

# The New School at West Heath

## Policy on Ethics

### Introduction

The New School at West Heath is a centre of educational excellence. It is essential that all staff have the very highest ethical standards in all aspects of their work at the school. This includes

- Personal Relationships
- Teaching and welfare
- Business and personal responsibility
- Financial and legal obligations

There are Policies and Practice guidance notes for all aspects of the school's work. These provide a benchmark all school practice.

Trust and respect are key values we aim to promote and should be reflected in the relationships between the school and:

- students
- staff
- parents and fee-payers
- education authorities
- other professionals
- facility hirers and users
- contractors and suppliers
- friends and fundraisers
- neighbours and the wider public
- press and other media

### Aims and Objectives

The reputation of our school is vital to our work and as such must be earned, safeguarded and cherished. Years of developing and maintaining a good reputation could be lost overnight by careless words and deeds! It is incumbent on every member of staff and anyone else working on behalf of the school whether paid or not, to take this with the utmost seriousness. This includes employees, self-employed individuals, trustees and volunteers. For the purposes of this policy the term "staff" is used to cover all these groups of people.

### Strategies

The following are particular areas meriting detailed comment.

- **Conflicts of interest.**

All members of staff need to be aware at all times of any actual or potential conflict of interest between the best interests of the school and its students and themselves.

Every individual must avoid any activity, arrangement or agreement for personal profit that could be construed as being contrary to the best interests of the school. This also includes any current or developing personal relationships between staff. Such relationships must be brought to the attention of the Principal. All relationships between staff and students should be strictly professional. Staff considering giving students their personal contact information should seek guidance from a senior member of staff before doing so.

Anyone who is in doubt as to whether a situation could fit into this category must seek advice from the principal. Further examples of this are the acceptance of money from parents or students, borrowing school equipment for personal use, the copying of software licensed for use in the school for use at home.

It is also important that all members of staff maintain a healthy work-life balance.

- **Outside work**

All full-time employees must seek the express permission of the Principal before securing any other paid or voluntary work outside the school. Reasonable requests, for example a teacher who wishes to mark GCSE examination papers, will be treated sympathetically. Employees must not take on commitments that compromise the quality of their work for the school. An employee may not, without the written approval of the Principal, charge or receive any additional remuneration for work with any student of the school. Employees who have been granted leave of absence on compassionate grounds, sick leave or maternity leave, must not accept other employment whilst on leave of absence.

- **Confidentiality**

All staff contracts of employment include a section on maintaining confidentiality. It is a breach of contract and this policy to disclose any information gained through working at this school to any person outside the organisation. It is also strictly contrary to this policy for any staff member to communicate to any media representative about the school unless authorised by the Principal. Similarly, no member of staff may act as a spokesperson for, or express any ideas attributable to the school without the prior consent of the Principal.

It might, in certain circumstances, also be in breach of this policy to disclose proprietary information to other staff other than on a need to know basis. Examples might include salary information, minutes of meetings, information relating to child protection issues and staff or student personal information.

- **Intellectual property**

Any member of staff writing an article or making a speech making reference to the work of the school must tell the Principal beforehand. This applies similarly to the use of video recordings, coursework or photographs taken at school.

Materials developed within the school remain the property of the school unless by prior agreement with the Principal.

- **Financial**

The ethics of finance is dealt with in the finance department's operating procedures. These are informed by the Charity Commission's regulations.

- **Property**

All property owned by the school must be used for the work of the school only except by prior agreement with the Principal. This applies to the use of photocopiers, computers and telephones including the use of the Internet. There is a form for requesting permission for taking property off the school premises. Equipment should be treated responsibly and care should be taken to ensure that it remains fit for use. Breakages and damage should be reported to the designated person responsible.

Any damage or hazards that have a Health & Safety implication must be reported immediately according to the school's procedures.

### **Resources**

<b>Ethics</b>	
<b>This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following:</b> Contract of employment, staff handbook, Health & Safety policy, damage procedures, child protection procedures, Whistleblowing.	
<b>Appendices:</b>	
<b>Monitoring of Policy Implementation is the responsibility of:</b> The Senior Leadership Team	
<b>Lead responsibility:</b>	Vice Principal - Residential
<b>Approved by:</b> S.S. Committee	<b>Date approved:</b> 21:01:04
<b>Ratified by:</b> Trustees	<b>Date ratified:</b> 11:2004
<b>Reviewed – no changes</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Reviewed – with revisions</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Revision No.</b>	1.0