



St Monica's R.C. High School Professional Relations Policy

Updated September 2018

Mrs G. Walker

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Monica's is a Catholic community working in partnership with families, schools and parishes to teach the Catholic faith as a way of life. We provide a caring, supportive environment where everyone is of equal worth. Jesus Christ is central to our school and our main aim is that everyone can develop their God given talents and gifts to the full, while growing in faith through prayer and service.

PROFESSIONAL RELATIONS POLICY

Adults who work with children and young people are expected to behave in a way which is appropriate to their role and which provides a positive role model for those young people.

The policy applies to all staff, workers and volunteers at the school including those engaged via supply agencies or on contracts for service. It is intended as a guide for adults who work with children and young people in a professional capacity and is intended to summarise and supplement existing policies and procedures ratified by the Governors.

Linked Policies: E-Safety and Acceptable use, Social Media, Safeguarding and Child Protection, Behaviour, Whistleblowing, Equality

1. Introduction

At St Monica's R.C. High School we believe that all staff and pupils are members of a Catholic community where everyone deserves and gives respect, where we all have rights and responsibilities. We all achieve the most working in partnership.

2. Aims/Principles

The Professional Relations Policy is designed to underpin the standards of conduct for staff, workers and volunteers and to foster clear professional boundaries as part of the school's commitment to pupil safety and the well being of staff, workers and volunteers.

3. Scope/Application

It is the responsibility of all adults to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

This policy applies to all staff, workers and volunteers at the school including those engaged via supply agencies or on contracts for services.

The policy is not exhaustive and does not attempt to describe every potential interaction, either professional or personal, between staff, workers and volunteers and pupils. Staff, workers and volunteers are required to exercise appropriate judgement at all times and to ensure that the conduct both in work and in their personal lives does not conflict with their role or professional duties.

Application of the policy to staff, workers and volunteers whose own children are pupils or pupils at the school will be subject to reasonable interpretation and individual exemptions. Staff, workers and volunteers in this position should discuss any concerns with the Headteacher and/or Designated Officer

4. Relationships with Pupils

4.1 Teaching groups

Good relationships with pupils are at the heart of effective teaching and learning. All staff, workers and volunteers should ensure that their actions demonstrate high expectations and clear professional standards.

4.2 Individual pupils

All staff, workers and volunteers should insist that they are addressed by pupils by their proper name e.g. Mrs, Ms....., Mr..... Pupils and Pupils should not be allowed to address staff, workers or volunteers by their first name or nickname.

Staff, workers and volunteers should not accept invitations to informal social occasions with their pupils, nor should they attend pupils' parties unless these are family events and they have been specifically invited by the family.

Staff, workers and volunteers arranging to meet a pupil in a social setting should follow the procedure for school trips and gain authorisation from the Headteacher.

Staff, workers and volunteers who accompany pupils on residential activities must maintain their professional standing at all times and not be compromised by informal contact with pupils. Staff, workers and volunteers on such activities have a duty of care to pupils at all times and must be able to exercise full responsibility for pupils when required. This may be at very short notice in an emergency.

Where staff, workers and volunteers have a responsibility to listen, support and advise pupils they should make no promises of complete confidentiality and must be cautious of pupils repeatedly seeking advice and support leading to dependency upon the member of staff.

All disclosures regarding issue of child protection should be reported immediately, without investigation or prejudice to Mrs Walker.

5. Communications

5.1 General Communication with pupils

Any private communication with an individual pupil concerning issues personal to the pupil should be recorded and copied to the pupil's file.

Personal telephone numbers, including mobile numbers should not be shared with pupils, other than in emergency situations. If a pupil continues to use these personal contacts, this should be reported immediately to Mrs Walker.

Improper communication between staff, workers and volunteers and a pupil is likely to result in disciplinary action.

5.2 Electronic Communication with pupils

No email communication should occur which does not pass through the school network mails boxes and addresses.

Staff, workers and volunteers should not participate in chat rooms or social networking sites with any pupils irrespective of age, or with former pupils/students under the age of 18. In particular, staff, workers and volunteers should neither accept nor request pupil or former pupils/students under the age of 18 as friends on Facebook or other social networking sites. Staff, workers and volunteers should be mindful of the impact on younger siblings or friends of former pupils/students in any social contact.

No text conversation should take place between staff, workers and volunteers and a pupil. In the event of this happening it should be recorded and placed on the pupil's file.

Staff, workers and volunteers using social networking sites in a personal capacity should ensure that they do not conduct themselves in a way that is detrimental to the school. For example, they should not:

- Allow interaction on websites to damage or compromise working relationships with colleagues.
- Post photographs of themselves, colleagues or pupils taken in school.
- Post or send abusive or defamatory messages.
- Record any confidential information about school on any social networking site.
- Post information which will disclose the identity of a pupil

Any staff who are active on social media should keep a careful check on their privacy settings. It is also recommended that they do not use a photograph of themselves on their profile picture. Staff should also consider choosing a user name that is different to the name they are known by professionally.

Staff must not access networking sites during school time as specified in the E-Safety and Acceptable use policies.

These rules apply to all staff. If a staff member has children at the school, they should discuss any social media links with the safeguarding officer Mrs Walker. For any other family links, the rules must be adhered to.

5.3 General communications

In line with our school rules of Ready, Respectful and Safe, staff, workers and volunteers should ensure that in all communications, their language is appropriate at all times. Any communications should not involve the use of swear words, the use of language that is likely to be viewed as insulting or demeaning and is culturally/gender sensitive. The use of any inappropriate language could result in disciplinary action being taken.

6. Improper Behaviour

Staff, workers and volunteers should take care not to put themselves at risk of accusations of improper behaviour towards pupils. They should be cautious when seeing a pupil/ pupil alone in a room and should ensure they are fully visible to anyone passing, through a viewing panel or open the door if necessary.

Staff, workers and volunteers should only take photographs or video pupils/ pupils in accordance with school policy.

Staff, workers and volunteers should be mindful when comforting a distressed pupil and offering any level of physical contact. All physical contact should be age appropriate.

Staff, workers and volunteers should not normally give lifts to pupils. In the event that a lift is necessary for the safety of pupils this should be reported to Mrs Walker and recorded on the pupil's file as soon as possible after the event.

No staff, workers and volunteers should enter into an intimate (physical or emotional) relationship with a pupil, or a former pupil under the age of 18. This will compromise their professional standing with the individual pupil and the wider school population. Such conduct may be subject to disciplinary action.

Sexual activity with a pupil of any age is a criminal offence as members of staff are in a position of trust. Any staff, workers and volunteers conducting such a relationship will be liable to disciplinary proceedings for potential gross misconduct.

Relationships with former pupils/students could be inappropriate and may lead to disciplinary action if there is evidence of the abuse of position of trust whilst the pupil was at the school. Staff are not allowed by law to enter into relationships with pupils or former pupils under the age of 18.

Staff, workers and volunteers should not disclose inappropriate private details about their personal lives or own activities.

7. Physical Contact with pupils

Staff should be mindful when being in physical contact with pupils that their contact is reasonable in line with DFE legislation. (see link below.) Any interaction in order to control or restrain a pupil should be reported to Mrs Walker and the appropriate report filled out and logged.

[file:///E:/Safeguarding%202018%202019/Use of reasonable force advice Reviewed July 2015.pdf](file:///E:/Safeguarding%202018%202019/Use%20of%20reasonable%20force%20advice%20Reviewed%20July%202015.pdf)

8. Relationships with parents and families

Staff, workers and volunteers should be conscious of any potential conflict in social relationships with parents of families of pupils where their own children or children of relatives attend school.

9. Dress and appearance

The school recognises that dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self expression. However, staff, workers and volunteers should dress in ways which:

- Are appropriate to their role and the tasks they undertake.
- Are not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative.
- Do not distract pupils or cause embarrassment.

Work wear should reflect the formal environment and professional standing of staff. Jeans and casual wear should not be worn.

9. Use of school equipment

Laptops or other school equipment should be used appropriately at all times and staff, workers and volunteers should ensure that usage does not conflict with their role or professional duties. Staff should follow GDPR guidelines and the School Acceptable Use Policy.

10. Personal relationships

Staff, workers and volunteers should ensure that their personal relationships outside of school do not conflict with their role or their professional duties and could not lead to their professional judgement being called into question. If staff have any concerns about relationships that could impact on their role in school, they are advised to speak to Mrs Walker.