

Policy Regarding Professional Boundaries between Staff & Students

Date: October 2009 **Reviewed:** May 2023 **Review Date:** May 2025

Rationale

Springhead School has a responsibility for the welfare of its pupils and staff. The school takes great pride in the friendly and professional atmosphere within the school which is much commented on by all. The school recognises that in a healthy working environment, all staff and pupils will form mutually rewarding relationships. However, in order to protect both staff and pupils, the boundaries between personal and professional life must be fully recognised and respected.

The school complies with all laws and guidelines issued by the government and NYCC with regard to the protection and safeguarding of all children and young people. Any relationship which could impair professional judgement, compromise integrity or affect the proper teaching or reputation of the school, therefore, should be avoided.

Principles

All adults working with children and young people are in positions of trust. It is important to recognise, however, that there are boundaries which cannot be crossed and there cannot be a 'relationship of equals'. Appropriate professional boundaries must be maintained.

The school places the highest value on its Moral Purpose, aims and values. In particular, the school is a place where pupils are respected, valued and listened to, and can develop both positive relationships and their self-esteem (School Values Statement)

Whilst encouraging positive relationships between staff and pupils, they cannot be friends in the true sense of the word. Any relationship other than a professional one is totally unacceptable.

All staff should behave in a professional manner and should ensure that their actions or personal conduct, no matter how well intended, do not cause offence or allow themselves to be open to misinterpretation.

Guidelines

There exists an increasing culture of informality, within which there are dangers of blurred boundaries between professional and private, home and school, formal and informal lives.

The development of new technologies and social media has created many new possibilities for communication. However, all communication between staff & students must take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. Outside the classroom situation this means:

- Via the school e-mail system
- Phone calls home
- Letters, with a copy remaining on the pupil's file

No other form of communication is acceptable, including the use of personal mobiles and e-mail addresses, social networking sites (eg Facebook), blogs and chat rooms. Personal contact details should never be given to a Springhead student. This is to protect you from falling in to difficulty inadvertently, or being targeted for abuse. It also protects you from any accusations of inappropriately over-familiar behaviour which could be misconstrued.

Signed Date