



## **G4.1 CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT FOR TEACHING STAFF AT THE DOWNS**

### **Aim**

Unlike 4.2, this section of the policy is not founded in statutory law, rather it reflects the individuality of the School.

It is vital for the staff at The Downs to reflect the exceptional ethos of the School, to model civilised behaviour for the children and to provide a professional service beyond the expectations of customers. This policy provides outline as to expectations.

### **Code of Dress**

#### **General**

The appearance of the staff sends a vital message to the pupils, current and prospective parents, and visitors. Dress should therefore be professional, respectable and appropriate to the task.

Casual dress is acceptable for meetings held before the beginning of term.

#### **Men**

On a normal working day, men should wear a Sports Jacket or a Suit, and a collar and tie. On more formal occasions such as Speech Day, Parents Evenings and the Carol Service, a suit should more be worn.

Men should not wear visual piercings and tattoos should not be visible.

#### **Ladies**

On a normal working day ladies should wear suitable professional clothes that reflect the same standard of the gentlemen. Ladies should wear a jacket. They might also wear tailored trousers, a dress or a skirt and a blouse. On more formal days all ladies should wear dresses or skirts. Tattoos should not be visible.

It is inappropriate for any staff to wear trainers other than for games.

#### **PE & Games**

Staff regularly taking PE may need to wear a tracksuit. As far as possible it should be the School's tracksuit however on occasion it may be necessary to wear a personal tracksuit. This must be clean and presentable.

Staff who take games will change appropriately for the activity. They will look tidy and smart, usually wearing the School sportswear. Good changing facilities are available in the Sports Hall. Games coaches should not wear tracksuits in the classroom unless it is essential.

Staff accompanying teams should dress as they would on a normal working day unless they are involved in umpiring or refereeing duties. Those umpiring cricket matches should wear a cricket sweater and not a tracksuit.

If you have any doubt about the code of dress, then please consult the Headmaster, the Assistant Head or the Head of the Pre-Prep.

### **Attendance**

Punctuality is vital as it sends the right message to the children and ensures the effective and efficient running of the School. It is therefore important that members of staff are at the right place at the right time. It should be noted that school bells are rarely used at The Downs.

### Lessons

Lessons should always begin on time. Pupils should not be released until the end of the lesson, although teachers should be mindful that pupils may have commitments as soon as the lesson has concluded.

Lessons should be well prepared and therefore there should not be any necessity for teachers to leave a classroom during the progress of a lesson.

### Assembly

Assembly is an opportunity for the whole community to celebrate success and to reflect on the School's values. All members of staff are expected to attend assemblies unless the Headmaster or a member of the Leadership Team has agreed otherwise.

### House Meetings

All staff are members of a house and therefore they are expected to attend House Meetings. These take place at least once every half term.

### Friday Informal Concerts

As staff would otherwise be teaching, they are expected to attend Friday Informal Concerts as it is important for staff to display an interest in the pupils' achievements and to value all cultures.

### Lunch

All members of staff are expected to attend lunch. It is an important social occasion and a time when staff are able to educate the children about their eating habits. Members of staff on duty are not expected to sit in the dining room as they may want to leave early before undertaking their duties when the children have been released. After lunch staff may wish to give notices to the School.

## Illness

In the event of illness, members of staff need to inform the member of the Curriculum Group responsible for covering lessons and / or the Assistant Headmaster and / or the Head of the Pre-Prep as soon as possible. If at all possible, these members of staff should be contacted the evening before absence in order to create the time to cover the absence. The School should be regularly informed of circumstances in the case of sustained illness, a doctor's note being necessary after a week. On return the Headmaster and/or Bursar should be advised and furnished with a 'Fit for Work' note as relevant.

## Absence

If members of staff need to be absent from school, the Headmaster should be consulted. The School will take a compassionate view as much as possible however, the effective running of the business that is The Downs School cannot be compromised.

## Appellation

While members of staff will be on Christian name terms socially, surnames and titles should normally be used in front of children.

When addressing children the staff should use Christian names. In any formal setting pupils' full Christian names should be used rather than nick names.

It is vital that pupils exhibit respect for adults:

The children are expected to address male members of staff and visitors as 'Sir'. Female members of staff should insist on being addressed as 'Mrs' or 'Miss', for example Mrs Lake or Miss Wyld. If in doubt pupils should address ladies as "Ma'am" – as in 'Jam'.

## Staff Rooms

There are two staff rooms at The Downs:

The Drawing Room is a social room where coffee and tea are available at all times. Coffee cups and teacups are restricted to this room and they should not be carried around the School unless absolutely necessary. The daily papers are also available.

The Staff Resource Room is a working room that is open all the time. Staff can access stationery, computers, a laminator, the photocopier and various other resources in this room. The Receptionists will put post and messages for members of staff into the appropriate pigeon holes.

Parents must not be taken into the staff rooms as there will be confidential notices displayed.

## Internal Communication

Each member of staff teaching is expected to check their emails at least once a day. Much of the communication at The Downs takes place by email.

Staff notice-boards are in the Resource Room. Members of staff are expected to check the boards every morning although notification of changes is often also made by email.

Staff Pigeon Holes are in the resources Room. They should be checked regularly.

A weekly 'updates timetable' is emailed and continually displayed in the Resources Room. Any other changes made to the termly calendar are displayed as far in advance as possible. Again these changes are usually also communicated by email.

#### **- Staff Meetings and Briefings**

All staff are expected to attend Staff Meetings and Briefings. These are times when important issues are to be discussed. Prompt attendance is necessary.

A Staff Meeting is held at the beginning of every term as part of Inset Training. The dates of the Inset Meeting are published in the School calendar well in advance.

A weekly Staff Meeting is held during break at 10.40 am. All members of staff except those on duty are expected to attend. The dates are published in the School diary/calendar and should be noted as the days change each week. Members of staff are invited to raise issues they feel pertinent during A.O.B. Minutes are published by email after the meeting.

Each Tuesday and Thursday morning at 8.20 am, the Head of Prep School holds a five minute briefing in the Drawing Room. At the Informal Meeting 'household' issues are resolved (see D8.5).

Each Wednesday evening (4.00 pm) the Head of Pre-Prep holds a Staff Meeting for the Pre-Prep staff. All are expected to attend. Minutes are distributed by email.

Three times a term Pastoral Care and Attainment Meetings are held. These take place in the evening after school. The theme of the meetings is the progress of individual children. Matrons, Teaching staff and members of the Learning Support Department attend. Minutes are shared on sharepoint.

#### **External Communication**

Should parents request a meeting or other form of communication (text, email, phone) staff must respond within 24 hours. This response should at least be a 'holding message' although a meeting or formal reply is much more desirable.

If it is necessary to meet parents for a formal discussion, staff should arrange the appointment after school or well before the beginning of school. In this way the School routine will not be adversely effected.

Team selections are published in two places; in the lobby and on the website by use of mobile technology. Team sheets should be displayed at least 24

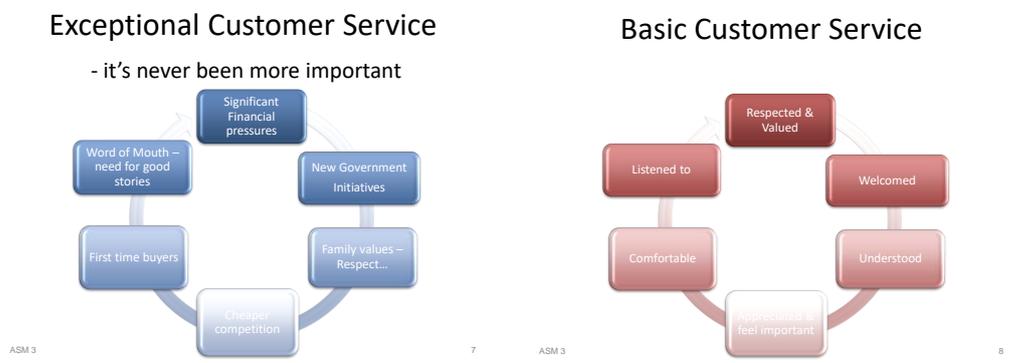
hours in advance. The Director of Sport will convey detailed instruction in this regard.

### Customer Care

Exceptional customer service is a marketing advantage. At The Downs it is expected that all employees strive to provide exceptional customer service. In service training is often provided to assist all members of staff develop and understand essential customer service skills. Our aim must be to convert customers (parents) and visitors to become advocates of the School.

Parents are paying customers and the success of the business that is The Downs School directly correlates to the number of paying customers. As with all service customers they should be treated with respect and courtesy and their concerns and anxieties should be carefully considered. They are not share-holders and they do not have the right to demand change in the business but they have a right and appreciate honest, straight forward answers presented in a sensitive manner. The professionalism of staff in this communication is absolutely essential.

The parents at The Downs School are very supportive. They are regularly involved in school events and they attend numerous activities. There then inevitably exist strong informal relations between staff and parents. These relations are to be applauded but staff must be mindful of the dangers of over familiarisation.



### 5 Elements of Customer Service



In the event of conflict or disagreement, members of staff should always consult with a member of the Leadership Team in the event of anxiety and / or

doubt. In any event the following diagram provides illustrates an effective process of conflict resolution. Essentially members of staff should try to exceed the expectations of the customer.



### **Confidentiality**

General gossip is detrimental to the reputation of The Downs School. Inaccuracies should be corrected however, confidential information regarding children, staff, and school business must never become the preserve of parents and/or the public. Should staff compromise the School's privacy, the circumstances will be considered extremely seriously.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Code of Professional Conduct will be monitored by the Leadership Team by observation and discussion with staff.

The code of practice will be evaluated against the policy 'Code of Conduct for Staff 4.2'.

### **Timescale**

The policy will be reviewed annually at the beginning of the academic year.

MAG  
06.03.18