

# Staff Code of Conduct Policy

## 2024 - 2025

Approved by the Governing Body on (date):	Autumn 2024
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Next Review Date (term/year):	Autumn 2025

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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](#).

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

We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' 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.

An electronic copy of the staff handbook is updated and saved on MS Teams in the Staffroom Team folder and is available to every member of staff at the beginning of every academic year. This handbook provides a more detailed account of the expectations set for a range of aspects of school life and acts as an extension of this code of conduct. Staff also sign an "acceptable use policy" for the use of ICT when they are inducted into the school.

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 children.

## 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, and staff handbook which should cover low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistle-blowing, as well as ICT and acceptable use of the internet policy (including the use of mobile devices), staff/child relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

## 3. General obligations

Staff set an example to children. They will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school
- Treat children 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 children's vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within
- Adhere to the Teachers' Standards

## 4. Safeguarding

Staff have a duty to safeguard 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 safeguarding policy, including child protection and procedures are available from the school office and school website. New staff will also be signposted to the policy. New staff will also be given copies on arrival.

#### **4.1 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold**

This section is based on 'Section 1: Allegations that may meet the harm threshold' in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

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 children

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 safeguarding, including child protection policy. This is available on the school website and in the staffroom.

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

#### **4.3 Whistle-blowing**

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

- Children or staff's 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 governors.

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.

For our school's detailed whistle-blowing process, please refer to our whistle-blowing policy, a copy of which can be found in the staffroom.

## **5. Staff-child relationships**

Staff will observe proper boundaries with children 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 children 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 children outside of school hours if possible.

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

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

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

Staff must comply with school policies and procedures that support the well-being and development of children and follow reasonable instructions that support the development of children. They should co-operate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of children.

## **6. Infatuations**

It is not unusual for pupils or, sometimes, their parents to develop infatuations towards members of staff. All such situations must be responded to sensitively to maintain the dignity of those concerned. Staff should also be aware that such circumstances carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against staff. Any indications of an infatuation towards staff must be reported to their line manager.

## **7. Smoking, alcohol, e-cigarettes and other substances**

School is a non-smoking site. Staff must not smoke or use e-cigarettes on the school premises or outside the school gates. They should not smoke or use e-cigarettes whilst supervising children in a residential setting or offsite. Staff must not consume or be under the influence of alcohol, drugs or unlawful substances on or near school premises. They must refrain from the consumption of alcohol and other substances at school community activities, both on and off school premises.

## **8. Showers and Changing**

Children are entitled to respect and privacy whilst they are changing or showering after physical activity or swimming. Supervision by staff should be appropriate to the needs and age of the children and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment. Staff should be vigilant about their own behaviour and announce their intention of entering a changing room. Personal and school devices with a camera or video function must not be taken into areas where children are showering or changing. Staff must not change or shower in the same place as children.

## **9. Transporting pupils**

In certain circumstances it may be appropriate for staff to transport pupils offsite for out-of-school activities. Staff should ensure that they are not alone with pupils and discuss the transport plan with the appropriate leader or line manager, and risk assess for any difficulties that may arise.

Staff should ensure that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. Staff should ensure that the driver has the appropriate license for the vehicle, that the vehicle is roadworthy, has a valid MOT certificate, is appropriately insured, and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.

Staff should ensure that the driver is not distracted while the vehicle is in motion for any reason other than an emergency and should also ensure all passengers are wearing correctly fitted, maintained and fastened seatbelts or if required appropriate child restraints/car seat. Staff should never transport pupils while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Prior to transporting children offsite consent must be obtained from the child's parents. All staff must be aware that the safety and welfare of the child is their responsibility until the child is safely passed back to their parent or carer.

## **10. Communication and social media**

School staff's social media profiles should not be available to children. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name, as children 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 children or their parents via social media, or any other means outside school, to develop any sort of relationship. They will not make any efforts to find children or parents' social media profiles.

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are children at the school without their consent.

Staff should read the 'ICT and Internet Acceptable Use of the internet' policy.

## **11. 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.

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

Please read in conjunction with the 'ICT and Internet Acceptable Usage' policy.

## **12. Confidentiality**

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

Where non-teaching staff have concerns about a child (e.g. behavioural, learning or welfare), they should speak to the child's class teacher or member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) who will decide if a conversation with the child's parents is necessary. Non-teaching staff should not initiate conversations with parents about children.

All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which must remain confidential. This needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate school procedure. It should not be discussed outside the school, including with the children'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. This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child is at risk of harm.

All staff are responsible for ensuring that the data that the school controls remains confidential and is not shared with anyone outside of the school (except where consent has been given by the parent/carer).

All staff must ensure that the school's privacy policy is followed in full and that the any mitigating actions for risks of a data breach are taken (e.g. locking computers when not in use)

### **13. Honesty and integrity**

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

Staff will not accept bribes. It is the teacher's responsibility to declare gifts given to the headteacher. Personal gifts from individual members of staff to students are completely inappropriate and could be misinterpreted.

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.

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

### **14. Dress code**

Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner. Clothes should be smart without holes or rips.

Outfits will not be overly revealing, and clothes should not display any offensive or political slogans.

### **15. 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.

Teaching is a respected vocation, and staff are expected to act accordingly.

### **16. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually but can be revised as needed. It will be approved by the governing body. Our governing body 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.

## 17. 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
- Staff grievance procedures
- Safeguarding, including child protection
- ICT and Internet Acceptable Usage Policy
- Home/School Agreement
- Staff Handbook 2024-2025
- Whistleblowing

[Employees Only – Click+Ctrl to follow link and sign the form electronically.](#)

**Sign here for paper copies only:**

Employee's name: .....

Signed: .....

Date: .....