



Staff Code of Conduct Policy

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1. Aims, scope and principles

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.

Many of the principles in this code of conduct are based on the Teachers' Standards, Higher Level Teaching Assistant Standards, Teaching Assistant Standards and Headteacher Standards.

School staff have an influential position in the school and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

We expect that all teachers and school leaders will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards, Higher Level Teaching Assistant Standards, Teaching Assistant Standards and Headteacher Standards.

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.

2. 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, we should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistleblowing, as well as acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

3. 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
- 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, Teaching Assistant Standards, Higher Level Teaching Assistant Standards, Headteachers' Standards
- Follow the school's policies and procedures

4. Safeguarding

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect.

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.

Our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures are available in the staffroom, on our website and on the policies drive. New staff will also be given copies on arrival.

4.1 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that anyone working in the school, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place inside or outside of school

We will deal with any such allegation quickly and in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be the headteacher, or the chair of governors where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation.

4.2 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 harm 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 1-to-1 activities where they can't easily be seen
- Humiliating pupils

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 allegations against staff (including low-level concerns) 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.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

4.3 Whistleblowing

Whistle-blowing reports wrongdoing that it is "in the public interest" to report. Examples linked to safeguarding include:

- Pupils' or staff members' health and safety being put in danger

- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement
- Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest

Staff are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. Their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and their confidentiality will be respected.

Staff should consider the examples above when deciding whether their concern is of a whistle-blowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or school procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

Staff should report their concern to the headteacher. If the concern is about the headteacher or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the chair of the governing board.

Concerns should be made in writing wherever possible. They should include names of those committing wrongdoing, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter.

5. 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 into 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.

6. 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 consider that pupils and families 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 social media and online safety policy.

7. Acceptable use of technology

Staff will not use technology in school or belonging to the 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.

Staff will not share their password with others or log in to the school's network using someone else's details. Personal mobile phones may be taken on educational visits for emergency contact purposes only and pictures should not be taken on the device.

Staff should put smart watches on to flight mode during working hours. The school will not cover any cost of damage.

We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system.

8. 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

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.

9. Honesty and integrity

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities.

Staff will not accept bribes.

Declare all gifts or hospitality that are received or offered other than the exceptions in writing to the Headteacher to be added to the Gifts and Hospitality Register. Exceptions would be:

- A gift offered by parents/ children to express their thanks and gratitude.
- A low-cost gift given to the school for the purpose of advertising a service or company up to the value of £20 e.g. diaries, pens, these do not have to be declared.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the school is correct. This should include:

- Background information (including any past or current investigations/cautions related to conduct outside of school)
- Qualifications
- Professional experience

Where there are any updates to the information provided to the school, the member of staff will advise the school as such as soon as reasonably practicable. Consideration will then be given to the nature and circumstances of the matter and whether this may have an impact on the member of staff's employment.

10. Dress code

Dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression; however, staff are expected to dress in a manner that is appropriate for their role and the tasks they undertake. It is important that all staff present themselves professionally in the workplace. How we present ourselves impacts not only the image of our school but also the health and safety of ourselves and others. To support this, the school offers an optional staff work uniform, which can be purchased. Details can be found in the Staff Handbook.

Acceptable Attire

Staff are expected to wear clothing that meets the following criteria:

- ✓ **Footwear:** Flat, non-slip, enclosed shoes for safety and comfort.
- ✓ **Clothing:** Outfits should allow for free, unrestricted movement. Clothing should not be overly revealing or restrictive, ensuring comfort during a variety of tasks. No fashion rips.
- ✓ **Appropriate for Activities:** Staff should wear clothing suitable for the physical nature of the work, which may include playing outside with learners, engaging in walks, or taking part in indoor and outdoor games. Be prepared to get soiled or dirty during such activities.
- ✓ **Skirts and Dresses:** Skirts should be knee-length or paired with leggings. Dresses should have sleeves, or a t-shirt should be worn underneath.
- ✓ **Trousers and Shorts:** Smart casual trousers or tailored shorts to the knee are appropriate.
- ✓ **Tops:** Smart, comfortable t-shirts with sleeves, at least to waist level. Long-sleeved tops are also suitable.

PE and Sports Activities

Staff involved in physical education or sporting activities are expected to wear appropriate activewear that allows for freedom of movement and maintains a professional appearance. This includes:

- Sports tops or breathable t-shirts (shoulders covered)
- Tracksuit bottoms, leggings (opaque), or knee-length sports shorts
- Trainers or supportive sports footwear
- A zip-thru hoodie or lightweight sports jacket if needed for outdoor sessions

Clothing should remain modest, functional, and suitable for working closely with learners in an active setting.

Inappropriate Attire

The following attire is not acceptable:

- ✗ **Footwear:** Flip-flops, open-toed sandals or high-heels. Feet should not be visible.
- ✗ **Necklines:** Low-cut tops or dresses.
- ✗ **Sleeveless Garments:** Vest tops or dresses with thin straps.
- ✗ **Slogans:** Clothing with offensive, inappropriate, or political messages
- ✗ **Denim:** Denim is not permitted, except for smart, casual jeans during field trips or educational visits. Black denim (not faded) is permitted.
- ✗ **Ties and Scarves:** For safety reasons, ties and scarves should not be worn in the school environment. They pose a risk of getting caught during physical activities or interactions with learners.

Grooming and Personal Hygiene

- **Nails:** Staff should keep nails short and suitable and practical for their role, particularly when engaging in personal care tasks. Nails should be clean, and where food preparation (e.g., snack time) and personal care is involved, acrylic or painted nails should be covered to maintain hygiene.

- **Jewellery:** Jewellery should be practical for the work environment and safe for interactions with learners. Visible piercings must be fitted with studs to minimise the risk of injury. Any necklaces worn should be kept within clothing to avoid catching. Staff should limit the amount of jewellery they wear, and the school is not responsible for the repair or replacement of jewellery, nor for any injuries sustained due to inappropriate jewellery.
- **Tattoos:** Tattoos that may be considered offensive should be covered while at work.

Work-Related Technology

Smart Watches: Staff are required to set smartwatches to flight mode during working hours to minimise distractions. The school will not be responsible for any damage to smartwatches.

Liability for Personal Property

Personal Property: The school cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage to personal items considered to be of high value or designer-branded (e.g. a designer black hoodie would only be replaced with a standard, non-branded equivalent). Reimbursement for damaged personal property will only be considered where the damage was not the fault of the staff member and will be limited to reasonable, non-designer replacements. This includes items such as glasses, where only the cost of a standard replacement will be covered. The school does not reimburse for cleaning costs under any circumstances.

Additional Considerations

Hoodies: Staff may wear hoodies at their own risk. Please be mindful that learners may pull on hoods, which can be difficult to remove quickly. For your own safety, the school recommends wearing zip-through hoodies rather than pullovers.

Non-Compliance

Any staff member deemed to be dressed inappropriately upon arrival may be asked to return home and change. The time taken to do so will be unpaid.

11. 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 may undertake additional employment outside the school, either paid or voluntary, provided it does not conflict with the interests of the school nor be to a level that may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work.

During the course of their employment, staff must report to the headteacher any conviction, caution, warning, reprimand, pending court appearance or any other police involvement, which may have an impact on their suitability to work with or around pupils.

12. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually, but can be revised as needed. It will be approved by the full governing board.

The headteacher 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.

13. Links with other policies

This policy links with our policies on:

- Disciplinary policy and 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
- Child protection and safeguarding
- Online safety
- Whistleblowing
- Finance
- Staff Handbook
- Allegations against staff (including low-level concerns)
- Social Media
- Mobile phone