

The Federation of Heavers Farm and Selsdon Primary Schools

STAFF PUPIL CONTACT POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. This policy applies to:

- all employees in this school,
- any form of contact outside the usual work context between staff and students or their families. This includes non-direct contact such as telephone, via text message, email or on social networking sites.
- contact outside the usual work context between staff and former- students, including those who have grown to adults.

This policy cannot cover all situations. Staff at times will be required to exercise their professional judgment and should seek guidance and support from the Executive Headteacher, or from the Chair of Governors in the case of the Executive Headteacher, if they are unsure about how to handle a situation. Depending on the circumstances, inappropriate contact and/or a failure to follow advice will be treated seriously and could lead to the initiation of Safeguarding procedures and/or disciplinary action. If the Executive Headteacher is unsure about how to handle a situation within the context of this policy, they should discuss their concerns with the Chair of Governors in the first instance or contact the schools HR team.

1.2. It is the policy of the school that there will be no personal contact other than in *certain exempted circumstances* between staff and current/former students of school age outside the normal working environment. Examples include: sporting activities, organised social circumstances (such as organised sports events, shared interests such as volunteering). Guidance on Safer Working Practice is explicit that staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with students for the purpose of securing friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. The reasons for this are:-

- Such contact can blur the professional boundaries between the staff member and student
- Such contact can compromise confidentiality
- Such contact can place both student and the staff member in a position of vulnerability.

- Students at the school may struggle to differentiate between the role of staff member and friend. They may therefore have expectations which the staff member cannot fulfil.

2. INTENDED CONTACT

2.1 In many cases contact outside the working environment is normal. For example, where staff have their own children at school; their friends are visiting or where private tuition is provided.

2.2 Any proposed work related contact, outside of the normal working environment, **must be agreed in advance by the Executive Headteacher** (for example private tuition, sports clubs). If agreed, a record of this must be kept on the staff members' personal file and the student's file. The record must set out reasons for the proposed contact.

2.3 All such contact must also be monitored by the member of staff's line manager or the Executive Headteacher.

2.4 For situations involving former students - see Section 5.

3. UNPLANNED CONTACT

3.1 Unplanned or unexpected contact with students with whom a member of staff will have no on-going professional contact is inevitable at some point and this should be of a minimal nature (e.g. a brief greeting in the street or attendance at a celebration).

4. CORRESPONDENCE

4.1 Copies of any correspondence received by a member of staff should be drawn to the attention of their line manager or Executive Headteacher and filed with any response in the schools' records system.

4.2 The internal email system and school computer equipment should only be used in accordance with school policy.

4.3 Staff should be cautious when using social networking sites outside of work and avoid publishing, or allowing to be published, any material, including comments or images that could damage their professional reputation and/or bring the school into disrepute. Staff are strongly advised to set their profile as 'private' and not allow access to students, their families and or carers. Staff should also be mindful that requirements in relation to maintaining the confidentiality of students, their families, colleagues and the school itself apply to all forms of communication, including that which takes place on social networking sites.

4.4 Staff should not give their personal details such as home/mobile phone number; home or email address to students unless the need to do so is agreed with the Executive Headteacher. Any ongoing contact from the student outside of the agreed contact should be reported immediately to the Executive Headteacher.

4.5 There will be times, for example during school trips, when it might be appropriate for a member of staff to temporarily share their mobile telephone number with parents. Every effort should be made to ensure that in such circumstances numbers are stored for the limited period of the trip and every effort should be made by the school to provide staff with school mobile telephones.

5. CONTACT WITH FORMER STUDENTS

5.1 In some circumstances former students may make contact with a previous member of staff. This may occur even when they have grown to adults. For example, situations where staff remain in contact with former students who have moved on to secondary school, who attend university or who have been placed in care or adopted.

5.2 In these situations, members of staff must take account of the fact that they are school employees and therefore have a responsibility as a member of staff and that young people may struggle to differentiate between the roles of staff member and friend. Staff members must always discuss any such significant contact with their current line manager/Executive Headteacher and seek advice on how to manage any future contact.

5.3 If a former student requires assistance or some form of help that lies outside of school, they should be signposted to relevant services. However, if the Executive Headteacher agrees that further contact with the staff member is relevant and appropriate, a clear plan of involvement, including outcomes expected and timescales must be drawn up and agreed by the Executive Headteacher.

5.4 In these circumstances, the Executive Headteacher must ensure that adequate support/supervision is available to the staff member and ensure that all such contacts and plans are recorded and that other appropriate agencies are involved.

5.5 Where a close relationship develops between a member of school staff and an ex-student which may raise concerns about the member of staff's suitability to work with children, the Executive Headteacher should contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for advice and guidance.

