

Daffodil Grammar School for Girls

Staff Code of Conduct

School address: 163 Commercial Road, London, E1 2DA

Proprietor: ASM Anisuzzaman

Headteacher: Mr Stephen Montford

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Eman Ahamed

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mr Stephen Montford

1. Status, scope and purpose of this Code

This Staff Code of Conduct sets out the standards of professional behaviour, judgment and integrity expected of every adult working at or on behalf of Daffodil Grammar School for Girls. It applies to all employees, whether teaching or non-teaching, full-time or part-time, permanent or temporary, and it also applies, so far as relevant, to agency staff, volunteers, visiting professionals, contractors and any other adult whose work brings them into contact with pupils or into a position of trust within the school. It is adopted as a formal governance document of the school and forms part of the school's safeguarding framework, staff management framework and professional standards framework. KCSIE 2025 states that every school should have a staff behaviour policy, sometimes called a code of conduct, and that it should include, among other things, low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistleblowing. The current Independent School Standards guidance also makes clear that proprietors must ensure policies are implemented effectively in practice, not merely drafted.

The purpose of this Code is not simply to prohibit obvious misconduct. It is to create a clear and shared understanding of the standard of conduct expected from adults working with children, to protect pupils from harm, to protect staff from avoidable misunderstanding or allegation, to support a culture of openness and accountability, and to ensure that the conduct of adults in school reflects the seriousness of the school's safeguarding obligations. The school recognises that children are entitled to learn in an environment where adults are safe, trustworthy, consistent, respectful and professionally bounded. This Code therefore addresses not only extreme or disciplinary matters, but also the everyday professional expectations that make a school safe and well led. KCSIE 2025 emphasises that staff behaviour policies should help create and embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which expected behaviour is lived and reinforced.

This Code should be read together with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Low-Level Concerns Policy or procedure, Whistleblowing Policy, Behaviour Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Safer Recruitment Policy, IT and Acceptable Use Policy, Data Protection arrangements, Staff Disciplinary procedures and the school's arrangements for allegations against staff. KCSIE 2025 expressly links the staff code of conduct with those wider safeguarding systems and expects them to work together as part of a coherent whole-school safeguarding culture.

2. Legal, regulatory and professional framework

This Code is written having regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the current Independent School Standards guidance issued in April 2026, the Equality Act 2010, data protection law, and the wider legal duties arising from the position of trust occupied by adults working with children. KCSIE 2025 continues to apply to proprietors, headteachers and staff in schools and colleges, and the Independent School Standards guidance confirms that proprietors should ensure staff understand and discharge their roles and responsibilities under Part 1 of KCSIE.

The school also recognises the relevance of the concept of safer working practice. Although different local models exist, the underlying principle is constant: staff must act in a way that protects pupils and protects themselves by maintaining proper professional boundaries, avoiding behaviour that could be misinterpreted, and reporting concerns early rather than allowing uncertainty to continue. Current safeguarding materials used across schools continue to reflect the same core expectation, namely that staff should not establish or seek to establish inappropriate social contact with pupils and should understand how to raise concerns about another adult's conduct.

3. General principles of professional conduct

All staff must act with honesty, integrity, maturity, self-discipline and respect for the rights, dignity and welfare of pupils. Staff must understand that they are always in a position of trust in relation to pupils and that their conduct carries professional weight. Children and young people are not the staff member's peers, equals in judgment, or appropriate objects of emotional dependence, personal disclosure or private friendship. A staff member's responsibility is to teach, guide, support, supervise and protect, not to seek emotional validation, social closeness or special status from pupils. KCSIE 2025 continues to place safeguarding responsibilities on all adults working in schools and requires proprietors to ensure staff understand their role in protecting children.

Professional conduct at this school requires more than avoiding criminal or disciplinary misconduct. It requires the consistent exercise of sound judgment in ordinary school life. A staff member may fall below the required standard long before any conduct reaches the threshold of an allegation of abuse. Conduct that is over-familiar, boundary-blurring, secretive, unwise, emotionally dependent, or dismissive of school procedures can be harmful even where there was no malicious intent. The school therefore expects staff to think carefully about not only what they do, but how it may reasonably be perceived by pupils, parents, colleagues and external agencies. KCSIE 2025's low-level concerns framework is built precisely on the principle that early sharing and early reflection are essential before patterns of unsafe conduct develop.

Staff must conduct themselves in a manner that upholds public confidence in the school and in adults working with children. This obligation applies during working hours, on school premises, during trips and visits, in contact with families, online, and outside work where conduct may affect suitability to work with children or confidence in the school's safeguarding culture. KCSIE 2025 specifically includes behaviour outside school among the matters relevant to allegations and suitability to work with children.

4. Safeguarding as a personal responsibility

Every member of staff is personally responsible for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils. Safeguarding is not the sole responsibility of the DSL, the headteacher or senior leaders. Staff must understand that they are required to identify concerns, respond appropriately, report without delay, and contribute to a safe, vigilant and open culture. KCSIE 2025 continues to state that it is essential that everybody working in a school understands their safeguarding responsibilities and that staff who work directly with children should read at least Part One of the guidance.

Staff must know the identity of the DSL and Deputy DSL, understand the school's child protection procedures, understand how to report concerns about a child, understand how to report concerns about the conduct of another adult, and understand the separate but connected functions of low-level concerns reporting, allegations management and whistleblowing. Staff must also understand that delay, minimisation, amateur investigation or private handling of serious matters is unacceptable. The current KCSIE framework makes clear that staff codes of conduct and safeguarding systems should be explained as part of induction and understood in practice.

5. Professional boundaries with pupils

Staff must maintain clear, appropriate and defensible professional boundaries with pupils at all times. The central rule is simple: the adult must always remain the adult. No member of staff may behave in a manner that blurs the line between professional authority and personal intimacy. This includes, but is not limited to, cultivating exclusive relationships with pupils, using pet names of a personal or romantic nature, confiding in pupils about adult problems, seeking emotional support from pupils, offering special status in exchange for loyalty, or creating secretive channels of communication or contact. Safer working practice materials used in schools continue to warn against establishing or seeking to establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing friendship or emotional closeness.

Staff must not behave in a flirtatious, suggestive, provocative, sexually ambiguous or emotionally dependent way towards any pupil. Staff must not initiate or encourage private or personal relationships with pupils and must not permit boundaries to shift through gradual and seemingly minor exceptions. The school recognises that safeguarding risk often arises not from a single dramatic event but from a progressive erosion of boundaries. For that reason, staff are expected to remain alert not only to what is plainly forbidden, but also to conduct that may appear small in isolation yet becomes risky in pattern. KCSIE 2025's low-level concerns approach is specifically designed to identify such patterns early.

6. Conduct towards pupils

Staff must treat pupils with respect, dignity, consistency and fairness. Staff must never humiliate, degrade, intimidate, mock, scapegoat or single out a pupil in a manner that is malicious, abusive or professionally indefensible. Staff must not use insulting language, personal ridicule, discriminatory remarks or sustained sarcasm directed at a pupil. Firmness, correction and clear discipline are entirely compatible with professional respect; cruelty, spite, contempt and emotional volatility are not.

Staff must not use their authority to frighten or manipulate pupils. They must not threaten pupils with consequences they are not authorised to impose, invent sanctions, or exploit a pupil's vulnerability, immigration background, family circumstances, disability, religion or emotional dependence. Staff must not ignore bullying, discriminatory behaviour or child-on-child abuse. The current safeguarding framework and independent school standards both require effective behaviour management and the prevention of bullying, including prejudice-based bullying.

7. Physical contact and physical intervention

The school recognises that some physical contact between staff and pupils may be proper, lawful and professionally necessary. This may include contact required for safety, first aid, comfort in

a genuinely distressing situation, demonstration in a curriculum context where appropriate, or restraint that is lawful and necessary to prevent harm. However, any physical contact must be justifiable, proportionate, age-appropriate, and consistent with both the pupil's needs and the school's policies.

Staff must avoid unnecessary physical contact, casual over-familiar contact, contact that could be misconstrued, or contact that is secretive, frequent, intrusive or not readily justifiable. Staff must remain especially cautious where a pupil is distressed, vulnerable, physically dependent, or where there may be cultural, religious, developmental or SEND-related sensitivities. If a situation requires physical contact, the staff member must be satisfied that another adult could understand why it was necessary. Where there is any doubt, the matter should be discussed afterwards with a senior leader and, where appropriate, recorded. The new DfE restrictive interventions guidance that took effect in 2026 reinforces that physical intervention must be lawful, necessary, proportionate and recorded where significant.

8. One-to-one situations and visibility

Staff should avoid unnecessarily isolated one-to-one situations with pupils. One-to-one work is often educationally legitimate and sometimes necessary, but it must be conducted in a manner that is open, transparent and professionally defensible. As far as reasonably possible, staff should use rooms with visibility panels, open doors where appropriate, proximate adults, clear scheduling, and arrangements known to line managers or senior leaders. Staff must not create private, hidden or unrecorded contact arrangements with pupils.

Where a one-to-one situation is unavoidable, particularly if it is emotionally sensitive, prolonged or outside ordinary routine, staff must take extra care to ensure visibility, appropriateness and accountability. Staff must not take a pupil alone in a vehicle unless expressly authorised and necessary, and then only in accordance with school procedures. The school's position is that professional transparency is protective for both pupil and staff member. KCSIE 2025's emphasis on staff behaviour policies and low-level concerns supports exactly this culture of openness and defensible practice.

9. Communication with pupils

All communication with pupils must be appropriate, professional, transparent and, wherever reasonably possible, conducted through approved school channels. Staff must not engage in secretive, unnecessary or overly personal communication with pupils. Staff must not communicate with pupils through personal social media accounts, private messaging applications, disappearing-message platforms, personal email accounts or private telephone numbers except

where expressly authorised by the school for a defined professional purpose and with proper safeguards in place.

The tone of communication matters as much as the channel. Even where a communication method is technically approved, staff must not use it for banter of an over-familiar nature, emotional dependence, personal disclosure, flirtation, rebuke that should be managed through formal channels, or messages that would look unprofessional if read by parents or senior leaders. Staff should always assume that written communications may later be reviewed. Current safeguarding practice consistently stresses the importance of safer working practice in communication with pupils and the avoidance of private social contact.

10. Social media and online conduct

Staff must use social media responsibly and in a way that does not compromise professional boundaries, the welfare of pupils, the reputation of the school, or the staff member's own suitability to work with children. Staff must not accept pupils as contacts or followers on personal social media accounts, must not seek to follow pupils' personal accounts, and must not use online platforms to develop or sustain informal relationships with pupils.

Staff must also understand that online conduct outside work may still be relevant to the school where it calls into question professional judgment, safeguarding suitability, respect for others, unlawful conduct, discriminatory attitudes or conduct inconsistent with the values of the school. KCSIE 2025 continues to make clear that behaviour outside school can be relevant to suitability to work with children and to allegations management.

The school does not seek to intrude unreasonably into private life. It does, however, require staff to recognise that privacy does not remove professional accountability where conduct becomes relevant to safeguarding, public trust or suitability.

11. Confidentiality, information handling and data protection

Staff must treat personal information about pupils, families, staff and school business with appropriate confidentiality. Information must only be shared where there is a proper professional reason to do so and, where relevant, in accordance with safeguarding requirements and data protection principles. Staff must not discuss sensitive matters in public areas, with unauthorised persons, on social media, or in any manner that is careless or gossipy.

At the same time, staff must understand that confidentiality does not override safeguarding. A member of staff must never promise a pupil that information will be kept secret if the information raises concerns about safety, abuse, neglect or harm. Safeguarding information must be shared with the DSL or other appropriate safeguarding lead in accordance with school procedures. KCSIE 2025 continues to make this principle explicit.

12. Low-level concerns

The school operates a low-level concerns framework as part of its commitment to a culture of openness, trust and transparency. A low-level concern is a concern, no matter how small, that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including conduct outside work, but which does not meet the harm threshold for referral to the LADO. KCSIE 2025 and the 2026 draft revisions continue to require schools to include low-level concerns within their staff behaviour and safeguarding arrangements and to make clear the purpose of such a policy.

The purpose of this framework is not to create fear or trivial reporting. Its purpose is to identify patterns early, support safe professional culture, and prevent the gradual normalisation of unsafe boundaries. Staff are expected to report concerns about themselves where appropriate, and about others where conduct gives rise to professional unease or appears inconsistent with this Code. Low-level concerns about staff should ordinarily be reported to the headteacher. Low-level concerns about the headteacher should be reported to the proprietor. The school will record, review and respond to such concerns in accordance with its safeguarding procedures.

13. Allegations against staff and the harm threshold

Where a concern indicates that a member of staff may have harmed a child, may have committed a criminal offence related to a child, may pose a risk of harm to children, or may be unsuitable to work with children, the matter is not a low-level concern. It is an allegation that may meet the harm threshold and must be managed under the school's allegations procedures and in consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer where required. KCSIE 2025 continues to require clear procedures for managing allegations against staff and distinguishes such allegations from low-level concerns.

Staff must therefore understand that this Code is not merely aspirational. Breaches may give rise to different levels of response, ranging from advice and management action, to low-level

concern recording, to disciplinary action, to external referral where the safeguarding threshold is met.

14. Whistleblowing and reporting concerns about colleagues

Staff must raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice, including concerns about the conduct of colleagues, weaknesses in safeguarding culture, failure to follow school procedures, concealment of concerns, or pressure to stay silent. KCSIE 2025 requires schools to have procedures for staff to raise concerns about poor or unsafe safeguarding practice or potential failures in the school's safeguarding regime, and these concerns must be addressed sensitively, effectively and in a timely manner.

Where a staff member does not feel able to raise a matter through ordinary management channels, or believes concerns are not being addressed appropriately, the Whistleblowing Policy should be used. Staff must never be made to feel that raising a genuine concern is disloyal. In a safe school culture, appropriate reporting is a professional duty.

15. Gifts, favouritism and personal benefit

Staff must not show favouritism towards particular pupils. Staff must not create or reinforce perceptions that a pupil has privileged access, emotional ownership or special standing with an adult. Favouritism undermines fairness, weakens trust and may create conditions in which grooming or dependency can go unnoticed. Staff must therefore be especially cautious about gifts, treats, private rewards, exceptional privileges, private jokes or repeated informal contact with particular pupils.

Staff must not solicit gifts from pupils or parents. Any gift offered by a parent or pupil must be handled in accordance with school procedures and professional judgment. Staff must not exploit their professional role for personal advantage, financial or otherwise.

16. Dress, presentation and professional example

Staff are expected to dress and present themselves in a manner consistent with their professional role, the age of the pupils, the ethos of the school and the need to maintain authority, respect

and public confidence. Dress must be safe, modest, appropriate and suitable for the duties being carried out. Because this school has an Islamic ethos and serves girls in a secondary setting, staff are expected to understand that standards of dress and presentation are part of the school's wider culture of professionalism and respect.

Professional example extends beyond clothing. Staff are expected to model courtesy, patience, self-control, lawful conduct, punctuality, honesty and good judgment. Pupils should see in staff the behaviour the school seeks to cultivate in them.

17. Attendance, punctuality, supervision and reliability

Staff are expected to be punctual, reliable and conscientious in the performance of their duties. Failure to attend properly, repeated lateness, poor supervision, leaving pupils unattended, or casual disregard of routines can place pupils at risk and undermine the safe running of the school. Reliability is therefore not merely an employment expectation; it is a safeguarding expectation.

Staff must carry out supervision duties diligently, remain attentive during lessons and social times, and ensure that pupils are handed over safely at the beginning and end of responsibilities. Where a staff member is unable to fulfil a duty or is delayed unexpectedly, the matter must be communicated promptly so that cover and supervision can be secured.

18. Health and safety, first aid and emergency conduct

Staff must comply with the school's health and safety, fire safety, first aid and risk assessment procedures. They must take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions. They must report hazards, defects, accidents and near misses promptly and follow instructions designed to secure safety on site and during educational visits.

In emergency situations, staff are expected to remain calm, follow school procedure, place pupil safety first, and cooperate with designated leads, first aiders and emergency services. Professional conduct in emergencies is a significant part of the trust placed in school staff.

19. Equality, dignity and respect

Staff must uphold the dignity and equal worth of all pupils and colleagues. They must not use discriminatory language, tolerate prejudice-based bullying, demean pupils because of disability, race, religion, family background or any other protected characteristic, or allow stereotypes to shape their treatment of individuals. The Equality Act 2010 advice for schools and the Independent School Standards guidance both require schools to encourage respect for others with particular regard to protected characteristics.

This school expects staff to model respectful disagreement, lawful conduct and principled fairness. Staff must be able to work within the lawful framework of the school even where personal views differ from a topic or issue. Professionalism requires lawful and respectful conduct, not private ideological discretion.

20. Conduct outside work

Staff are entitled to a private life. However, because they work with children and hold a position of trust, conduct outside work may have professional consequences where it affects suitability to work with children, confidence in the school, or the welfare of pupils. This may include criminal behaviour, inappropriate online conduct, discriminatory conduct, unlawful substance misuse, exploitative relationships, or behaviour that raises serious questions about professional judgment or safeguarding suitability. KCSIE 2025 makes clear that behaviour outside school may be relevant to allegations and suitability.

Staff must therefore exercise sound judgment in private as well as public settings where conduct could foreseeably become relevant to the school. Where a staff member is arrested, charged, investigated, subject to bail conditions, or otherwise involved in a matter that may affect their role, they must inform the headteacher promptly.

21. Staff welfare, support and seeking advice

The school recognises that professional life can be demanding and that staff may face uncertainty in complex situations. Staff are therefore encouraged to seek advice early from the headteacher, DSL or appropriate senior leader where they are unsure how to manage a pupil interaction, a communication issue, a boundary concern or any matter that may engage this Code. Seeking advice early is a sign of professionalism, not weakness.

The school also recognises that a good staff culture is protective. Adults who feel supported are more likely to report concerns, reflect on practice and sustain appropriate boundaries. Leaders therefore have a responsibility not only to enforce this Code but to make it workable through training, clarity and support.

22. Breaches of this Code

A breach of this Code may result in management advice, training, a recorded low-level concern, disciplinary action, referral to external agencies, or other action depending on the seriousness of the conduct. The school will consider the nature of the conduct, the context, the degree of risk created, whether there is a pattern, whether a child has been harmed or put at risk, and whether the matter raises questions of suitability to work with children.

A member of staff who is unsure whether particular conduct may breach this Code should seek advice before proceeding. The school's expectation is that uncertainty should lead to consultation, not concealment.

23. Training, induction and review

All staff will receive this Code as part of induction, and its contents will be explained in a way appropriate to their role. Induction will include the relationship between this Code and the school's safeguarding systems, including allegations management, low-level concerns and whistleblowing. KCSIE 2025 makes clear that the staff behaviour policy should be explained to staff as part of induction.

The school will provide updates and refresher input as necessary, particularly where legal or regulatory changes occur. This Code will be reviewed at least annually and sooner if there is a change in law, statutory guidance, school structure or identified need. The proprietor will ensure that the Code remains current and that implementation is monitored in practice, in line with the current Independent School Standards guidance.

24. Adoption

This Code is adopted as the formal Staff Code of Conduct of Daffodil Grammar School for Girls and takes immediate effect upon approval by the proprietor.