



Watford Grammar School for Girls

Code of Conduct Policy

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Code of Conduct
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1. Objective, Scope and Principles

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school employees are expected to observe. School employees 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/students within the school. As a member of a school community, each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside working hours.

This Code of Conduct applies to all employees of the school. This Code of Conduct does not form part of any employees' contract of employment.

In addition to this Code of Conduct, all employees engaged to work under Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Employment have a statutory obligation to adhere to the 'Teachers' Standards 2012' and in relation to this policy, Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct. In line with statutory safeguarding guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', we have a staff code of conduct, which outlines the acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

2. Overarching Expectations

2.1. All staff are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct.

2.2. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct:

- Staff uphold public trust in the teaching profession and Watford Grammar School for Girls and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:
 - Treating pupils and colleagues with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to their professional position.
 - Having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' wellbeing, in accordance with statutory provisions as appropriate.
 - Showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
 - Not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
 - Ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
 - All staff must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of Watford Grammar School for Girls and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.

2.3. Additionally, teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

3. Setting an Example

3.1. All staff who work in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by students. Staff must therefore for example avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.

3.2. All staff must, therefore, demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our students to do the same.

3.3. All staff must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

3.4. This Code helps all staff to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable, regard should also be given to the disciplinary rules set out in the Schools' Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

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

3.6. Teaching staff are expected to adhere to the Teachers' Standards and pay particular attention to Standard 8.

4. Safeguarding Students

- 4.1. Staff have a duty to safeguard students from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect
- 4.2. The duty to safeguard students includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil/student to the school's Designated Senior Person (DSP) for Child Protection.
- 4.3. In line with Section 11 of Child Protection Policy, staff have a duty to report any allegations or low-level concerns about a member of staff, volunteer or contractor to the Headteacher without delay. For definitions and the procedure, see the Child Protection Policy.
- 4.4. The school's DSL is Sam Moore. The Deputy DSLs are Bal Randhawa, Katie Holes, Jo Shrimpton and Jacqui Paddick.
- 4.5. The school's Child Protection Policy, including Prevent guidelines and Whistleblowing Procedure are available in Staff: Other: Policies, and staff must be familiar with these documents.
- 4.6. Staff should treat children with respect and dignity and must not seriously demean or undermine pupils, their parents or carers, or colleagues.
- 4.7. Staff should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of students, embarrassing or humiliating students, discriminating against or favouring students.
- 4.8. Staff must take reasonable care of pupils/students under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.
- 4.9. Physical conduct with a child should always be appropriate and with the permission of the child.
- 4.10. Staff must declare any offences that may appear on a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) to the Headteacher and all staff are required to make an automatic update every three years since their initial DBS, unless they have subscribed to the update Service.

5. Relationships with students (inc. former student under the age of 18)

- 5.1. Staff must declare any relationships that they may have with students outside of school, including former students who are still under 18 years; this may include mutual membership of social groups, tutoring, or family connections. Staff should not assume that the school are aware of any such connections. A declaration form may be found in [appendix 1](#) of this document. Staff must submit a new declaration if there is a change in relationship.
- 5.2. Students who have a parent that is a member of staff should not be treated differently to any other student. Staff should minimise the potential conflict in interest by ensuring all contact with the parent must follow the 'Communication Guidance for Parents' found on the website.
- 5.3. Relationships with students must be professional at all times, physical relationships with students are not permitted and may lead to a criminal conviction. It is an offence for a person aged 18 or over in a position of trust (e.g. teacher or any other category of employee/worker in a school) to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual. A situation where a person is in a position of trust could arise where the child

is in full-time education and the person looks after children under 18 in the same establishment as the child, even if s/he does not teach the child.

5.4. Contact with students must be via school authorised mechanisms. At no time should personal telephone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with students, nor must you exchange any private texts, information or photos of a personal nature.

5.5. If contacted by a student by an inappropriate route, staff should report the contact to the Headteacher immediately.

5.5.1. If staff members and pupils/students must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff must ensure that: (See Child Protection Policy)

- This takes place in a public place that others can access
- Others can see in to the room
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place.

6. Low Level Concerns, Allegations and Whistleblowing

6.1 Staff must ensure they understand what they should do if they have concerns about another staff member, as referred to in Part 1 and Annex A of KCSIE. Staff should understand that all concerns about adults, including low level concerns, feelings of unease, discomfort and/or nagging doubts, that do not meet the 'harm threshold', are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately. This includes any concerns that an adult may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the Code of Conduct, including behaviour outside of work. This is critical to ensuring an open and transparent culture within WGGS, in order to minimise the risk of abuse. They should follow the Procedure for Low Level Concerns and Allegations found in Appendix 3.

6.2 Whistle blowing is the process of making a disclosure about wrongdoing in the public interest. Staff should refer to the Whistleblowing Policy for any concerns about illegal or unethical conduct within Watford Grammar School for Girls, relevant to the public interest. The law protects whistle blowers from any potential consequences to their employment, for example by providing protection from dismissal, from being overlooked for promotion, from victimisation, harassment or any other unfair treatment.

7. Student Development

Staff must comply with school policies and procedures that support the well-being and development of pupils/students.

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

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

8. Honesty and Integrity

8.1. 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.

- 8.2. All staff must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or 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 for schools.
- 8.3. Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to the Headteacher, with the exception of “one off” token gifts from students or parents. Personal gifts from individual members of staff to students are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted and may lead to disciplinary action. A record will be kept of all gifts received.

9. Keeping within the Law

- 9.1. Staff are expected to operate within the law. Unlawful or criminal behaviour, at work, or outside work, may lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal, being taken against staff.
- 9.2. Staff must ensure they:
- uphold the law at work
 - never commit a crime away from work which could damage public confidence in you or the *school*, or which makes you unsuitable for the work you do. This includes, for example:
 - submitting false or fraudulent claims to the school or public bodies (for example, income support, housing or other benefit claims)
 - breaching copyright on computer software or published documents
 - sexual offences, violence or any other form of abuse which will render you unfit to work with children or vulnerable adults
 - crimes of dishonesty which render you unfit to hold a position of trust.
- 9.3. Staff must write and tell the Headteacher (Chair of Governors if you are the Headteacher) immediately if they are being investigated for, are charged with, convicted of, or cautioned for, any crime whilst they are employed at the school. This includes outside of their working hours. (Staff do not need to inform the Headteacher/Chair of Governors of offences that do not involve the police such as a parking or speeding fine). The Headteacher and/or Governors would then need to consider whether any investigations, charges or convictions damage public confidence

10. Health and Safety

- 10.1. Staff are required to comply with Safety Regulations and to use any safety equipment and protective clothing which is supplied to you by the school, as well as any hygiene and accident reporting requirements.
- 10.2. Staff must not act in a way which might cause risk or damage to any other members of the school community, or visitors. In general, all staff are required to take due care for their own safety and the safety of their colleagues at all times.
- 10.3. Staff may not smoke, or use vape equipment, while on the school site.

11. Conduct outside of Work

- 11.1. Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.
- 11.2. In particular, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable.
- 11.3. Staff may undertake work outside 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. The school must be informed of such work. Tutoring a student from the school for a fee is not permitted on or off the premises, unless employed directly by the school.
- 11.4. The business of the school should be conducted, and be seen to be conducted, in an objective and unbiased manner. There may be occasions when there is scope for conflict between an employee or worker's own interests and those of the school. It is important that such interests are clearly documented. Therefore, to avoid any difficulties arising from a potential clash of interests staff must:
- Notify their Line Manager or the Headteacher of any links, of any sort, with an outside organisation which may carry out work for the school, or supply it with goods or services (or is tendering or preparing to do so);
 - Not participate in any recruitment process to the school's service, where staff are related to, or have a close personal relationship with an applicant;
 - Not participate as part of any recruitment process or other panel (e.g. as a staff governor on a Pay Panel) if they may be in a position to benefit from the outcome;
 - Avoid acting as a professional representative on behalf of a friend, partner or relative in any business or commercial dealings they have with the school;
 - Report any possible conflict of interest to the Line Manager or the Headteacher.

12.E-Safety and Internet Use

- 12.1. Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Regard should be given to the schools' E-Safety and ICT Acceptable Use Policy at all times both inside and outside of work.
- 12.2. Ensure all electronic communication with students, parents, carers, staff and others is compatible with your professional role and in line with school policies.
- 12.3. Contact with students should only be made via the use of school email accounts, Teams or telephone equipment when appropriate.
- 12.4. Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network 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. Staff should not identify themselves as an employee of the school on personal social media accounts, the only exception to this is that staff may identify their employer on a LinkedIn account.
- 12.5. Staff should exercise caution in their use of all social media or any other web based presence that they may have, including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed either directly or

by 'liking' certain pages or posts established by others. This may also include the use of dating websites where staff could encounter students either with their own profile or acting covertly. Do not put online any text, image, sound or video that could upset or offend any member of the whole school community or be incompatible with your professional role.

- 12.6. Use school ICT systems and resources for all school business. This includes your school email address, school mobile phone and school video camera.
- 12.7. Do not disclose any passwords and ensure that personal data (such as data held on MIS software) is kept secure and used appropriately.
- 12.8. You have a duty to report any eSafety incident which may impact on you, your professionalism or the school.
- 12.9. Photographs/stills or video footage of students 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 schools' procedures on school equipment.
- 12.10. Do not browse, download, upload or distribute any material that could be considered offensive, illegal or discriminatory.
- 12.11. Emails should be checked on each contracted working day as a minimum or every other day if one day's timetable is particularly busy.

13. Confidentiality

- 13.1. Where staff have access to confidential information about pupils/students 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/student.
- 13.2. All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a pupil/student is bullied by another pupil/student (or by a member of staff), this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate school procedure. It must not be discussed outside the school, including with the pupil's/student's parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the school except with a senior member of staff with the appropriate authority to deal with the matter.
- 13.3. However, staff have an obligation to share with their manager or the school's Designated Senior Person any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a pupil/student. Staff must **never** promise a pupil/student that they will not act on information that they are told by the pupil/student.

14. Dress and Appearance

- 14.1. All staff must dress in a manner that is appropriate to a professional educational role and image, i.e. business smart which is appropriate to the working environment; jeans, chinos, leggings worn as trousers, polo shirts (which are not part of uniform), flip flops and other such casual wear is not.

- 14.2. Staff should dress in a manner that is not offensive or revealing.
- 14.3. Staff should dress in a manner that is absent from political or contentious slogans.

15. Disciplinary Action

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

16. Compliance

- 16.1. All staff must complete the form in appendix 2 to confirm they have read, understood and agreed to comply with the code of conduct. This form should then be signed and dated.

17. Disciplinary Action

- 17.1. Failure to meet the standards and requirements set out in this Code of Conduct and any other related policies and procedures may result in disciplinary action being taken against you. Misconduct may result in dismissal, including summary dismissal (or immediate termination of engagement for volunteers and others not employed by WGGS) for any act constituting gross misconduct. Acts that may constitute 'misconduct' and 'gross misconduct' are attached as Appendices to this Code at [Appendix 4](#) and [Appendix 5](#) respectively.

Appendix 1: Relationships with students in and outside of work declaration

Relationships with students in school

Members of staff whose child is a pupil / student in the school should act in a way that minimises any conflicts of interest in their school role and their role as a parent. The following protocols should be followed to manage this dual role:

- All contact with staff regarding their child should be through their private email or telephone contact.
- Meetings or conversations regarding their child should be arranged in line with the 'Communication Guidance for Parents' found on the website.
- At no point should staff use their access to school data to find information about their child before it would be published to all parents.

Any incidents in which members of staff have not minimised the conflict in role should be reported to the Headteacher.

Relationships with students outside of work declaration

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby employees of the school are known to students outside of work. Examples include membership of sports clubs and family connections. Tutoring WGS pupils is not permitted.

Staff must declare any relationship outside of school that they may have with students and keep the school updated as appropriate.

Staff must complete their declaration on the Microsoft Form:

[Link here.](#)

Appendix 2: Confirmation of compliance

Confirmation of compliance

All staff are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct.

The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct.

Staff uphold public trust in the teaching profession and Watford Grammar School for Girls and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:

- Treating pupils and colleagues with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to their professional position.
- Having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' wellbeing, in accordance with statutory provisions as appropriate.
- Showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
- Not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and accept the rules and requirements relating to standards of behaviour and actions in respect of all the areas, policies and procedures contained within it.

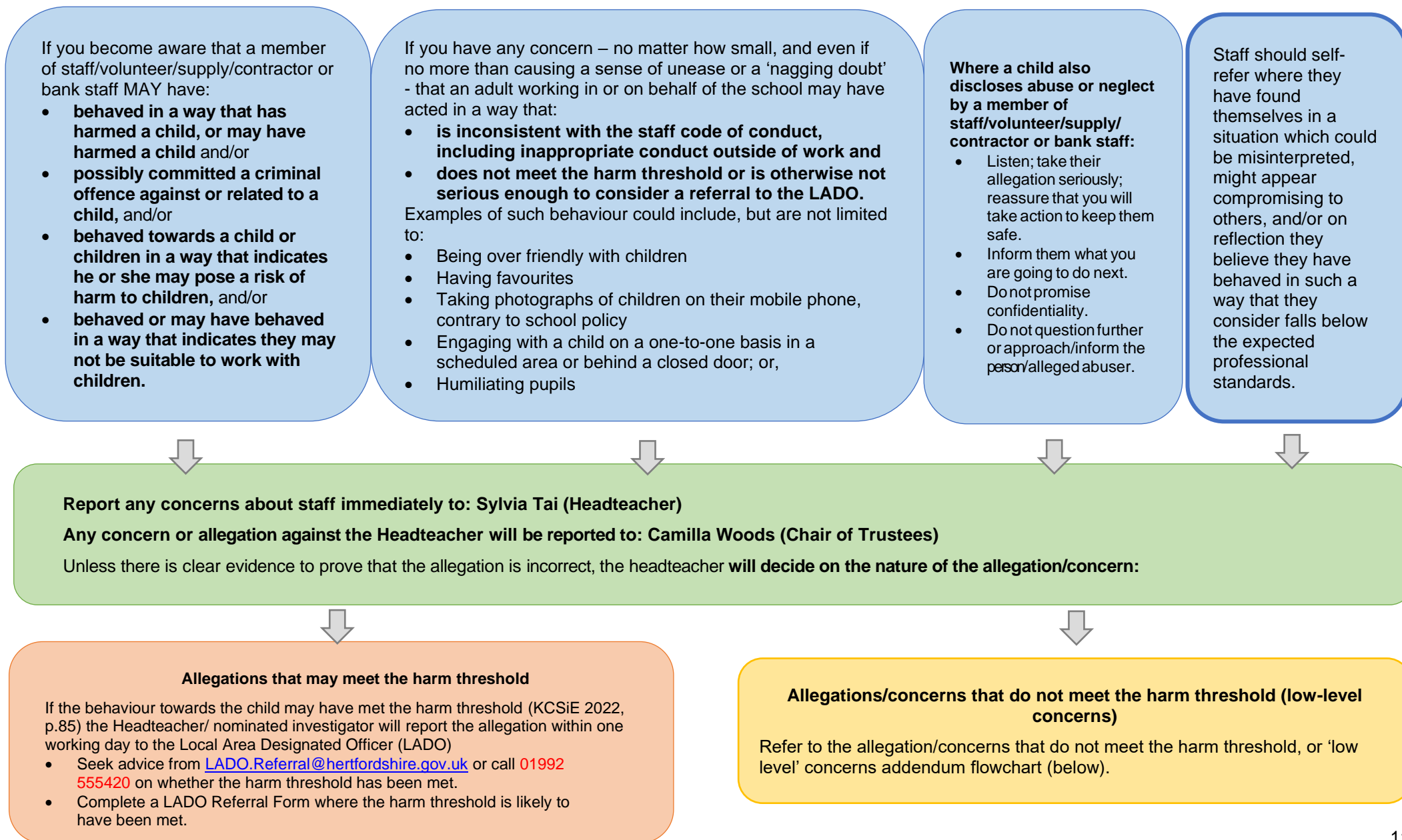
I can confirm that my criminal record information is unchanged and that I have no investigations or charges pending.

I understand that if I knowingly make a false declaration this may lead to disciplinary action being taken against me which could result in my dismissal as an employee, or otherwise the termination of my services as a worker/volunteer.

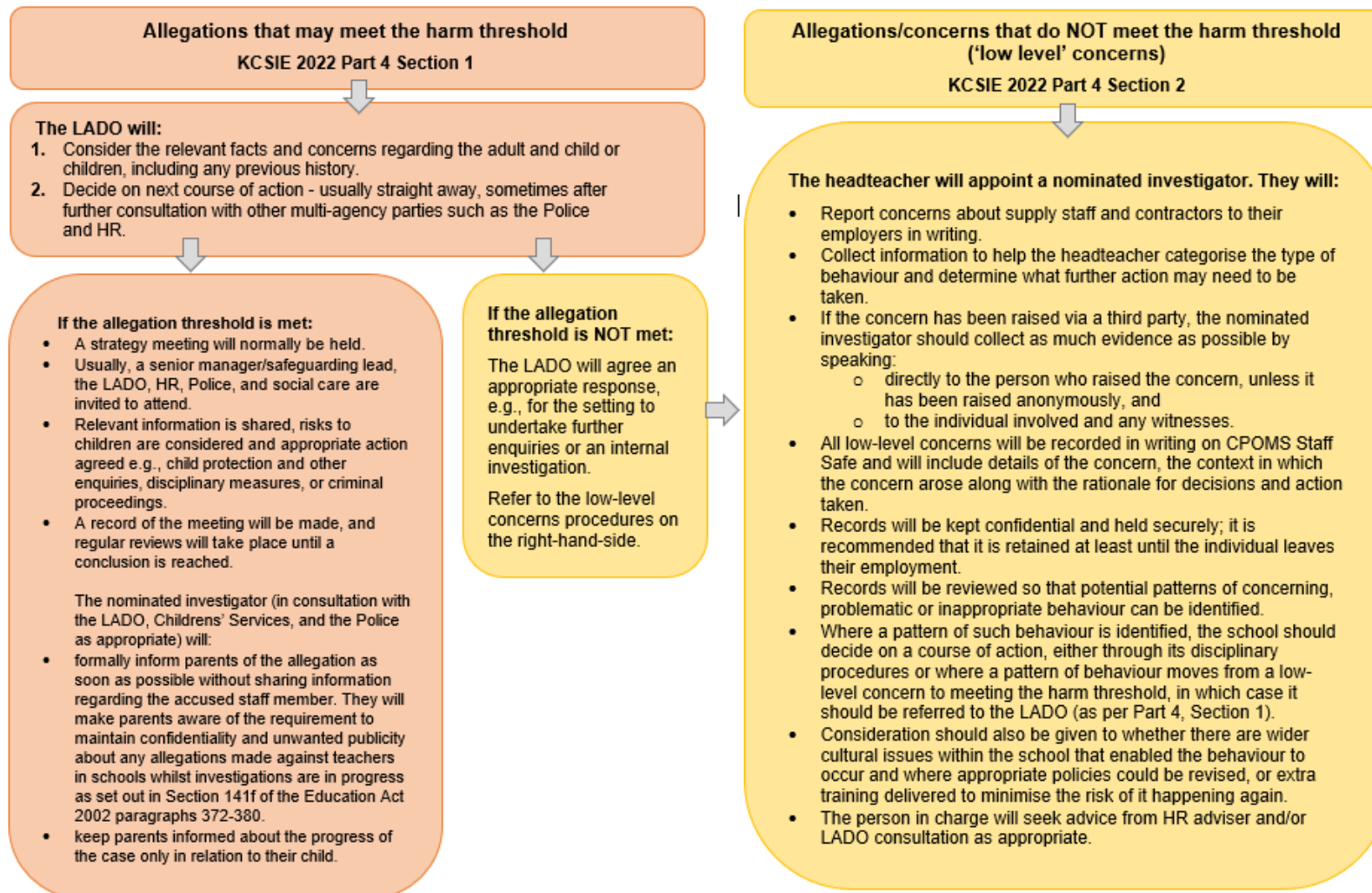
Staff must complete their declaration on the Microsoft Form:

<https://forms.office.com/e/63G5gTmW0V>

Appendix 3: Allegations and Low Level Concerns Procedures



Allegation/concerns guidance for persons in charge



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Appendix 4: Misconduct

Misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- failure to conform to agreed working practices, where these are reasonably and properly required
- refusal or failure to carry out a reasonable instruction
- failure to complete contractual hours
- failure to observe policies and procedures, including, for example:
 - the correct recording of working time and attendance,
 - the reporting of sickness, and
 - requirements relating to time off work or release from duties (e.g. annual leave or domestic emergency)
 - WGGGS Code of Conduct.
- persistent lateness
- unaccountable absences from the workplace or area
- failure to comply with appearance and dress codes or requirements
- failing to take reasonable care of Watford Grammar School for Girls property
- using WGGGS property, equipment, transport or other resources for private purposes without authorisation, or misuse of such property whether inside or outside of the workplace or working hours
- disclosing confidential information without authorisation
- failure to comply with the WGGGS 'No Smoking' policy or requirements
- failure to participate in or follow instructions during fire drills/practices
- any actions or inactions leading to a loss of trust and confidence, or which bring WGGGS into disrepute

Note:

- (1) The above list is neither exclusive nor exhaustive.
- (2) If sufficiently serious, or if repeated, the above may, in some cases, constitute gross misconduct.

Appendix 5: Gross Misconduct

Gross Misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- serious abuse
- corrupt practices
- where an employee is charged with a criminal offence inconsistent with his/her position
- serious breaches of regulations, policies or procedures (e.g. the *WGGG* Child Protection Policy)
- theft, fraud and deliberate falsification of records (e.g. expenses claims)
- physical violence, threats, fighting, assault on another person
- serious bullying, harassment or discrimination
- deliberate damage to *WGGG* or another person's property
- removal or disposal *WGGG* property without permission
- serious insubordination
- interference with safety devices or equipment putting other employees/workers, pupils, governors or any visitors at risk at the workplace
- serious infringement of health and safety regulations, rules or practices
- serious misuse of *WGGG* property or name
- misuse of a disabled person's blue badge
- incapability whilst on duty brought on by alcohol or illegal drugs, the misuse of drugs or the possession of illegal drugs whilst at work
- the supply and trafficking of drugs, money laundering activities, or the use, sale or distribution of illegal substances
- negligence which causes or might cause unacceptable loss, damage or injury
- serious breach of duty of confidence (subject to the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and any amendments)
- deliberate or reckless damage, misuse or interference with or unauthorised use of *WGGG* computers and/or software or unauthorised entry to computer records
- serious misuse of electronic systems
- conviction of a criminal offence that is relevant to the employee's employment
- failure to adhere to Regulations and/or internal procedures or protocols governing public or other examinations, coursework and/or other assessment methods. This includes in relation to planning, preparation, invigilation, marking and storing of examination papers and coursework.
- deliberate falsification of a qualification that is a stated requirement of the employee's employment or results in financial gain to the employee
- undertaking private work in working hours without express prior permission
- bringing *WGGG* into serious disrepute, and/or any actions/inactions leading to a serious breach of trust or confidence.

The above list is neither exclusive nor exhaustive

