate integrity, maturity and good judgement.

## **TRUST**

All adults working with children are in a position of trust. There is an inherent imbalance in the relationship between an adult volunteer and a child which should never be abused for personal advantage.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Volunteers may on occasion be privy to confidential information. Volunteers should not divulge information of a confidential nature. Comments made by staff in the Staff Room or in meetings should be regarded as confidential. Volunteers who are parents must maintain this same level of confidentiality despite social expectations. Parent-volunteers should discuss any potential inter-role conflict or other concerns with the Deputy Head, the Head of the Junior Department or the Head of the Nursery, as appropriate.

Safeguarding and Child Protection concerns supersede confidentiality. Such concerns must only be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or one of the Deputies. The Deputy Head is the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Head is the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Head of the Nursery and the Head of the Junior Departments are the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads in their respective departments.

## **LANGUAGE**

Volunteers should use appropriate language at all times. Volunteers should:

- Avoid words or expressions that have any unnecessary sexual content or innuendo.
- Avoid displays of affection or over-familiarity whilst undertaking volunteering duties. It is acknowledged that parent-volunteers hold a dual role, however they should ensure that they uphold the boundaries between the two roles whilst undertaking volunteering duties.
- Avoid any form of aggressive or threatening words.



- Not swear, blaspheme or use any sort of offensive language in front of pupils.
- Avoid the use of sarcasm or derogatory words and avoid making unprofessional personal comments about anyone.

## **BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT**

Behaviour management of the children is the responsibility of members of the School's paid staff and should not involve volunteers. If you are working with pupils who are misbehaving, please refer this to the School's staff as soon as possible. Never try to reprimand or allocate punishments yourself.

## **DRESS AND APPEARANCE**

As the pupils wear school uniforms, it is expected that the volunteers also dress smartly. Volunteers should ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake. This is the case when accompanying the children on trips, though just as the children may have to wear casual clothing for certain trips, then the staff and volunteers will wear what befits the nature of the trip.

Those who dress or appear in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate or revealing could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegation.

## **MEDICINES**

If volunteers are using medication which may affect their performance or behaviour whilst carrying out their volunteering duties, then they must inform the Deputy Head, the head of the Junior Department or the Head of Nursery, as appropriate. All medicines should be stored away from access to children and in the EYFS setting, adult medication should be stored in the offices.

## **GIFTS**

Volunteers need to take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. There are occasions when children or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to volunteers e.g. at Christmas or as a thank-you and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.

Volunteers should ensure that they do not give gifts or rewards to pupils. The only exception to this rule is those gifts such as birthday presents that would in any event have been bought for a parent-volunteer's own child to give to another pupil regardless of that parent's role as a volunteer





at the School.

## **INFATUATIONS OR "CRUSHES"**

A volunteer who becomes aware that a pupil may be infatuated with themselves or a colleague/fellow volunteer, should report concerns to the DSL immediately, so that appropriate action can be taken. Suggestions that a pupil may have developed a crush should also be recorded. Volunteers should avoid being alone with pupils who have developed a crush on them. In this way, steps can be taken to avoid hurt and distress for all concerned.

## **SOCIAL CONTACT**

Volunteers should not use their volunteering role to establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. It is acknowledged that many volunteers are also parents of children who attend the School, requiring them to fulfil the dual role of parent and volunteer. However social contact outside of the volunteering role should not extend to any pupil who you would not have met were it not for your volunteering role. Any social contact with pupils must only take place with the parents of the pupil being expressly aware and should ideally be with another adult present.

Parent-volunteers must ensure that social contact with any parents and pupils upholds the boundary between their role as a parent and their role as a volunteer at the School. It is important that any social contact is not perceived as constituting a conflict of interest and that it does not impact on the reputation of the School. All volunteers should also be aware that social contact could be misconstrued as grooming.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CONTACT OUTSIDE SCHOOL**

Contact with pupils outside school should be limited to only those pupils who you would ordinarily have known by virtue of being a parent of a pupil at the School, and should never extend to any pupil you have only met by virtue of your volunteering role at the School. For example, parent-volunteers may continue to host "playdates" for their child and their classmates, but it is never acceptable to have contact outside school with any other pupils that you would not have met unless volunteering.

You should:

- Not give pupils your home address, home telephone number, mobile telephone number or email address.
- Not give a pupil a lift in your own vehicle other than with permission from the Head

(where the lift forms part of your volunteering work for the School).

- Report and record any situation which may place a child at risk or which may compromise the School's or your standing.
- Never contact a pupil directly by phone, social media, email or text message or any other medium (any necessary contact should be made through parents).
- Never engage in secretive social contact with pupils or their parents, guardians or carers.

You should be aware that where you meet children or parents, guardians or carers socially, such contact could be misinterpreted as grooming.

## **COMMUNICATION WITH PUPILS (EMAIL, TEXT, TELEPHONE ETC.)**

Adults should be circumspect in their communications with children, so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming.

Volunteers should not give their personal contact details to pupils, including e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers.

Volunteers should never use or access social networking sites of pupils or use internet or web based communication channels to send personal messages to pupils.

## **USE OF MOBILE TELEPHONES**

Mobile telephones should not be out whilst you are undertaking your volunteering duties on school premises; please note that in EYFS areas, mobile phones are strictly prohibited and must be left stored away from the children in a locked area or office. Volunteers should avoid answering their telephones or making calls when they are on duty. Exceptions to this would be when there is a need to contact the emergency services or the school office on account of an emergency. Volunteers on outings and residential trips should also have phones on them for emergencies.

## **PHYSICAL CONTACT**

Volunteers should not have unnecessary physical contact with pupils and should be alert to the fact that minor forms of friendly physical contact can be misconstrued by pupils or onlookers. Whilst there are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for volunteers to have physical contact with pupils, it is crucial that you only do so in ways appropriate to your professional role as a volunteer at the School, even if you know some of the pupils very well.

Physical contact may be appropriate when a pupil needs to get comfort or reassurance (e.g. following an accident or personal crisis) or when there is a need to take urgent action to avoid an



incident or injury. When physical contact is made with pupils, this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age and stage of development.

Physical contact, which occurs regularly with an individual child or young person, is likely to raise questions.

## **ONE-TO-ONE SITUATIONS**

Volunteers should avoid ever being in one-to-one situations with children and young people, as this renders volunteers vulnerable to allegations.

## **ACCEPTABLE USE OF TECHNOLOGIES**

Volunteers should ensure that they are familiar with and comply with the School's Internet Safety Policy and the Staff IT Acceptable Use Policy at all times. In particular, volunteers must:

- not contact any pupil directly through social media, email, text message or any other medium (even if known aside from their volunteer role). Any necessary social communication should always be with the parents of the pupil.
- not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the School or the School community into disrepute;
- 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.

The School acknowledges that volunteers who are also parents will likely make contact with other parents, over social media. Volunteers must exercise caution and professional judgement in these circumstances and should not have any contact with pupils' family members via social media if that contact may constitute a conflict of interest or call into question their professionalism or if this may be damaging to the reputation of the School. If the volunteer is unclear on any issue, they should discuss this with the Head. Any volunteer who is not a parent must not make contact with any parent whom they would not otherwise have met aside from their volunteer role.

## **EDUCATIONAL VISITS AND AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

During school activities that take place off the school site or out of school hours, volunteers remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour cannot be interpreted as inappropriate. Throughout visits and activities, volunteers are required to follow all reasonable instructions given to them by members of staff. Volunteers are required to notify a member of staff immediately if any matters occur relating to first aid, safety and/or behaviour, and should



never seek to deal with such matters themselves.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY, VIDEOS AND OTHER CREATIVE ARTS**

All photography and filming of pupils whilst you are undertaking volunteering duties is prohibited unless permission is granted from the Head. Images and videos of pupils to which you have access by virtue of your volunteering duties should never be stored on personal devices.

You must ensure you do not do anything that risks exposing children to inappropriate or indecent images. Inappropriate material, such as pornography, should not be brought to the School and you must not use School property to access such material. If you discover material that is potentially illegal, you must isolate the equipment and contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead under the School's child protection procedures immediately. Pupils must not be exposed to unsuitable material on the internet.

## **SEXUAL CONTACT**

Volunteers must not:

- Have any type of sexual relationship with a pupil or pupils.
- Have sexually suggestive or provocative communications with a pupil.
- Make sexual remarks to or about a pupil.
- Discuss their own sexual relationships in the presence of pupils.

Sexual relationships or contact with pupils, or encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which might lead to a sexual relationship, is a grave breach of trust. The School will always follow up on any such allegations, which include making referrals in accordance with the Safeguarding Children Policy. Substantiated allegations will result in the School ceasing to use your volunteering services and may also lead to criminal prosecution.

## **WHISTLEBLOWING**

Volunteers should bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant external agencies. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk. All volunteers should be aware of the School's Safeguarding and Whistleblowing procedures and will receive regular training and updates.

## **CONSEQUENCES OF BREACHING THIS CODE**

It is in your interests to follow this code, so as to maintain standards of behaviour and your own reputation. Any breach of this policy is likely to result in the School ceasing to use your volunteering services.

Allegations against staff/volunteers will be handled in accordance with the Safeguarding Children Policy. Breach of the Code of Conduct may be sufficient to reach the “harms threshold” set out in paragraph 12.2 of the Safeguarding Child Policy. Any breach of the Volunteer Code of Conduct which is insufficient to reach the harms threshold will be dealt with as a low level concern, in accordance with paragraph 12.16 of the Safeguarding Children Policy.

If the School ceases to use the services of a volunteer because they are unsuitable to work with children, a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service will be made as soon as possible, if the criteria for a referral are met. Any such incidents will be followed by a review of the safeguarding procedures within the School, with a report being presented to the Governors without delay.

If a volunteer ceases to provide his or her services to the School at a time when child protection concerns exist in relation to that person, those concerns will still be investigated in full by the School and a referral will be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service as soon as possible, if the criteria for a referral are met.

## **CONCERNS**

### Safeguarding:

For procedures for dealing with allegations or concerns about a child or disclosures / allegations of abuse, volunteers should refer to the School's Safeguarding Children Policy.

### Low level concerns:

As part of our whole school approach to safeguarding, we promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns or allegations about adults working in or on behalf of the School are dealt with promptly and appropriately. This includes any concern or allegation – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a ‘nagging doubt’ - that an adult working with children may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with this Volunteer Code of Conduct or the Staff Code of Conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
- does not meet the harm threshold set out in Part 4 of the statutory guidance, KCSIE, or is otherwise not serious enough to merit a referral to the LADO.

Such concerns or allegations are referred to as “low level concerns” within KCSIE. The term “low level” does not mean that it is insignificant. Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

In order to create and embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which the School's values and expected behaviour set out in this Volunteer Code of Conduct and in the Staff Code of



Conduct are lived, monitored and reinforced constantly by all staff and volunteers, it is vital that any such low level concerns or allegations are shared in accordance with the School's Low Level Concerns Policy which can be found at paragraph 13 of the Safeguarding Children Policy.

Any questions regarding low level concerns or allegations and/or the procedure for reporting them should be raised with the DSL and/or the Head.