



Code of Conduct for School Based Staff and Volunteers

September 2016

KEY FACTS:

- ✦ Policy for all school based employees and volunteers.
- ✦ Clear guidance on expected standards of behaviour.
- ✦ Policy based on mutual respect.
- ✦ Avoid contact with students outside school.
- ✦ No member of staff must ever work behind a locked door with a student.

1 Introduction

- 1.1. Cognita is required to set out a Code of Conduct for all school-based staff and volunteers.
- 1.2. This Code of Conduct applies to:
 - all staff who are employed by Cognita including those in the Early Years;
 - all temporary and agency staff;
 - students on work experience placements;
 - volunteers working in school; and
 - the Proprietor and their representative/s.
- 1.3. This Code of Conduct should be read and understood in the context of:
 - your agreed job description;
 - appropriate professional standards;
 - school and Cognita policies and procedures; and
 - statutory requirements and regulations that apply to schools.
- 1.4. Adults have crucial roles to play in the lives of children. This Code of Conduct helps establish the safest possible learning and working environment which safeguards children and reduce the risk of adults being falsely accused of improper or unprofessional conduct. The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to provide a clear framework of expected and appropriate standards and behaviour to which all staff, volunteers and proprietors are required to adhere and to raise awareness of illegal, unsafe and inappropriate behaviours. This Code is not an exhaustive list of unacceptable or inappropriate behaviours but is designed to provide guidance and raise awareness of issues and situations which may arise. There will therefore be times when staff are required to exercise their professional judgement in situations not covered by this Code.
- 1.5. The Head should provide this Code to all staff and volunteers on induction and should notify staff of the expectations therein. This document is provided so that members of staff are clear about professional conduct and boundaries. School staff are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that maintains public trust in the teaching profession, sets a good example to other staff and to all the pupils within the school. Staff are also expected to follow all reasonable requests from those supervising or managing their work.

- 1.6. This document is intended to help ensure that Cognita schools are safe places for pupils, provide clarity as regards expectations of staff and avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intention. Deviation by a member of staff from this guidance may bring into question the staff member's suitability to work with children and young people.
- 1.7. References made to 'child' and 'children' refer to children and young people under the age of 18 years. However, the principles apply to professional behaviours towards all pupils, including those over the age of 18 years. 'Child' should therefore be read to mean any pupil at the school.
- 1.8. References to adults and staff refer to all those who work in a paid or unpaid capacity in a school. This also includes those who visit the school, e.g. sports coaches, Cognita personnel.

2 Conduct outside Work

- 2.1. Staff must not engage in conduct (including other employment) outside work which could reasonably be expected to damage the reputation and standing of the school, Cognita or other members of the school community. In particular, criminal offences, especially those which involve violence, possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable and incompatible with continued employment with Cognita. Staff must exercise caution when using information technology, including social networking sites, and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, subject to the contractual obligations and consent from the Head which will not be unreasonably withheld.
- 2.2. Staff must inform the Head immediately if they are arrested or subject to a criminal conviction or caution. Where safeguarding concerns arise, the Head will carry out a formal risk assessment to identify and mitigate any potential risks to pupils and staff.

3 Setting an example

- 3.1. All adults who work in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which may be used as a model by other staff and by pupils. All adults must, therefore, demonstrate the highest standards of conduct. All adults must also avoid behaving in a way that risks giving rise to allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct. This Code is intended to support all adults to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable.

4 Making professional judgements

- 4.1. This guidance cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for staff. It does highlight, however, some examples of behaviour that is unlawful, inappropriate or inadvisable. There will be rare occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or take action in the best interests of the pupil which are not dealt with in this guidance. Individuals are expected to make professional

judgements in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the pupils in their charge. Such judgements should always be shared with a senior member of staff, who may inform the child's parent/carer. Adults should always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably.

- 4.2. Although this Code of Conduct gives advice and instruction on how to deal with specific situations, it should not replace professional common sense and good judgement. In all matters relating to pupil/staff relationships, teachers must bear in mind how an action might reasonably be regarded by a third party.
- 4.3. All adults should understand the need to act as good role models for pupils. The school expects all adults to behave in a thoroughly professional manner and to set an example to pupils through high standards of behaviour.

5 Duty of Care

- 5.1. Teachers and other staff are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority; manage risk; use resources; and protect pupils from discrimination and avoidable harm. All staff, whether paid or voluntary, have a duty to keep children safe and to protect them from abuse (sexual, physical and emotional), neglect and safeguarding concerns. Children have a right to be safe and to be treated with respect and dignity. It follows that trusted adults are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils. Failure to do so may be regarded as professional neglect or misconduct.
- 5.2. The safeguarding culture of a school is, in part, exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between adults and pupils and behaviour by adults that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement.

6 Relationships in School

- 6.1. Relationships between staff and pupils should be friendly and mutually respectful. This Code has been formulated in order to help staff to maintain this balance. The purpose of the Code is to:
 - confirm and reinforce the professional responsibilities of staff;
 - clarify the legal position in relation to sensitive aspects of staff/pupil relationships; and
 - set out the expectations of standards to be maintained within the School.
- 6.2. It is hoped that staff will be reassured by this Code. It will, in the vast majority of cases, simply confirm good professional practice. Its purpose is to promote the highest standards of care for pupils and to protect teachers and others from making professional misjudgements and from the potentially devastating consequences of false allegations, without compromising bona-fide school activities.

7 Staff/Pupil/Former Pupil Contact

- 7.1. As a general rule, staff should avoid unnecessary contact with pupils outside school.
- They should not give pupils their personal contact details. Thank you letters to pupils or parents should not contain these personal details. If children locate these by any other means and attempt to contact or correspond, the adult should not respond and must report the matter to the DSL or the Head.
 - They should not make arrangements to meet pupils, individually or in groups, outside school other than on school trips authorised by a senior member of staff.
 - They should avoid contacting pupils at home unless this is strictly necessary; they should keep a record of any such occasion.
 - They should not attend private pupil parties and should be aware of their professional standing and responsibilities when attending parties arranged by parents or others at which pupils are also present.
- 7.2. Some students may be reluctant to end the close working relationship they have enjoyed with members of staff. When a student leaves school the professional duty of care ends. However, it is important to continue to maintain professional standards of behaviour. Although current and former pupils may request meetings with staff for help with university applications, gap year advice or references for future careers, these meetings and any associated correspondence should be conducted at school within office hours and in a professional manner.
- 7.3. If you are in any doubt regarding appropriate contact with a current or former pupil you should seek advice from member of the leadership team
- 7.4. Members of staff who are parents of pupils, friends with parents of pupils or who, for example, are voluntary workers in youth organisations attended by pupils, will of course have contact with pupils outside school. However, they should still use their professional judgement to respect the spirit of this Code.
- 7.5. There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as grooming where the sole purpose is to gain the trust of a child, and manipulate that relationship so sexual abuse can take place. Adults should be aware that consistently conferring special attention and favour upon a child might be construed as being part of a grooming process and as such will give rise to concerns about their behaviour
- 7.6. It is accepted that the effective use of technology brings benefits to learning. Adults must ensure that they establish and adhere to safe and responsible practices. All adults must adhere to the stated Acceptable Use Policy. Communication between pupils and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology and social networking. Adults should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny. Adults should be circumspect in their communications with pupils so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation or their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming. Staff should not request or respond to any personal information from children other than that which may be

necessary in their professional role. They should ensure that their communications are open and transparent and avoid any communication which could be interpreted as 'grooming behaviour'.

- 7.7. Staff should not be 'friends' with current or recent pupils on social media and should avoid other similar links on other social networking sites. Any invitation to become a 'friend' or similar should be politely declined. [If staff have links with former pupils on social networking sites they should ensure that their privacy settings are such as to prevent friends' friends (who may be current pupils) from accessing their profile or other data.]
- 7.8. Email, messaging or use of social media sites between adults and pupils outside agreed protocols may lead to disciplinary and/or criminal investigations.

8 Language

- 8.1. Staff should not swear, blaspheme or use any sort of offensive or inappropriate language in front of pupils. They should not use language which is discriminatory or demeaning in relation to gender (including gender reassignment), religion, race, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability or age. Staff should not make sexual innuendos. Discussion of issues of a sexual nature (other than in the context of the curriculum as specified in Schemes of Learning) should be kept to a minimum and only conducted where necessary from a pastoral perspective. Any concerns arising from such discussions should be reported to the Head or DSL.

9 Physical Contact

- 9.1. There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with children, however, it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role and in relation to the pupil's individual needs and any agreed care plan.
- 9.2. Not all children feel comfortable about certain types of physical contact; this should be recognised and wherever possible, adults should seek the pupil's permission before initiating contact and be sensitive to any signs that they may be uncomfortable or embarrassed. Staff should acknowledge that some pupils are more comfortable with touch than others. Staff should listen, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and, so far as possible, use a level of contact and/or form of communication which is acceptable to the pupil and job role.
- 9.3. Any physical contact should be in response to the child's needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to the age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and teaching context. Adults should use their professional judgement at all times.
- 9.4. Physical contact may be appropriate where a pupil is in distress and needs comforting or if a member of staff has to give first aid. Parents should always be informed when first aid has been administered. Staff should use their own professional judgement when they feel

a pupil needs this kind of support and should be aware of any special circumstances relating to the pupil. Particular care must be taken in instances which involve the same pupil over a period of time.

- 9.5. Physical contact should never be secretive, for the gratification of the adult or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action by them or a colleague could be misinterpreted, or if an action is observed which is possibly abusive, the incident and circumstances should be immediately reported to the DSL or Head.
- 9.6. Extra caution may be required where it is known that a child has suffered from previous abuse or neglect. Staff need to be aware that the child may associate physical contact with such experiences. Staff should also recognise that these pupils may seek out inappropriate physical contact. In such circumstances staff should deter the child sensitively and help them to understand the importance of personal boundaries, reporting concerns to the DSL.
- 9.7. In certain curriculum areas, such as PE, music, drama, staff may need to initiate some physical contact with children, for example, to demonstrate a technique in the use of equipment or an instrument. Physical contact should only take place when it is necessary in relation to a particular activity. The extent of contact should be made clear and undertaken with the permission of the pupil. Contact should be relevant to their age and understanding. Adults should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the pupil.
- 9.8. It is good practice if all parties clearly understand at the outset, what physical contact is necessary and appropriate in undertaking specific activities. Keeping parents and pupils informed of the extent and nature of any physical contact may also prevent misunderstanding and potential allegations.

Reasonable Force (see Policy for Physical Intervention with Pupils)

- 9.9. By law, teaching staff may reasonably intervene to prevent a child from:
 - committing a criminal offence;
 - injuring themselves or others;
 - causing damage to property; and/or
 - engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline.
- 9.10. This applies when a teacher is on school premises and when he or she is in control or in charge of the pupil elsewhere, for example on a field trip or other authorised out of school activity.
- 9.11. Reasonable force is only appropriate where no other form of control is available and where it is necessary to intervene. Any force used must always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result and must be appropriate for the age, sex and understanding of the pupil.
- 9.12. Before intervening physically a teacher must, wherever practicable, tell the pupil to stop and what will happen if he or she does not. The member of staff must continue attempting

to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident and must make it clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary.

- 9.13. Staff must always avoid touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent.
- 9.14. Any member of staff who is involved with or witnesses use of force on a pupil must inform the Head immediately following the incident. This is to help prevent any misunderstanding or misrepresentation of the incident, and it will be helpful in the event of a complaint. The member of staff involved must always provide a written report as soon as possible afterwards.

Action taken in self-defence or in an emergency

- 9.15. The law allows anyone to defend themselves or another person against an attack provided they do not use more force than is necessary.

10 Isolation and One-to-One Working

- 10.1. If a teacher is alone with a pupil he/she should ensure that any such meeting or lesson is as visible as possible and that it takes place in public or semi-public places such as the library or classrooms. As such he/she should ensure that the door to the room has a glass panel which is not obscured or is left open. If this is not possible then another adult must be close by. Furniture should also be positioned to allow easy access into or out of the room.
- 10.2. Staff working in one to one situations with children and young people may be more vulnerable to allegations and pupils may be more vulnerable to harm by those seeking to abuse their trust. All staff should recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings or lessons accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure that the safety and security needs of both staff and pupils are met. Heads should undertake a risk assessment in relation to the nature and implications of one-to-one working and individual risk assessments should be carried out in respect of adults for whom lone working is an integral part of their role. Any arrangements should be reviewed on a regular basis. It may be necessary to amend these to take account of particular pupil needs. This does not mean that working one-to-one is unacceptable; it just requires a proportionate risk assessment.
- 10.3. No member of staff must ever be behind a locked door with a pupil. Staff should never arrange a one to one meeting in a remote or secluded area. Any meetings which take place outside agreed working arrangements should not take place without the agreement of DSL/Head and parents. Staff should always report any incidents to the DSL or Head.

11 Relationships

- 11.1. As a result of their knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, all those working with children in a school are in a position of trust in relation to the pupils on roll.

The relationship between a person working with children is one where the adult has a position of power or influence. It is vital for all adults to understand this power; that the relationship cannot be one between equals and the responsibility they must exercise as a consequence. The potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable pupils means that adults have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.

- 11.2. We best serve the pupils in our care by a pastoral approach that is concerned, collective and thorough, but professionally detached. We do not serve pupils or parents well by encouraging situations in which pupils develop excessive reliance on individual teachers or members of staff.
- 11.3. All teachers and adults in school have a relationship of trust with all pupils by virtue of their position and the work they undertake. This relationship of trust must not be distorted by fear or favour and those in positions of trust must exercise responsibility as a consequence of the power they have over those they teach and/or care for. Where a relationship of trust exists, allowing a relationship to develop in a way that might lead to a sexual relationship is wrong.
- 11.4. It is unacceptable for a member of staff to have any kind of sexual or intimate relationships/contact with a pupil [or [recent] former pupil] of any age or to encourage such relationships/contact. Such relationships/contact are a serious breach of trust and professional standards even where the pupil is over 18. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 makes it a criminal offence for a teacher to involve a pupil under 18 in a sexual activity regardless of whether or not the pupil consents to that activity. The sexual activity referred to does not just involve physical contact including penetrative and nonpenetrative acts. It may also include non-contact activities, such as causing children to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of pornographic material. 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', defines sexual abuse as, "Forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening".

12 Punishments

- 12.1. All staff must follow the agreed School Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Strategy. Corporal punishment, or the threat of corporal punishment, is not acceptable and is unlawful. Staff may not smack, strike or otherwise physically punish a pupil; deprive a pupil of food or drink; enforce food or drink; prevent contact by telephone to parents or any independent listener or helpline; use sarcasm or demeaning comments towards children; withhold any aids or equipment needed by the pupil or impose any punishment which is intended to distress or humiliate a pupil.
- 12.2. Staff should try to diffuse situations before they escalate (e.g. by distraction) and should avoid shouting at children other than as a warning in an emergency situation.

13 Confidentiality and Data Protection

- 13.1. Staff must respect the privacy of pupils, parents and colleagues and must not pass confidential or sensitive information to any third parties (including addresses or telephone numbers), without checking first with the person concerned.
- 13.2. In some circumstances staff may have access to confidential information relating to pupils. These details must be kept confidential at all times and only shared when legally permissible and in the interests of the child.
- 13.3. Information about pupils, parents or colleagues must never be disclosed to telephone enquirers. Staff should ask the enquirer to put the request in writing so that it can be dealt with appropriately.
- 13.4. The storing and processing of personal information about pupils and staff is governed by the Data Protection Act 1998 and when handling such information all staff must comply with the Data Protection Principles which are set out in this Act. For further information please see <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/data-protection-principles/>
- 13.5. If a staff member is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from the Head or the School's DSL. Any actions should be in line with locally agreed information sharing protocols. Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil or his/her family for their own, or others advantage. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate or embarrass the child. Confidential information should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need-to-know basis.
- 13.6. There are circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a pupil, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a responsibility to pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated safeguarding responsibilities. The School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures must always be followed.

14 Comments and Discussions with Pupils

- 14.1. Staff must avoid comments to or about pupils which could be taken to have sexual overtones. It is equally unacceptable for staff to encourage debate and discussion between groups of students, which could be interpreted as having sexual overtones, which are not justified in the context of the teaching programme. Schemes of Learning should highlight particular areas of risk and sensitivity. Specific guidance may be needed to assist newly qualified or other staff who are new to this area of work. This will call for the exercise of careful judgment in responding to questions raised by pupils.
- 14.2. Notwithstanding the advice given above it is recognised that, in order to discharge particular pastoral responsibilities, staff may from time to time need to engage in conversation with pupils which cover sensitive matters. Teachers must use their professional judgement to ensure that they are not drawn into areas inappropriate to their duties or their relationship with the pupils concerned. Staff must also use their discretion

to ensure that, for example, any probing for details cannot be construed as unjustified intrusion.

- 14.3. Staff must respect the rights of others and respect those with different beliefs. Staff must not express extreme views without balance on sensitive topics such as sexual orientation or religious belief. The use of sarcastic, demeaning or insensitive comments towards young people can also be potentially very damaging and must be avoided. In particular staff must not make any racist, sexist, homophobic or otherwise discriminatory comments.

15 Infatuations and Crushes

- 15.1. These unfortunately do develop and can involve pupils and teachers of both sexes on both a heterosexual and homosexual basis. They need to be handled sensitively. Careless and insensitive reactions may cause distress to those involved and have been known to provoke false accusations.
- 15.2. It is in the interests of all parties to avoid adding to the pupil's problems by encouraging the crush or making jokes about the situation. In such situations the advice of the DSL or Head must be sought.
- 15.3. Other members of staff have a part to play in alerting a colleague to the possibility of an infatuation in order that appropriate steps can be taken to minimise hurt and distress and the risk to the teacher concerned.
- 15.4. Whilst the risk of infatuation is not limited to any particular group of members of staff, new teachers must recognise their particular vulnerability to adolescent infatuation. If a member of staff is concerned that he/she is developing a friendship with a pupil which would have the potential to become an unacceptable relationship, he/she must seek guidance from the DSL or Head and must ensure that the relationship does not develop further.

16 Out of School and After School Activities

- 16.1. Staff must take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere of a residential setting or after-school activity. The more relaxed relationships that may promote successful activities can be misinterpreted by young people. It is important to emphasise that the standards of professional conduct and behaviour expected of staff outside and after school are no different from those which apply within school. Staff should be aware of the particular care which should be taken with older, more mature students in these circumstances.

17 Transporting Children

- 17.1. In certain situations e.g. out of school activities, staff or volunteers may agree to transport children. A designated member of staff is appointed to plan and provide oversight of all transport arrangements and respond to any difficulties that may arise. Staff should not

transport pupils in their own vehicles or alone unless this is unavoidable, in which case specific approval from the designated member of staff should be obtained in advance. Where this is not possible, for example in an emergency, the incident should be reported to the Head.

- 17.2. Staff should ensure that their behaviour is safe and that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. They should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and appropriately insured for business purposes and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded. All adults whether staff or volunteers in regulated activity should have satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure and barred list check.

18 Personal Letters, Gifts and Electronic Communication

- 18.1. Staff should usually only write letters or send emails to individual pupils about routine matters of academic study or pastoral care, congratulations on recent achievements or other purely professional issues.
- 18.2. Teachers should not give presents to an individual pupil (as opposed to small gifts to a whole group) outside of the school rewards system. If a teacher believes it to be necessary to write a personal note or give a present to an individual pupil, s/he should discuss the purpose and context with a senior colleague, who should refer to the Head if they require further advice.
- 18.3. Adults need to be aware that the giving of gifts can be misinterpreted by others as a gesture either to bribe or groom a young person.
- 18.4. All staff using e-mail should be aware of the less formal style that can characterise this form of communication and should ensure that e-mails do not convey an inappropriate or overly familiar tone. There are occasions when children, young people or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to adults e.g. on special occasions or as a thank you and this is acceptable although if the member of staff feels that this may indicate a crush or infatuation he/she should refer this matter to the DSL or Head. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.

19 Socialising

- 19.1. Teachers have a professional duty to set a responsible example to pupils. Teachers should not put themselves in a position which may compromise their professional status. Teachers should bear in mind that most students have mobile recording and photographic technology to hand, and the potential this has for comments or actions to be recorded out of context.
- 19.2. On occasions when teachers are socialising in groups, in public locations, it is important that professional standards are maintained and no opportunity is given to pupils to compromise these. If teachers become aware that pupils are socialising in the same venue, staff are encouraged to consider changing their plans. There may be times when this is

difficult, for example at a restaurant, and in these circumstances staff are strongly advised to moderate their behaviour accordingly.

- 19.3. Teachers must maintain the highest professional standards at school social events and they must not continue to socialise with pupils after the official finishing time or at alternative locations. Teachers must not drink alcohol on school premises unless at an approved School function.

20. Use of images

- 19.1 There are no circumstances that will justify adults making, downloading, possessing or distributing indecent images or pseudo-images of children (child abuse images). Accessing these images, whether using the school or personal equipment, on or off the premises, or making, storing or disseminating such material is illegal.
- 19.2 If indecent images of children are discovered at the establishment or on the school's equipment an immediate referral will be made to the (Local Authority) Designated Officer and the police.
- 19.3 Under no circumstances should any adult use school equipment to access pornography. Personal equipment containing pornography or links to it should never be brought into or used in the workplace. This will raise serious concerns about the suitability of the adults to continue working with children and young people

20 Photography, videos and other images

- 20.1 Staff should not be expected or allowed to use their own personal equipment to take images of pupils at or on behalf of the school.
- 20.2 Staff should follow the School's agreed policy on photography and use of images. Whilst images are regularly used for very positive purposes, adults need to be aware of the potential for these to be taken and/or misused or manipulated for pornographic or 'grooming' purposes. Particular regard needs to be given when images are taken of young or vulnerable children who may be unable to question why or how the activities are taking place.
- 20.3 Images must not be used in the public domain unless parental permission has been given.

21 Dress and appearance

- 22.1 Adults should dress and present with appropriate appearance appropriate to their professional role; this may be different to that adopted in their personal life. Staff should ensure they are dressed smartly, decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake. Those who dress or appear in a manner which could be viewed as offensive or inappropriate will render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegation.

22 Curriculum

- 21.1. The use of teaching resources of an explicit or sensitive nature, particularly in relation to language or sexual behaviour, must be given careful consideration to ensure that its selection is not subsequently misinterpreted. There must always, therefore, be a clear link with the scheme of work. A conversation about the use of such resources should take place beforehand with a member of the school's leadership team.
- 21.2. Some areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit or of a political or sensitive nature. Care should be taken to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the learning outcomes identified by the scheme of work or lesson plan. This can be supported by developing ground rules with pupils to ensure sensitive topics can be discussed in a safe environment. The plan should highlight particular areas of risk and plans for how to address should be noted.
- 21.3. The curriculum can sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussion about subject matter of a sexually explicit, political or otherwise sensitive nature. Responding to children's questions requires careful judgement and staff should take guidance from the DSL.
- 21.4. Care should be taken to comply with the School's policy on SMSC which will make explicit reference to British Values. Staff should also comply at all times with the policy for sex and relationships education (SRE).

23 Reporting of Concerns

- 23.1 Any event which causes a member of staff to fear that a pupil has suffered or is at risk of suffering harm or that another adult has failed to maintain professional boundaries or may pose a threat to children or young people **must** be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or in their absence to the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Deputy DSL). If the allegation or concern involves the DSL or Deputy DSL the staff member should report it directly to the Head. If the allegation or concern involves the Head, the staff member should report directly to the Cognita Assistant Director of Education. It is important however to emphasise that any member of staff, parent or student can refer their concerns to the local authority children's social care team directly. Please see the Safeguarding Policy for further details.

24 Whistleblowing

- 24.1 Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear or repercussion. Staff should follow the School's Whistleblowing Policy. Staff should recognise their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant external agencies and that to not do so may result in charges of serious neglect on their part where the welfare of children may be at risk.

Safeguarding: Code of Conduct for School Based Staff and Volunteers

Ownership and consultation	
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Audience	All school based staff and volunteers

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Related documentation	All safeguarding related policies Employee handbook School staff handbook Keeping Children Safe in Education Working Together to Keep Children Safe Independent School Standards (Regulations) – for schools in England Independent School Standards (Regulations) – for schools in Wales British Schools Overseas Standards – for schools in Spain