



## Staff Code of Conduct Policy



Approved by: Governing Board

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## **Contents**

Aims, scope and principles	3
Legislation and guidance	3
General obligations	4
Safeguarding pupils	4
Low- level concerns about staff	4
Honesty and integrity	5
Conduct outside work	5
Confidentiality	6
Pupil development	6
Staff- pupil relationships	6
Principles of professional behavior and attitudes	6
Relationships with staff, parent/carers and the wider community	7
Acceptable use of technology	8
Communication and social media	8
Conduct outside work	8
Dress code	9
Promoting fundamental British Values	9
Monitoring arrangements	9
Links with other policies	9

## **AIMS, SCOPE AND PRINCIPLES**

The Department for Education (DfE) published new statutory safeguarding guidance in April 2014. It states, in paragraph 30, that schools must have a staff behaviour policy or code of conduct. This should be provided to all staff, together with the school's child protection policy.

Paragraph 10, on page 5 of the guidance, says:

*All staff members should be aware of systems within their school or college which support safeguarding and these should be explained to them as part of staff induction. This includes ... the school's or college's staff behaviour policy (sometimes called a code of conduct).*

A Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school staff are expected to observe, and the school should notify staff of this code and the expectations therein. School staff are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that models the highest possible standards for all the pupils within the school. As a member of a school community, each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside working hours. This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect. We expect that all staff will act in accordance with the appropriate personal and professional behaviours as outlined in this policy. We expect all support staff, governors and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in our staff disciplinary procedures.

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils.

## **LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE**

We are required to establish procedures for the regulation of staff conduct under regulation 7 of The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009.

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, we should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

## **GENERAL OBLIGATIONS**

Staff set an example to pupils. They will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school
- Treat pupils and others with dignity and respect
- Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others
- All staff must, therefore, demonstrate the highest standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils/students to do the same.
- All staff must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Not express personal beliefs in a way that exploits pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within
- Adhere to the Teachers' Standards (where applicable)

## **SAFEGUARDING PUPILS**

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- neglect

The duty to safeguard pupils includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil to the school's Designated Named Person for Child Protection.

Our child protection and safeguarding policy and Whistleblowing Procedure are available in the staffroom, on the staff shared drive and on the school website. New staff will also be given copies on arrival.

Staff will familiarise themselves with our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures, and the Prevent initiative, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

- Staff must not demean or undermine pupils, their parents or carers, or colleagues.
- Staff must take the upmost care of pupils/students under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.
- Staff must not use their mobile phone as a camera in school. Any photograph/video must be taken using school equipment. Staff must only save images on school equipment. Any use of technology must be compliant with the school's ICT Acceptable User Policy.
- Staff who are in contact with pupils should not use their mobile phones in school during their directed hours / paid hours of employment. Outside of these times, mobile phones should only be used in areas of the school where pupils are not present.
- Staff may be required to make welfare calls to families during periods of lockdown or when period of remote education is being delivered. Staff are expected to use the school telephone to make these calls where it is practicable to do so. When it is not practical, staff are advised to follow GDPR rules and hide their number before making the welfare calls. Any concerns are to be raised with the DSL or Deputy DSLs.

### **LOW-LEVEL CONCERNS ABOUT MEMBERS OF STAFF**

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harms threshold, is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt'. For example, this may include:

- Being over-friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on a personal device
- Engaging in one-to-one activities where they can't easily be seen
- Using inappropriate language

Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy. We also encourage staff to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage staff to report it.

All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way.

Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed, and the staff member supported to correct it, at an early stage.

This creates and embeds a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff, while minimising the risk of abuse.

Reporting and responding to low-level concerns is covered in more detail in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

### **HONESTY AND INTEGRITY**

- Staff must maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.
- All staff must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or if they request, agree or accept, or receive a bribe from another person. If you believe that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act, you should refer to the Whistleblowing procedure for schools.
- Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to the Headteacher, or to the Chair of Governors if the Headteacher is the recipient, with the exception of “one off” token gifts from students or parents. Personal gifts from individual members of staff to students are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted.

## **CONDUCT OUTSIDE WORK**

- Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the employee’s own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community. Any such conduct could lead to dismissal.
- In particular, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable and could lead to dismissal.
- Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Staff must not use personal social media as a means of communicating with pupils.
- Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites, which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute.
- Staff must only use their school email account or school Virtual Learning Platform account when communicating electronically with pupils, parents and colleagues.
- Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school and is not to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance.
- All members of staff must declare any business interests outside of school that may be connected either to the supply of goods / services to the school or be rewarded through association with the school.
- As part of our procedures we will also take into account ‘the harm test’ and steps will be taken to check the suitability of all adults who may have been involved in any incidents that would put into question their suitability to work with children will be investigated even if no child is involved. These incidents will be dealt with properly and the circumstances and suitability of their ability to work with children is thoroughly assessed. We will seek further advice if needed before an appointment is made.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the school, staff, pupils and their parents.

This information should never be:

- Disclosed to anyone unless required by law or with consent from the relevant party or parties
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for
- Where staff have access to confidential information about pupils/students or their parents or carers, staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil/student.
- All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a pupil/student is bullied by another pupil/student (or by a member of staff), this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate school procedure. It must not be discussed outside

the school, including with the pupil's/student's parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the school except with a senior member of staff with the appropriate role and authority to deal with the matter.

- However, staff have an obligation to share with their line manager or the school's Designated Senior Person any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a pupil/student. Staff must **never** promise a pupil/student that they will not act on information that they are told by the pupil/student.

This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, as detailed further in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

## **PUPIL DEVELOPMENT**

Staff must comply with school policies and procedures that support the well-being and development of pupils/students.

Staff must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of pupils/students.

Staff must follow reasonable instructions given by leaders that support the development of pupils/students.

## **STAFF/PUPIL RELATIONSHIPS**

Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so.

If staff members and pupils must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

- This takes place in a public place that others can access
- Others can see in to the room
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of school hours if possible.

Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes social media profiles.

While we are aware many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to pupils are not acceptable.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, or if a staff member is concerned at any point about a fellow staff member and a pupil, this should be reported in line with the procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

## **PRINCIPLES OF PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDE**

**The principles guiding our professional behaviour and attitude towards our pupils are to:**

- *Have high expectations in all areas;*
- *Maintain a positive attitude and model expected behaviour at all times;*
- *Commit to a child-centred approach to learning and a child-friendly environment;*
- *Create confident secure learners who are able to take risks without worrying about 'mistakes' and are able to enjoy learning;*
- *Show a commitment to lifelong learning;*
- *Provide a challenging, stimulating learning environment, which includes and engages all pupils;*
- *Provide opportunities for pupils to develop as responsible citizens;*
- *Respect and value each child as an individual and acknowledge that their needs will be different;*
- *Treat every child fairly and with dignity; build self-esteem;*
- *Recognise and understand children's cultural background and show awareness of the range of differences in their experiences;*
- *Adhere to all measures of safeguarding procedures and health and safety procedures.*
- *Value children's rights; listen to them and help every child to 'have a voice';*

- *Maintain confidentiality; share information on a 'need to know' basis;*
- *Ensure every child matters, show care and concern; be patient; exercise our legal duty of care in all matters;*
- *Safeguard pupils well-being.*

## **RELATIONSHIPS WITH STAFF, PARENTS/CARERS/ WIDER COMMUNITY**

**The principles guiding our behaviour and attitudes towards colleagues are to:**

- Respect and value each colleague as an individual and acknowledge that their needs will be different;
- Treat every member of staff fairly and with dignity;
- Build self-esteem;
- Understand the roles and responsibilities of colleagues;
- Respect and value each other;
- Build trust and maintain integrity in relationships;
- Share experience and expertise – go that extra mile to be helpful;
- Be a united community; celebrate achievements; support and comfort each other; empathise
- Understand the need for confidentiality and keep it when necessary;
- Engage in well-being activities which will help team building; show a commitment to teamwork;
- Listen to others ideas and be open to them;
- Have a clear understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities;
- Recognise and understand each other's cultural backgrounds;
- Communicate effectively and openly with each other; be critical but considerate friends;
- Separate the 'personal' from the 'professional'; resolve problems 'at source' whenever possible;
- Maintain high standards in own attendance and punctuality.

**The principles guiding our behaviour and attitudes to our own professional development are to:**

- *Work as a team and share best practice;*
- *Take personal responsibility for self-evaluation and self-improvement;*
- *Keep up to date with new initiatives and pedagogical developments;*
- *Be proactive and maintain a 'healthy' career drive, for the benefit of self and others;*
- *Balance own CPD needs with the requirements of the SDP;*
- *See the whole school as a 'learning community for everyone; **never give up – learning is lifelong;***
- *Put new skills into practice and allow time to show impact and progression.*

**The principles guiding our behaviour and attitudes towards other professionals, volunteers, students and governors are to:**

- Recognise that the school needs the support of other professionals from within the school community and from external agencies;
- Co-operate fully; be efficient and reasonable in our demands and expect this to be reciprocated;
- Respect and value opinions and guidance; be open-minded to ideas and work towards a shared understanding of school improvement;
- Be warm and welcoming to visitors; offer hospitality and be punctual for appointments;
- Accept governors and other professionals, volunteers and students as part of the same community;
- Maintain confidentiality and integrity;
- Ensure good, two-way communication; voice questions and make your views known;
- Ensure that information is accessible and share it (within the parameters of the school's policy).

**The principles guiding our behaviour and attitudes towards parents and carers are to:**

- *Respect parents cultural background and show awareness of the range of differences in their experiences; welcome them and make them feel a valued part of the school community;*
- *Value parent's knowledge and understanding of their own children; acknowledge them as their child's 'first educators';*
- *Communicate school's expectations, ethos, guidelines, policies and day to day issues as they arise; create opportunities for parents to make their views known and to involve them in school decision making;*
- *Encourage parents to participate in their children's learning and to support the aims of the school; ensure that they have an accurate view of their child's progress; expect parents to reciprocate by sharing information about their child;*
- *Guide parents to support services for themselves and their children.*

**The principles guiding our behaviour to our local community are to:**

- *Build and maintain community links; forge and develop relationships and working partnerships*
- *Continue to work to make transitions as smooth as possible;*
- *Recognise and understand the diverse nature of our community;*
- *Begin to develop the school as a resource for the local community;*
- *Foster a sense of belonging to the local community by being proactive in participating in local events and building a bridge between the local community and the curriculum;*
- *Celebrate the achievements of our pupils in the community.*

**ACCEPTABLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY**

- Staff will not use technology in school to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.
- Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school equipment for personal use, in school hours or in front of pupils. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.
- We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system.
- Staff should be aware of the ICT and Acceptable User Policy.

**COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

- School staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name, as pupils may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead, and set public profiles to private.
- Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship. They will not make any efforts to find pupils' or parents' social media profiles.
- Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at the school without their consent.
- Staff should be aware of the school's online safety policy.

**CONDUCT OUTSIDE OF WORK**

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school, or the teaching profession, into disrepute. This covers conduct including but not limited to relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school on social media.

- Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community. Any such conduct could lead to dismissal.
- In particular, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable and could lead to dismissal.



- Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Staff must not use personal social media as a means of communicating with pupils.
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- Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school and is not to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance.
- All members of staff must declare any business interests outside of school that may be connected either to the supply of goods / services to the school or be rewarded through association with the school.

#### **DRESS CODE**

- Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner.
- Outfits will not be overly revealing, and we ask that tattoos are covered up.
- Clothes will not display any offensive or political slogans.

#### **PROMOTING FUNDAMENTAL BRITISH VALUES**

Staff must actively promote the Fundamental British Values of Democracy, Rule of Law, Individual Liberty and Mutual Respect and Tolerance of Different Faiths and Beliefs.

#### **MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS**

This policy will be reviewed annually but can be revised as needed. It will be approved by the Governing Board.

Our Governing Board will ensure this code of conduct is implemented effectively, and will ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard children and deal with any concerns.

#### **DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

All staff need to recognise that failure to meet these standards of behaviour and conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

#### **LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES**

This policy links with our policies on:

- Staff disciplinary procedures, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct. It also sets out examples of what we will deem as misconduct and gross misconduct
- Work Resolution Policy
- Child protection and safeguarding
- Gifts and hospitality
- Online safety
- Dress Code Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy