



**Malbank School & Sixth Form College**

**Staff/Governors as Parents or close relatives – Professional Boundaries  
and Conduct Policy**

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## Staff as Parents or close relatives – Professional Boundaries and Conduct Policy

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# Staff/Governors as Parents or close relatives – Professional Boundaries and Conduct

## 1. Purpose

This policy provides guidance for staff or governors who are also parents or close relatives of children enrolled at the school and staff working with the children of colleagues. It ensures that professional boundaries are maintained that all students are treated equitably, and that interactions between staff are respectful and consistent with the school's values. It is important to remember that parental/familial awareness and involvement in their child or relatives' day to day schooling when they are not at the same setting is usually minimal - it is healthy for parents/relatives and children for there to be a separation that encourages growth and independence.

This policy is underpinned by our school mottos:

- ***“Rejoice in being the best you can be”*** – Staff and governors are expected to model integrity and professionalism in all roles they hold within the school community.
- ***“Make the 60 minutes matter”*** – Learning time must be protected from undue influence or disruption, including matters relating to staff members' own children.
- ***“Be polite and show respect”*** – All interactions between staff/governors, including those involving staff members' children, must be courteous, respectful, and in line with our expectations for professional conduct.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All staff employed at the school or who are governors at the school.
- Any staff member or governor who is a parent or legal guardian of a student at the school.
- Any staff member or governor who is a family member of a student at the school.
- All professional interactions involving staff and students, including staff or governors' own children or relatives.

## 3. Principles

- **Professionalism:** Staff/governors must maintain professional boundaries at all times, regardless of personal relationships.
- **Fairness:** All students must be treated equitably, including children or relatives of staff and governors.
- **Confidentiality:** Information about students, including staff or governors' children or relatives, must be handled in accordance with data protection and safeguarding policies.
- **Safeguarding:** The best interests of the child must always be prioritised.

## **4. Guidance for Staff who are Parents/Relatives**

### **Communication with Colleagues**

- Staff and governors should avoid using informal channels (e.g., personal messaging apps or casual conversations) to discuss their child or relative's academic or pastoral matters with colleagues.
- All interaction in terms of queries should be done in the usual manner expected for all parents and should be subject to the same expectations as laid out in our overarching 'Parental Conduct and Expectations policy' – most notably the 48-hour response time to enquiries.
- Staff or governors should avoid discussing their child or relative's behaviour, performance, or wellbeing with other staff members outside of formal contexts – this should never happen as an unannounced, unpredicted conversation in passing as no other parent or relative would have the opportunity to have this level of access.
- Concerns or queries about their child or relative should be raised through formal channels (e.g., parent-teacher meetings, email to pastoral leads or subject teachers).
- Best practice includes the use of personal email addresses, not work-related ones to address concerns or raise queries to encourage a separation of roles.

### **Involvement in Decision-Making**

- Staff and governors should not be involved in decisions or disciplinary actions relating to their own child or relative unless explicitly authorised by senior leadership in exceptional circumstances.

### **Equity of opportunity**

- Staff or governors must not use their position to influence outcomes related to their child or relative or seek preferential treatment, for instance placement in setting or seating position in a classroom.
- Staff or governors should not circumvent the rules and systems in school to the benefit their own child or relative. For instance, staff/governor children/relatives should not be allowed in out of bounds areas during times when this is not allowed, students of staff or governors should not be allowed to move to the front of food queues, students of staff should not receive higher priority access to trips where there is limited capacity. These listed examples are by no means exhaustive but hint at typical situations where equity of opportunity is key and to undermine this would be both unfair and could likely lead to frustration from other students.

### **Access to Information**

- Staff or governors must not access school records or systems to view information about their child or relative unless they are doing so in their day-to-day professional capacity.

## **5. Guidance for Staff Interacting with Governors or Colleagues' Children or Relatives**

### **Fair Treatment**

- Staff must treat colleagues' children and relatives as they would any other student, without favouritism or undue scrutiny.
- Staff should avoid discussing the child's behaviour, performance, or wellbeing with the parent/relative-staff or governor outside of formal contexts – this should never happen as an unannounced, unpredicted conversation in passing as this could not happen with any other parent.
- Staff should respect a colleagues/governor right to separate their role as a parent/relative and as a professional. Always consult SIMS to refer to who the designated point of contact is, as this can often be another parent or family member if the staff member / governor has made this active decision.
- Best practice is that wherever possible, interactions replicate normal practice – typically this would entail a “phone call home”. Where these interactions take place face to face, staff initiating them should ask permission to do so to ensure the parent/relative is comfortable having the conversation in the work setting – it should always be done in a private space to replicate the 1-1 nature of a phone call home.

### **Confidentiality**

- Staff / governors must not share information about a student with their parent/relative, colleague or governor unless they are authorised to do so and it is part of a formal process.

### **Escalation of Concerns**

- If a staff member feels uncomfortable or conflicted when dealing with a colleague's child or relative, they should escalate the matter to a line manager or designated safeguarding lead.

## **6. Leadership Responsibilities**

Senior leaders must ensure that staff-parent/relative relationships do not compromise the integrity of school processes. Any concerns about boundary breaches should be addressed promptly and sensitively and passed onto the Headteacher.

## **7. Breaches of Policy**

Breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action in line with the school's staff code of conduct and safeguarding procedures.

## **8. Review**

This policy should be reviewed annually or when significant changes occur in staffing or school structure.