

# L'École Française de Bristol



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Pour faire vivre ton français

## **Code of conduct & Guidance for safer working practice for all staff and volunteers when interacting with pupils / Children and Young People**

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## UNDERPINNING PRINCIPLES

- The welfare of the child is paramount;
- Staff, Employees and Volunteers should show tolerance and respect for the rights of others;
- Staff, Employees and Volunteers should promote **BRITISH VALUES, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs**;
- Staff, Employees and Volunteers should understand their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils;
- Staff, Employees and Volunteers are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions;
- Staff, Employees and Volunteers should work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way;
- Staff, Employees and Volunteers should acknowledge that deliberately invented/malicious allegations are rare and that all concerns should be reported and recorded;
- Staff, Employees and Volunteers should discuss and/or take advice promptly from the Headteacher/Safeguarding Officer if they have acted in a way which may give rise to concern (see our [Low Level Concern Policy](#));
- Staff, Employees and Volunteers should apply the same professional standards regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and sexual orientation of the pupils and their families;
- Staff, Employees and Volunteers should not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or any substance, including prescribed medication, which may affect their ability to care for children. Please consult your doctor and your manager if taking prescribed medication that may do so: alternative duties may be given.
- Staff, Employees and Volunteers should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines (to be found in this document) could result in disciplinary action being taken against them, criminal action and/or other proceedings including barring by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) from working in regulated activity;
- Staff, Employees and managers should continually monitor and review practice to ensure this guidance is followed;
- Staff, Employees and Volunteers should be aware of and understand the school's child protection policy, arrangements for managing allegations against staff, staff behaviour policy and whistleblowing procedures;

## INTRODUCTION

All adults who come into contact with children and young people in their work have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare. It is important that all adults working with children and young people understand that the nature of their work and the responsibilities related to it, place them in a position of trust. This practice guidance provides clear advice on appropriate and safe behaviours and professional boundaries for all adults working with children and young people at L'École Française de Bristol; whether in paid or unpaid capacities.

The vast majority of adults who work with children and young people act professionally and aim to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for children and young people in their care. However, it is recognised that in this area of work, tensions and misunderstandings can occur. It is here that the behaviour of adults can give rise to allegations of abuse being made against them. Allegations may be malicious or misplaced. They may arise from differing perceptions of the same event, but when they occur, they are inevitably distressing and difficult for all concerned. Equally, it must be recognised that some allegations will be genuine and there are adults who will deliberately seek out, create or exploit opportunities to abuse children and young people. It is therefore essential that all possible steps are taken to safeguard children and young people and ensure that the adults working with them are safe to do so.

### Child Abuse

Child abuse may be physical, sexual, emotional or neglect. Whilst child abusers may be relatives or friends of the family, some meet children in other contexts and a small minority of these may gain access to children in schools as teachers or support staff or through their voluntary involvement in school activities. Pupils should not feel inhibited from reporting abuse against them by staff or volunteers, or any incident where a pupil has grounds to believe that a member of staff has crossed the boundary of acceptable behaviour. The Headteacher and staff will continue to do all they can to ensure that the environment within the school encourages pupils and staff to make truthful reports of any inappropriate behaviour.

The action to be taken by staff when they suspect a pupil is being abused by a person outside or inside the school, and the steps that should be taken if an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff by a pupil, are set out in the school's Safeguarding Policy and Procedure and all staff should be familiar with that.

### Other procedures and guidance

All adults should also be familiar with the school's policies about physical contact with pupils, the use of reasonable force to control or restrain pupils, and the procedures that should be followed if a pupil needs first aid or medical attention.

## **GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS**

### **1. Dress and appearance**

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression and some individuals will wish to exercise their own cultural customs. However employees and volunteers should select a manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role and which may be necessarily different to that adopted in their personal life. Employees and volunteers should ensure they are dressed 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.

### **2. Gifts, rewards, favouritism and exclusion**

Employees and volunteers need to take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. There are occasions when pupils or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to the employees or volunteers of the École Française de Bristol e.g. at Christmas or as a thank-you and this is usually acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value. Similarly, it is inadvisable to give such personal gifts to pupils or their families. This could be interpreted as a gesture either to bribe or groom. It might also be perceived that a 'favour' of some kind is expected in return. Any reward given to a pupil should be in accordance with agreed practice, consistent with the school or setting's behaviour policy, recorded and not based on favouritism. Employees and volunteers should exercise care when selecting children for specific activities, jobs or privileges in order to avoid perceptions of favouritism or injustice. Similar care should be exercised when pupils are excluded from an activity. Methods of selection and exclusion are specified in our behaviour policy.

### **3. Infatuations and 'crushes'**

All employees and volunteers need to recognise that it is not uncommon for pupils to be strongly attracted to an adult and/or develop a 'crush' or infatuation. They should make every effort to ensure that their own behaviour cannot be brought into question, does not appear to encourage this and be aware that such infatuations may carry a risk of their words or actions being misinterpreted. Any employee or volunteer who receives a report, overhears something, or otherwise notices any sign, however small or seemingly insignificant, that a young person has become or may be becoming infatuated with either themselves or a colleague, should immediately report this to the Headteacher or most senior manager. In this way appropriate early intervention can be taken which can prevent escalation and avoid hurt, embarrassment or distress for those concerned. The Headteacher or Deputy Head should give careful thought to those circumstances where the adult in question, pupil and their parents/carers should be spoken to and should ensure a plan to manage the situation is put in place. This plan should respond sensitively to the child and staff member and maintain the dignity of all. This plan should involve all parties, be robust and regularly monitored and reviewed.

### **4. Private meetings with pupils**

Employees and volunteers should be aware that private meetings with individual pupils may give rise to concern. There will be occasions when a confidential interview or a one-to-one meeting is necessary, but, where possible, such interviews should be conducted in a room with visual access, or with the door open, or in a room or area which is likely to be frequented by other people, and another pupil or adult should be present or nearby. Where such conditions cannot apply, employees and volunteers should ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place.

## **5. Physical contact with pupils**

- (a) Physical contact may be misconstrued by a pupil, parent or observer. Touching pupils, including well intentioned informal and formal gestures such as putting a hand on the shoulder or arm, can, if repeated regularly, lead to serious questions being raised. As a general principle staff must not make gratuitous physical contact with their pupils. It is particularly unwise to attribute touching to their teaching style or as a way of relating to pupils.
- (b) Any form of physical punishment of pupils is unlawful as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour unless it is by way of restraint. It is particularly important that staff understand this both to protect their own position and the overall reputation of the school. See below.

## **6. Where physical contact may be acceptable**

There will be occasions when physical contact will be acceptable. In general these will fall into one of the following four categories:

- (a) There may be occasions where a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance which may include physical comforting such as a caring parent would give. Employees and volunteers should use their discretion in such cases to ensure that what is, and what is seen to be by others present, normal and natural does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same pupil over a period of time. Where an employee or a volunteer has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance he/she should seek the advice of the Headteacher.
- (b) Some employees or volunteers are likely to come into physical contact with pupils from time to time in the course of their duties. Examples include: showing a pupil how to use a piece of apparatus or equipment or demonstrating a move or exercise during games or PE. Employees or volunteers should be aware of the limits within which such contact should properly take place and of the possibility of such contact being misinterpreted.
- (c) There may be occasions where it is necessary for staff to restrain a pupil physically to prevent him/her from inflicting injury to others or self-injury, damaging property, or causing disruption. In such cases only the minimum force necessary may be used and any action taken must

be to restrain the pupil, in accordance with the school's Physical policy. Where an employee has taken action to physically restrain a pupil he/she should make a written report of the incident in the form prescribed by the school's policy on restraint.

- (d) Intimate /Personal care: Pupils should be encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their own personal care as is possible and practicable. When assistance is required, this should normally be undertaken by one member of staff, however, they should try to ensure that another appropriate adult is in the vicinity who is aware of the task to be undertaken and that, wherever possible, they are visible and/or audible. Intimate or personal care procedures should not involve more than one member of staff unless the pupil's care plan specifies the reason for this.

The Staff must always refer to the [Physical contact policy](#) and the [Intimate care policy](#).

## **7. Caring for pupils with particular problems**

Employees who have to administer first aid should ensure wherever possible that other children or another adult are present if they are in any doubt as to whether necessary physical contact could be misconstrued.

## **8. Relationships and attitudes**

- (a) All employees and volunteers should clearly understand the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their dealings with pupils. Intimate or sexual relationships between employees and pupils will be regarded as a grave breach of trust, and any sexual activity between an employee or volunteer and a pupil under 18 years of age is a criminal offence. Any sexual activity between a minor volunteer (under 18 years of age) and a pupil will be a grave breach of conduct and that person would be removed from his/her volunteer activity and could be reported to the authorities.
- (b) All employees and volunteers should not make sexual remarks to, or about, a child or young person or discuss their own sexual relationships with or in the presence of students. Staff, governors and volunteers should take care that their language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculations. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought.

## **9. Sharing concerns and recording incidents**

All employees should be aware of their establishment's safeguarding procedures, including the procedures for dealing with allegations against employees and volunteers. In the event of an allegation being made, by any person, or incident being witnessed, the relevant information should be immediately recorded on a Safeguarding Report form and reported to the Headteacher, senior manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead as

appropriate. Members of staff should feel able to discuss any difficulties or problems that may affect their relationship with or behaviour towards pupils, so that appropriate support can be provided and/or action can be taken. In order to safeguard and protect pupils and colleagues, where employees have any concerns about someone who works with children they should immediately report this to the Headteacher /DSL in line with the setting's procedures.

## **10. Reporting incidents**

Following any incident where an employee feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued he/she should discuss the matter with the Headteacher as soon as possible. The employee may also wish to seek advice from his/her Union if they have one. Where it is agreed with the Headteacher, the member of staff or volunteer should provide a written report of the incident. A detailed written report should always be made if a member of staff had been obliged to restrain a pupil physically, or where a complaint has been made by a pupil, parent or other adult, or where an intention has been expressed to make a complaint.

## **11. First Aid and medication**

The setting has an adequate number of qualified first-aiders. Parents must be informed when first aid has been administered. Employees must have received sufficient and suitable training and achieved the necessary level of competency before they take on responsibility to support children with medical conditions. In circumstances where a pupil needs medication regularly, this must be recorded in their individual healthcare plan. This provides details of the level and type of support a child needs to manage effectively their medical condition in school. A medical form must be obtained and it will give the correct dosage and any storage requirements. After discussion with parents, children who are competent should be encouraged to take responsibility for managing their own medicines and procedures. This could include for example, the application of any ointment or sun cream or use of inhalers. If a member of staff is concerned or uncertain about the amount or type of medication being given to a pupil this should be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Adults taking medication which may affect their ability to care for children should seek medical advice regarding their suitability to do so and providers should ensure that they only work directly with children if that advice confirms that the medication is unlikely to impair their ability to look after children. Employers are also responsible for managing the performance of their employees and for ensuring they are suitable to work with children. Risk assessment requires that staff medication on the premises must be securely stored and out of reach of children at all times.

## **12. Discussions and Communication with children (including the use of technology)**

Employees and volunteers must avoid comments to or about pupils which could be taken to have sexual overtones. It is equally unacceptable for employees and volunteers 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. It will be especially helpful if Schemes of Work highlight particular areas of risk and sensitivity. Specific guidance may be needed to assist newly qualified or other teachers who are new to this area of work. This will call for the exercise of careful judgement in responding to questions raised by pupils.

Notwithstanding the advice given above it is recognised that, in order to discharge particular pastoral responsibilities, employees may from time to time need to engage in conversation with pupils and students 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.

In responding to individual students' distress employees will need to consider carefully whether they should offer advice, sympathy or counselling if a discussion enters a sensitive area or, alternatively, refer them to a colleague or agency who is better placed to offer appropriate advice.

The persistent and hurtful use of sarcastic, demeaning or insensitive comments towards young people may also be regarded as a form of abuse which is potentially very damaging and should be avoided.

Employees and volunteers should ensure that they establish safe and responsible online behaviours. 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 handheld devices. (Given the ever changing world of technology it should be noted that this list gives examples only and is not exhaustive.)

Employees and volunteers should not request or respond to any personal information from children other than 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'.

### **13. Educational visits and After-school Activities**

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999) impose a duty on employers to produce suitable and sufficient risk assessments. This would include assessment of any risks to employees, children or others during an educational visit, and the measures that should be taken to minimise these risks.

Employees and volunteers should take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere of a school trip with overnight stay 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 employees and volunteers should be no different to that which applies within school. Employees and volunteers should be aware of the particular care, which should be taken with older, more mature students in these circumstances.

## 14. Teaching materials

The use of books, videos and films must be given careful consideration. We will follow the BBFC's cinema age ratings and [guideline](#).

**bbfc** View what's right for you

It is a licensing requirement that this cinema enforces BBFC age ratings. Films shown in public cinemas are rated U, PG, 12A, 15 and 18. All films come with detailed ratings info.

You can find this for the film you'd like to see on the film poster, at [www.bbfc.co.uk](http://www.bbfc.co.uk) or on our free BBFC app.



**U - Universal**  
Suitable for all

A U film should be suitable for audiences aged four years and over, although it is impossible to predict what might upset any particular child. U films should be set within a positive framework and should offer reassuring counterbalances to any violence, threat or horror.



**PG - Parental Guidance**  
General viewing, but some scenes may be unsuitable for young children

A PG film should not unsettle a child aged around eight or older. Unaccompanied children of any age may watch, but parents are advised to consider whether the content may upset younger or more sensitive children.



**12A - Suitable for 12 years and over, unless accompanied by an adult**

No one younger than 12 may see a 12A film in a cinema unless accompanied by an adult. Adults planning to take a child under 12 to view a 12A film should consider whether the film is suitable for that child. To help them decide, we recommend that they check the ratings info for the film in advance.



**15 - Suitable only for 15 years and over**

No one younger than 15 may see a 15 film in a cinema. A cinema may lose its licence if it admits children under 15 to a 15 rated film. No theme is prohibited at 15, provided the treatment is appropriate for 15 year olds. 15 films may contain strong language, violence, sex and drug misuse.



**18 - Suitable only for adults**

No one younger than 18 may see an 18 film in a cinema. A cinema may lose its licence if children under 18 are admitted to an 18 rated film. The BBFC respects the right of adults to make their own viewing decisions, provided the material is legal and does not pose a significant risk of harm. 18 films may contain very strong content that might offend some adult viewers.

It is not actually illegal for schools to show BBFC-rated videos, DVDs or Blu-rays to its pupils of any age, just as parents may also choose to show any material to children in the home. Merely showing an age-restricted film to underaged persons - or allowing them to see one outside a licensed cinema - is not in itself an offence. We would, however, strongly discourage such a practice unless (a) the children in question are only a year or so below the age stated on the certificate, and (b) there is a serious educational purpose to showing the recording (eg showing well-known works or educational films such as 15-rated Schindler's List to 14-year-old GCSE students). Even in such cases, **teachers must have obtained parental consent prior to showing the film.** The teacher must also have obtained the approval of the Head Teacher. It is vital to make sure that any children watching are not likely to suffer any ill effects as a result of seeing the film. BBFC website offer advice to teachers and a parental consent form [here](#), to ensure that its selection is not subsequently misinterpreted. There should always, therefore, be a clear link with the targets of the teacher's programme.

## 15. Whistleblowing (or the procedures that protect staff members who report colleagues they believe are doing something against public interest or illegal)

We have a clear and accessible [whistleblowing policy](#). Staff members must know this policy. Employees who use whistleblowing procedures in good faith will have their employment rights protected. Employees must recognise their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of the

Headteacher or DSL 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.

## **16. Data Protection Act**

It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure the School's compliance with the Data Protection Act. Personal data must only be used to assist you to carry out your work; it must not be given to people who have no right to see it. All staff should maintain the security of all computerised databases of information on individuals, whether they are staff, pupils or members of the general public. Staff should refer any queries to the Head Teacher.

The Staff must always refer to the [GDPR policy](#).

## **17. Confidentiality**

(a) As data controllers, all schools are subject to the Data Protection Act 1998. In addition, teachers owe a common law duty of care to safeguard the welfare of their students. This duty is acknowledged in the provisions governing disclosure of information about students.

(b) Members of staff and governors may have access to confidential information about students in order to undertake their responsibilities. In some circumstances the information may be sensitive and/or confidential. Confidential or personal information about a student or her/his family must never be disclosed to anyone other than on a need to know basis. In circumstances where the student's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the student.

(c) There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a student, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a duty to pass information on without delay to those with designated student protection responsibilities.

(d) 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 school equipment. Information must only be stored for the length of time necessary to discharge the task for which it is required.

(e) If a member of staff is in any doubt about the storage or sharing of information s/he must seek guidance from a senior member of staff. Any media or legal enquiries must be passed to senior management.

**Members of staff, governors and volunteers must comply with all the school's policies and procedures.**