



ALMOND HILL JUNIOR SCHOOL  
GOVERNING BODY

**CODE OF CONDUCT  
(INCLUDING SOCIAL MEDIA)  
POLICY**

Full Governing Body	March 2024
Date for Review	September 2024

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## **1. Introduction**

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour that all school employees and those acting on behalf of the school are expected to observe. All staff are role models, and are in a unique position of influence, and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the pupils within the school.

This Code of Conduct applies to all employees of the school. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and it may be amended at any time.

In addition to this Code of Conduct, all employees engaged to work under Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Employment are required to adhere to the 'Teachers' Standards 2012', in particular relation to this policy, Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct.

This Code helps all staff to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable, and regard should also be given to the disciplinary rules set out in the Disciplinary Policy which may be found in the policies folder on the cloud or obtained from the school office.

Staff should be aware that a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including but not limited to dismissal.

Where this policy requires an employee to disclose matters from their personal life the school will consider the circumstances and context of each matter before determining whether any further action is required.

## **2. Principles**

All staff are expected to familiarise themselves and comply with all school policies and procedures.

Staff must not undermine fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Staff are expected to be respectful when talking to and about other members of staff, pupils and families and not engage in 'gossip' or disparaging comments that may be overheard and cause offence.

All staff must attend work in accordance with their contract of employment and associated terms and conditions in relation to hours, days of work and holidays.

### **2.1. Setting an example**

All staff set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils. Therefore, all staff must:

- avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times
- demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same
- avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

## **3. Safeguarding Pupils**

Staff have a duty to have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education throughout their employment and abide by the duties placed upon them within this.

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.

The duty to safeguard pupils includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil or colleague to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and/or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).

The School's DSL is Emma Fordham. The Deputy DSLs are Shahnaz Birchall, Gemma Burgess and Vikki Simmons.

Staff have access to the Child Protection Policy and Whistleblowing Procedure which may be found on

the cloud and staff must be familiar with these documents.

Staff should treat pupils with respect and dignity and must not personally demean or undermine pupils, their parents or carers, or colleagues.

Staff should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of pupils, embarrassing, or humiliating pupils, discriminating against or favouring pupils.

Staff must take reasonable care of pupils under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.

Staff should be aware that the management of any safeguarding concerns is dealt in accordance with the latest statutory guidance as detailed in Keeping Children Safe in Education and includes any allegations that meet the harm test and/or allegations considered to be low level concerns. (i. e those which do not meet the harm test).

### **3.1. Low Level Concerns**

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the harm test threshold.

A low-level concern is any concern that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer).

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
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

## **4. Relationships**

Staff must declare any relationships that they may have with pupils, staff, clients, contractors supplies or parents outside of the school. This may include mutual membership of social groups, tutoring, and/or family connections.

Existing or new personal relationships at work between colleagues should be declared to the headteacher where there is a potential for this to impact upon the work of either (for example: a risk of allegations of bias or conflict of interest). The headteacher will treat declarations in confidence.

Staff should not assume that the school are aware of any such connections and should use Appendix 2 and/or 3 to make a declaration.

### **4.1. Relationships with pupils**

Relationships with pupils must be professional at all times. Physical relationships with pupils are not permitted and may lead to a criminal conviction.

Encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which may lead to a sexual relationship, or any other inappropriate relationship will be viewed as a grave breach of trust.

Contact with pupils must be via school-authorized mechanisms and solely for educational purposes. At no time should a personal telephone number, text, email addresses or communication routes via

personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with pupils.

If contacted by a pupil by an inappropriate route, staff should report the contact to their Line Manager immediately.

Behaviour giving rise to concern should also be reported which includes pupils seeking affection, being sexually provocative or exhibiting overly familiar behaviour.

## **5. Pupil Development**

Staff must comply with all school policies and procedures that support the wellbeing and development of pupils.

Staff must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of pupils.

Staff must follow reasonable instructions that support the development of pupils.

## **6. Honesty and Integrity**

Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.

All staff must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be found guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they:

- offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone
- if they request, agree or accept, or receive a bribe from another person.

If you believe that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act, you should refer to the Whistleblowing procedure which may be found on the cloud or can be obtained through the office.

For Hertfordshire schools, for further information see the HCC Anti Bribery Policy for Schools available on The Grid.

Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to the Line Manager/Headteacher, with the exception of one off “token” gifts from pupils or parents.

Personal gifts from individual members of staff to pupils are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted and may lead to disciplinary action. Any ‘gifts’ that may be considered appropriate must be discussed with the headteacher.

Staff must not act on behalf of the school unless they have the authority to do so.

Professional references from the school will be provided by the relevant person with delegated authority. References or endorsements on social media given by other members of staff must be clear that they are provided in a personal capacity.

## **7. Conduct outside of Work**

Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation of the school or the employee’s own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education, any conduct or behaviour that indicates an employee may not be suitable to work with children including such behaviour outside of the workplace which may or may not involve children is likely to be regarded as unacceptable.

For example, should a member of staff be involved in domestic violence at home and no children were involved, the school will need to consider what triggered these actions and question whether a child in the school could trigger the same reaction, therefore be put at risk.

In addition, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable where it brings into question an employee's suitability or ability to do their role/work in an educational setting.

Staff may undertake work outside the school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school, nor be to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance in the school. It is recommended that permission is sought in advance.

- staff must disclose any work outside the school or outside business interests where there is a potential conflict of interests with their employment at the school
- if any allegation of wrongdoing occurs in a staff member's work outside the school (whether or not they deny this) which may have a bearing on their employment, they must disclose this immediately to the Headteacher.

Forming inappropriate relationships or friendships with children or young people who are pupils under the age of 18 at another school/college will be viewed as inappropriate and impact upon the school's ability to trust the member of staff to maintain professional boundaries with pupils at the school.

Any work-related social event is considered to be an extension of the workplace and as such the standards of behaviour expected at these events is in line with this policy.

## **8. Social Media and Internet Use**

The school will expect to:

- enable appropriate use of social networking sites in a safe and secure manner
- safeguard employees in their use of social networking sites and ensure they do not make themselves vulnerable
- minimise the risks to the school through use of social media.

This applies to use of social media for business purposes as well as personal use that may affect the school in any way. It covers all employees, consultants, volunteers, and agency workers.

### **What is social media?**

For the purposes of this, social media is any online platform or app that allows parties to publish information, share content and interact with others either to a wide audience or through private conversations, such as private messages.

Social media is the term used for internet-enabled tools used on computers, tablets, smart phones and other smart devices etc to allow people to share information, ideas and views.

### **Types of social media**

This covers all social media platforms, including, but not limited to:

Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, TikTok and message boards.

It also includes any website where you can contribute or edit content and instant messaging services i.e., WhatsApp, Snapchat etc.

This also applies to any other existing or new social media platform not mentioned, whether internal or external or used on a personal or work device.

All forms of social media use are covered, this can include but is not limited to; posting comments, pictures or videos, blogging, using forums, sending private messages, endorsing other people's content, re-tweeting/circulating posts or adding/editing content on a website. Staff should exercise caution in their use of all social media.

If it can be determined from your account that you work for Almond Hill (either visually, verbally or written), we ask employees to make it clear that any content and views are their own. Confirming this point does not make employees exempt from following this policy.

Please include “these views are my own and not that of my employer” on your profile.

Staff must exercise caution at all times both inside and outside of work when using information technology. Staff should be aware of the risks to themselves and others.

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social media sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute. Staff should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have.

This may also include the use of dating websites where staff could encounter pupils either with their own profile or acting covertly.

Contact with pupils should only be made via the use of school email accounts or telephone equipment when appropriate and strictly for educational reasons.

Photographs or video footage of pupils should only be taken using school equipment, for purposes authorised by the school. Any such use should always be transparent and only occur where parental consent has been given. The resultant files from such recording or taking of photographs must be stored in accordance with the school’s procedures on school equipment.

Further details on this can be found in the Online Safety Policy and Acceptable User Agreements, and social media Policy which may be found on the cloud.

## **9. Personal use of social media within working time**

Personal use of social media is not permitted during working hours or by means of the school’s computers, networks and other IT resources and communications systems. This includes computers or devices distributed by the school for work purposes.

## **10. Business use of social media**

If an employee is contacted for comments about the school for publication anywhere, including in any social media outlet, the enquiry should be directed to the headteacher, and the employee should not respond without written approval.

## **11. Prohibited use of social media**

Employees must avoid making any social media communications that could damage the school’s interests or reputation, even indirectly.

The employee should not use social media in a way that breaches any of the school’s policies, the law, or any other regulatory requirements

Social media use is permitted as long as it does not involve unprofessional or inappropriate content and does not interfere with the school or the employee’s role or responsibilities.

### **11.1. Inappropriate use**

Inappropriate use includes, but is not limited to:

- any content that could be viewed as malicious, abusive, offensive, obscene, threatening, intimidating or contain nudity or images of a sexual nature
- discrimination (e.g., racism, homophobia etc.)
- swearing (both verbal and gestured) any content including explicit lyrics

- making or endorsing harmful or derogatory comments
- any threatening behaviour that may cause harm to others or the interests or reputation of the school
- bullying and harassment
- making false or misleading claims/ statements
- impersonating colleagues or third parties
- posting or sharing information that could jeopardise the school's confidentiality, particularly regarding sensitive school-related topics, such as the school's performance, internal disputes involving pupils, parents or employees
- disparaging the school, its employees or any third party
- sharing sensitive or personal information about the school or employees that should not be discussed or shared or is covered under GDPR i.e., absence information or phone numbers
- endorsing, liking, sharing content that could be offensive, speculative or may cause reputational damage to the school. this includes adding or commending on speculation
- sharing login details or allowing others to post on your behalf
- using your school email address for a personal social media account
- create social media accounts representing the school without prior authorisation
- expressing opinions on behalf of the school or using the school's logo or other trademarks without express authorisation.

These examples include creating, endorsing, liking, posting, retweeting, sharing direct messaging or sending any statements, photo's, videos, audios or messages. They also include speaking and/or lip syncing to other creators' content and any music used.

Employees should never provide professional references or endorsements on behalf of the school for other individuals without the express authority of the Headteacher including on social or professional networking sites. Such references, positive and negative, can be attributed to the school and create legal liability for both the author of the reference and the school.

### **11.2. Safeguarding and social media**

Employees must not abuse their position of School with pupils on social media. Examples of abuse of School include, but not limited to:

- Accepting any former pupil under the age of 18, or any current pupils, as friends, or requesting such friendships
- Communicating personally with pupils
- Posting photographs of pupils on sites not owned by the school
- Commenting about or naming pupils.

If any member of staff becomes aware that they themselves have been/ or another staff member has been speaking to a pupil online, they should raise it to the headteacher or line manager immediately.

### **11.3. Use of emojis, GIF's and Memes**

Using emojis, GIF's or Memes do have their benefits, however it is important to use them correctly and appropriately.

Employees should be aware that messages and comments that include emojis may affect the way text



is read. Emojis may mean different things to different people, the use of them may mean the text is deemed inappropriate.

If an employee chose to use emojis, GIF's or Memes they should ensure they are appropriate and easily understood within the context.

#### **11.4. Absence from work and use of social media**

Use of social media whilst absent can create the impression that staff are well enough to be working. We accept that this is not necessarily the case, but this may be how it is perceived by colleagues and others. Taking this into account we would guide staff to be mindful of their use of social media during absence from work.

### **12. Guidelines for responsible use of social media**

The employee should make it clear in social media postings that the employee is speaking on the employee's own behalf.

Employees should be respectful to others when making any statement on social media and be aware that the employee is personally responsible for all communications which will be published on the internet for anyone to see. Employees should ensure that they use privacy and access settings whilst being aware that they cannot control the use of their postings by others.

The employee should also ensure any content they post on social media are consistent with the professional image the employee presents to colleagues, pupils and parents.

If the employee is uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, they are advised to refrain from posting it until they have discussed it with their manager.

If the employee becomes aware of social media content that disparages or reflects poorly on the school, the employee should contact their Line Manager or the Headteacher.

### **13. Monitoring**

The school reserves the right to monitor, intercept and review employees use of social media. The school considers valid reasons for checking an employee's internet usage include suspicions that the employee has:

- been using social media when they should have been working
- acted in a way that is in breach of the rules set out in this policy.

Monitoring is in the school's legitimate interests and is to ensure that this policy is being complied with.

For further information, please refer to the Online Safety (including remote learning, mobile phone use and social media) policy and Data Protection Policy and Breach Response Plan.

The employee may be required to remove any social media content that the school consider to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action.

### **14. Confidentiality**

Where staff have access to confidential information about pupils or their parents or carers, staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil.

All staff may at some point witness actions or events which need to be confidential.

For example, where a pupil is bullied by another pupil (or by a member of staff), once reported through the appropriate school procedure, it must not be discussed outside the school, including with other

staff, pupils, parents or carers, in the school except with the appropriate member of staff to deal with the matter.

Staff have an obligation to share with their headteacher (who is the school's designated senior lead) any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a pupil. Staff must not promise a pupil that they will not act on information that they are told by the pupil.

Staff are not allowed to make any comment to the media about the school, its performance, governance, pupils or parents without written approval. Any media queries should be directed to the Headteacher/designated person.

### **15. Dress and Appearance**

Staff should not carry 'cups' around school e.g. on playground duty, meeting parents/pupils at the classroom door, to assembly etc. This does not set the tone of 'professional appearance'. Water bottles are permitted and lidded cups in situ also (e.g. on an adult's desk).

All staff must dress in a manner that is appropriate to their role and promote a professional image, not casual wear.

Staff should not wear coats in school.

Staff should wear appropriate clothing to teach/support in PE.

Staff should dress in a manner that is absent from political or other contentious slogans. If clothing has wording or pictures on it, this should not be offensive. Footwear should not pose a health and safety risk.

Where employees are transitioning to live in the gender with which they identify, the school will apply and adapt this code sensitively and flexibly.

The school understand that there may be circumstances that make it difficult for some employees to follow a code (for example, if an employee has a disability or is experiencing certain menopausal symptoms). If this is the case, the school will discuss with the employee how we can support the employee and make reasonable adjustments where possible.

The school has the final say on whether clothing and appearance is appropriate.

### **16. Compliance**

All staff must complete the form in appendix 1 to confirm they have read, understood and agreed to comply with the code of conduct. This form should then be signed and dated on an annual basis and each time the code is amended.

**17. Appendix 1- Confirmation of compliance**

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with the school's code of conduct.

Full Name

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Current Position

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Signed by \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to Diane Cawthorn (SBM).

### 18. Appendix 2 - Relationships with pupils outside of work declaration

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby employees of the school are known to pupils outside of work.

Staff must declare any relationship outside of the school that they may have with pupils.

Employee Name	Pupil Name	Relationship

I can confirm that I am fully aware of the code of conduct relating to contact out of the school with pupils in line with this policy.

If I am tutoring a pupil outside of the School I am aware that the following must be adhered to:

- i do not, at any point, teach the child in question as part of my daily timetable - this is a stipulation of such tutoring
- I emphasise to parents that this is done completely independently of the school
- no monies come through the school at any point, either informally (e.g., via the pupil) or formally
- no private tutoring has/will take place on the school premises.

I confirm that if these circumstances change at any time, I will complete a new form to ensure the school are aware of any relationships.

Full Name

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Current Position

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Signed by \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to Diane Cawthorn (SBM).

### 19. Appendix 3 - Relationships outside of work declaration

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby employees of the school are known to others connected with the school outside of work.

Staff must declare any relationship outside of the school that they may have with others that could create a conflict of interest.

Employee Name	3 <sup>rd</sup> party name	Relationship

I can confirm that I am fully aware of the code of conduct and relationships at work policy, and I am not in breach of these.

I confirm that if these circumstances change at any time, I will complete a new form to ensure the school are aware of any relationships.

Full Name

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Current Position

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Signed by \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to Diane Cawthorn (SBM).