

Thomas Telford School



Code of Conduct for Staff, Governors and Volunteers

Updated February 2022 by Jamie Norman

The Governing Board will review this policy every two years.

Review date February 2024

**This document sets out a code of conduct for all Thomas Telford School employees,
Governors and Volunteers**

Other relevant Policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Complaints policy
- Disciplinary and Capability Procedure
- Disclosure and Barring Statement
- GDPR Policy
- Equal Opportunity and Diversity policy
- Medical Room Policy
- PHSE/SMCS Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Whistleblowing

Designated Safeguarding Lead

- Jamie Norman

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads

- Phil Nicholls
- Claire Nock
- Heledd Jones

Headmasters Professional Assistant

- Saffron Baxter

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Introduction

'Thomas Telford School Governing Board will foster a culture of the highest professional standards.' This Code of Conduct sets out standards expected and the duty upon staff, Governors and volunteers to abide by them. All staff, Governors and volunteers have a duty to keep students and themselves safe and to protect them from physical and emotional harm. This duty is, in part, exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between adults and students and behaviour by adults which, demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement. Following this Code of Conduct will help to safeguard staff, Governors and volunteers from falsely or mistakenly being suspected or accused of professional misconduct in relation to students.

Staff, Governors and volunteers must feel able to raise issues of concern and everyone must fully recognise the duty to do so, particularly in terms of Thomas Telford School Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures.

This Code of Conduct cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for staff. However, it does highlight behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable in relation to students. There will be occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make a decision or take action in the best interests of the student where no specific guidance had been given. Adults are expected to make responsible and informed judgements about their own behaviour in order to secure the best interests and provide the best welfare for students in their care.

All teaching staff must adhere to the 'Teachers' Standards Guidance' which can be accessed at www.gov.uk.

The Code of Conduct forms part of Thomas Telford School disciplinary rules for staff. A serious breach of the Code will be regarded as gross misconduct. A less serious breach may result in a disciplinary warning.

Where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff, the Governing Board will follow the guidance set out in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2021.

The policy is about managing allegations that might indicate that a person is unsuitable to continue work with students in their present position, or in any capacity. It will be used where it is alleged that a member of staff or volunteer or Governor has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- Behaviour towards a child or children in a way that indicates the member of staff is unsuitable to work with children.

Principles of Professional Practice.

All staff, Governors and volunteers, as appropriate to the role/job description, must;

- Place the wellbeing and learning of students at the centre of their professional practice.
- Have high expectations for all students, be committed to addressing underachievement and work to help students progress regardless of their background and personal circumstances.
- Treat students fairly and with respect, take their knowledge, views, opinions and feelings seriously and value diversity and individuality.
- Model the characteristics they are trying to inspire in students, spirit for learning, resilience, enquiry, honesty, tolerance, social responsibility, patience and genuine concern for others.
- Respond sensitively to situations and recognise the key role parents/carers play in the student's education.
- Seek to work in partnership with parents/carers, respecting views, promoting understanding and cooperation to support students learning and well-being.
- Reflect and review own practice.
- Staff should work and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way.
- Staff should apply the same professional standards to all students.
- Staff should understand Thomas Telford School Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy, managing allegations against staff, whistleblowing and Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) procedures.
- Communicating with parents, families and students plays a key role in developing an effective learning platform for all students in the School. The means of communication can come in a variety of ways but must remain professional at all times. Staff are encouraged to communicate via telephone where possible, but preferably face to face, especially when dealing with more challenging issues. When using email as a form of communication staff must continue to use formal ways of addressing all involved and refrain from becoming "over-familiar" with the families. It is expected that staff will address parents in a formal manner, establishing professional boundaries and creating a dialogue that relates to the educational values of the School. Staff are encouraged not to exchange Christian names over formal school matters. These relationships built between staff and families are invaluable in creating a caring and productive environment for all involved. These must remain formal and professional at all times. Any staff concerned about this element must discuss directly with their line manager and seek advice.

Duty of Care

All adults who work with and on behalf of children are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority; manage risk; use resources; and safeguard children and young people.

- Whether working in a paid or voluntary capacity, these adults have a duty to keep children and young people safe and to protect them from sexual, physical and emotional harm. Children and young people have a right 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 children and young people. Failure to do so may be regarded as neglect.
- The duty of care is in part, exercised through the development of respectful and caring relationships between adults and children and young people. It is also exercised through the behaviour of the adult, which at all times should demonstrate integrity, maturity and good judgement.

- High standards of behaviour are expected from adults who work with children and young people. When individuals accept such work, they need to understand and acknowledge the responsibilities and trust inherent in that role.

Confidentiality

Members of staff and Governors may have access to confidential information about children and young people in order to undertake their responsibilities. In some circumstances they may have access to or be given highly sensitive or private information. These details must be kept confidential at all times and only shared when it is in the interests of the child to do so. Such information must not be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the child or young person concerned.

- If an adult who works with children is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from a senior member of staff or nominated child protection lead. Any actions should be in line with locally agreed information sharing protocols.
- The storing and processing of personal information about children and young people is governed by the Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR). Thomas Telford School will provide clear advice to adults about their responsibilities under this legislation.
- Confidential information about students must be held securely. Confidential information about students must not be held off the School site other than on security protected Thomas Telford School equipment. If a member of staff is in any doubt about storing information they must seek guidance from SMT.

Whilst adults need to be aware of the need to listen to and support children and young people, they must also understand the importance of not promising to keep secrets. Neither should they request this of a child young person under any circumstances.

Additionally, concerns and allegations about adults should be treated as confidential and passed to a senior manager without delay.

See Thomas Telford School GDPR Policy/20 principles of GDPR/Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Making a Professional Judgement

Adults should always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate and safe and applied equitably.

Adults should:

- Discuss the circumstances that informed their action, or their proposed action, with a senior manager. Notes of these discussions should be taken and shared appropriately.
- Report any actions which could be misinterpreted to their senior manager.
- Always discuss any misunderstanding, accidents or threats with a senior manager.

Honesty and Integrity

All employees must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work at Thomas Telford School.

- Staff must take care they do not accept a gift that might be construed by others as a bribe or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.
- Personal gifts must not be given to students. Any reward should be recorded by Thomas Telford School in the appropriate manner.
- The integrity of Thomas Telford School employees must be beyond suspicion. If a member of Staff has a private interest (dealing in an official capacity) however slight, it is the employees duty to disclose this to their line manager.

Propriety, Behaviour Reputation, Appearance and Electronic Communication.

Staff and Governors working with children and young people have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children and young people. It is therefore expected that they will adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of the public in general and all with whom they work. There may be times where an individual's actions in their personal life come under scrutiny from the community, the media or public authorities, including with regard to their own children, or children or adults in the community. Staff should be aware that their behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, could compromise their position within the work setting in relation to the protection of children, loss of trust and confidence, or bring Thomas Telford School into disrepute.

- Staff must ensure they are dressed in a safe and appropriate manner for the tasks they undertake. Those who dress or appear in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations of misconduct. A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However adults should dress in ways which are appropriate to their role and this may need to be different to how they dress when not at work.
- Thomas Telford School is a working environment and staff should adhere to the dress code for Sixth Form students to set an appropriate example.
- Under no circumstances should adults at Thomas Telford School access inappropriate images on school devices. Personal property of a sexually explicit nature **must not** be stored on Thomas Telford electronic devices. Breach of this will be treated as gross misconduct and may be a criminal offence. It may also result in being barred from working with children and young people.

See Thomas Telford School E-Safety/ Behaviour/ Child protection Policy.

Communication between Staff

Staff are encouraged to communicate via the School email system where possible. There will be times where this is not deemed appropriate due to the response time needed in certain situations. In these instances, staff are encouraged to use the Microsoft Teams chat platform. This is due to the platform being fully controlled and monitored by the School. Certain social media platforms are not GDPR compliant and therefore staff are advised to avoid WhatsApp groups for school conversations, using a Microsoft Teams group chat is an effective alternative. These will be managed and monitored by line managers.

Social Contact and Social Networking

Staff should not seek to establish social contact with students for the purpose of securing a friendship. If a student's seeks to establish social contact, even if coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise professional judgement at all times. Social contact through social media or phone **must not** be encouraged as this may be misconstrued and put the member of staff in an extremely vulnerable position.

Staff should ensure that they establish safe and responsible online behaviours, working to local and national guidelines and school acceptable use policies which detail how new and emerging technologies may be used. Communication with children both in the 'real' world and through web based and telecommunication interactions should take place within explicit professional boundaries. This includes the use of computers, tablets, phones, texts, e-mails, instant messages, social media such as Facebook and Twitter, chat-rooms, forums, blogs, websites, gaming sites, digital cameras, videos, web-cams and other hand-held devices. (Given the ever-changing world of technology it should be noted that this list gives examples only and is not exhaustive).

Staff must not give their personal details to students or parents unless this is agreed with a senior member of staff.

Social networking sites and blogging are part of modern day life.

- Staff **must not** post material which damages the reputation of Thomas Telford School of which causes concern about their suitability to work with children and young people.
- Those who post material which could be considered inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations of misconduct.
- Staff should refrain from posting information or material that relates directly to the school on their personal social media platforms or other forms of communication. School information can be advertised using the regulated school accounts. This includes posting information that relates to the forming of an opinion on the School or demonstrating attendance to school events.
- Social media presence on a personal level should not reflect employment by the School or the activities staff are involved in.

See Thomas Telford School E-Safety Policy/Child Protection Policy/Acceptable Use Policy.

Conduct on School Trips/Excursions

School trips are an essential part of the educational package that the School provides. The giving of their time by staff is greatly appreciated, but it is important that staff conduct on these trips complies with the expectations set out by this document.

Under no circumstances should alcohol be consumed by staff who are responsible for children and young adults on school trips and excursions organised by the School. With all trips, understandably there may be risks and staff must not be under the influence of alcohol, which may impair their judgement when having to deal with difficult or challenging situations. Students who are 18 years of age or older are not allowed to consume alcohol on these educational visits.

Infatuations

Staff may recognise that a student may be strongly attracted to a member of staff and develop an infatuation.

- The member of staff who becomes aware that a student may be infatuated must report it to a senior member of staff without delay. This situation must be documented and reported to the appropriate members of SMT.
- The situation will be taken seriously and appropriate action will be taken.
- Staff must be careful to ensure that no encouragement of any kind is given to the student. Careless and insensitive actions may provoke false accusations.

Examples of situations which must be reported are given below:

- Where a member of staff is concerned that he/she may be developing a relationship with a student which could have the potential to represent an abuse of trust.
- Where a member of staff is concerned that a student is becoming attracted to them or that there is a developing attachment or dependency.
- Where staff are concerned that actions or words have been misunderstood or misconstrued by a student such that abuse of trust might be wrongly suspected by others.
- Where staff are concerned about the apparent development of a relationship by another member of staff, or receives information about such a relationship.

One to One Situations, Meeting with and Transporting Students.

Staff working in one to one situations with students are more vulnerable to allegations. Staff must recognise this possibility and plan accordingly.

- Every attempt should be made to ensure that the safety of both staff and students are met.
- Managers should undertake a risk assessment in relation to the specific nature and implications of the one-to-one work.
- Staff must avoid secluded areas of the School ensuring that the door of the room is left open and/or visual/auditory contact with others maintained.
- Offsite meetings with students when Thomas Telford School is not in session is not permitted, unless approval has been obtained from the Headmaster or a member of SMT.
- Teachers of individual lessons, i.e. music and individual needs (including SEND) should endeavour to ensure that their teaching takes place where visual contact with others can be maintained.
- Permission for home visits both on and off site must be sought from the Headmaster or a member of SMT.
- Transport arrangements must be made in advance by a designated member of staff. An appropriate licence/permit and insurance should be held for the vehicle.
- Unless it is an emergency situation such as urgent transport to hospital, two members of staff (where possible this should be one male and one female) must accompany the student to their destination and be handed to an appropriate adult.

See Thomas Telford School Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy.

Extremism

All employees must encourage students to respect the:

- Fundamental British Values of Democracy.
- Rule of Law.
- Individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those of gender identity and gender choice.

See Thomas Telford School Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy/ PSHE policies.

Curriculum

Areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit or of a sensitive nature.

- Care should be taken that resource material cannot be misinterpreted and should be clearly related to learning.
- Responding to students questions can require careful judgement and staff must take guidance from a senior member of staff.

See Thomas Telford School Relationship and Sexual Education Policy.

Media, Photography and Video

A number of activities involve Thomas Telford School recording images. This may be part of the curriculum, extra school activities, for publicity or to celebrate achievement.

- Parental consent is required to be obtained by the School. A list of parents who have informed the School they do not wish their child to participate in photographs/videos is maintained by Thomas Telford School and held in the Data Office.
- Staff should remain sensitive to any student who appears uncomfortable. It is important to take into account the wishes of the students, remembering that some students do not wish to have their photograph taken or appear on video.
- Parents who do not wish their child to be photographed or appear in videos, Thomas Telford School will comply with their request.
- Some children, such as CIC (Children in Care) will not be used in video or photographs unless authorisation has been given by the Local Authority.
- Avoid naming the student, if photograph is used. If a student is named, do not use the photograph.
- Ensure a member of SMT is aware that photography/imagery is being used. Images must be securely stored and authorised by a member of SMT.
- Be clear about the purpose/activity.
- All images must be available for scrutiny in order for acceptability.
- DO NOT take images in one to one situations.
- DO NOT take display/distribute images of students unless there is consent to do so.

Use of Personal Equipment

There may be times where staff may deem it appropriate to use their personal devices to capture information for school use. For example, when staff are on a fixture and they take a photo of the team.

For fixtures, trips and visits digital cameras are available from the Media Team.

In these instances staff must:

- Inform the students/staff/parents involved what they intend to do with the information.

- Only store the information on the device and not allow this to be moved to a cloud based storage system.
- As soon as the information has been copied to school systems this must be deleted on the personal device.

Departments are actively encouraged to promote the School via the various social media platforms. In order for this to be effectively managed all information must go through the Web Development Team for approval and posting. This will then posted at the earliest convenience. Staff must present the exact information in order for the Web Development Team to be able to post the correct information.

See Thomas Telford School GDPR Policy/20 principles of GDPR/ Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Sharing Concerns and Recording Incidents.

All staff, Governors and Volunteers must be vigilant and share concerns and report incidents.

- In order to safeguard and protect students and colleagues, where staff have any concerns about someone who works with children/young people they should immediately report this to the Headmaster or a member of SMT.

See Thomas Telford School Whistle blowing/Child Protection Policy.

Physical Intervention and Personal Privacy

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 student's individual needs and any agreed care plan. Staff should remain self-aware at all times that their actions could not be a subject to misinterpretations. Not all children feel comfortable about certain types of physical contact; this should be recognised and, wherever possible, adults should seek the student's permission before initiating contact and be sensitive to any signs that they may be uncomfortable or embarrassed. Staff should acknowledge that some students are more comfortable with touch than others and/or may be more comfortable with touch from some adults than others. Staff should listen, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and, so far as is possible, use a level of contact and/or form of communication which is acceptable to the student. It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one student, in one set of circumstances, may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. Any physical contact should be in response to the child's needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Adults should therefore, use their professional judgement at all times.

- When a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide care/reassurance they must seek further advice from a member of Thomas Telford School SMT.
- If a student has a specific care plan to support their physical and intimate needs, contact should be in line with the students plan and medical policy.
- In certain subjects such as Physical Education and Music staff, will on occasion, have to initiate contact with students to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment / instrument or assist them with an exercise. This must be done with the students' agreement. This should take place in an open environment with minimum contact to complete the exercise.
- Students are entitled to privacy when changing. However there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard students, Health and Safety and appropriate behaviour. This supervision should be appropriate to the needs and sensitive to the potential embarrassment.

See Thomas Telford School Medical/ Behaviour/Anti bullying/Safeguarding policies.

First Aid

Thomas Telford School has a School Nurse and trained first aiders. The School Nurse and appointed first aiders cover the Medical Room. Staff must have had the appropriate training before administering first aid or medication.

See Thomas Telford School Medical Policy.

Leaving Employment

Employees of Thomas Telford School should continue to observe their duties of confidentiality after they have left the employment of the School.

Declaration

Please now give your electronic signature using the SSS documents form. If you are unable to do this please print and complete the form and hand to:
Headmasters PA – Miss Saffron Baxter

I confirm that I have read and agree to adhere to the guidance set out in the Thomas Telford School Code of Conduct 2022.

Name (please print):

Designation:

Signature:

Date: