

# CODE OF CONDUCT SCHOOL STAFF



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| <b>Approved by:</b> | Governing Body |
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| <b>Last reviewed on:</b> | March 2025 |
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| <b>Reviewed by:</b> | Head Teacher |
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| <b>Next review due by:</b> | January 2026 |
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## **Introduction**

The following code is based on a code widely used throughout other educational establishments in both the maintained and non-maintained independent sectors. Breach or failure to observe this policy will result in action being taken under disciplinary procedures for employees including, but not limited to, dismissal, and discontinuation of engagement with volunteers and agency staff.

### **1. Purpose, Scope and Principles**

- 1.1. 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.
- 1.2. The Code of Conduct is not an exhaustive list of acceptable and unacceptable standards of behaviour. In situations where guidance does not exist within the policy, staff are expected to exercise their professional judgement and act in the best interest of the pupils in the school.
- 1.3. School staff are role models who are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the pupils within the school. The principles underlying this guidance aim to encourage staff to achieve the highest possible standards of conduct and minimise the risk of inappropriate conduct occurring.
- 1.4. 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.
- 1.5. This Code of Conduct applies to:
  - all staff who are employed by the school, including the Headteacher
  - all staff that are attached to the school
  - peripatetic staff employed by the school as well as those staff who have full-time contracts
  - The Code of Conduct does not apply to employees of external contractors and providers of services

### **2. Professional Behaviour and Conduct**

- 2.1. Staff should demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same; children respond very well to the positive modelling by teachers of behaviours to be encouraged.

- 2.2. Our school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our pupils and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all pupils fulfil their potential.
- 2.3. All staff must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.
- 2.4. Avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times whilst in the presence of our pupils and your colleagues. You will avoid shouting, making use of sarcasm and never intend to humiliate a child in your care.
- 2.5. Staff should follow reasonable management instructions.

### 3. Safeguarding Pupils

- 3.1. All staff must have full awareness and understanding of the DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) statutory guidance<sup>1</sup>.
- 3.2. Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from:
  - physical abuse
  - sexual abuse
  - emotional abuse
  - neglect
- 3.3. The duty to safeguard pupils includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or one of the Deputy DSLs.
- 3.4. The school's DSL is Nicole Douglas. Our Deputy DSLs are displayed on posters throughout the school. The school governor with responsibility for safeguarding is Dr Sarah Sherwood.
- 3.5. Staff are required to read and understand the school's Child Protection Policy and Whistleblowing Procedure<sup>2</sup> and staff must be familiar with these documents.

**Low Level Concerns** KCSiE has included within its section on 'Allegations made against/Concerns raised in relation to teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers and contractors (part 4)' a new section on low-level concerns.

The term low level concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the higher threshold. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' – that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in an inappropriate manner.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

<sup>2</sup> Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, without fear of repercussions. Staff should refer to the school's Whistleblowing policy for further guidance. This is particularly important where the welfare of pupils may be at risk.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to: being over friendly with children, having favourites, taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door or using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

It is vital that staff share any low-level concern that they may have. This is to ensure that we have a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which the school's values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by staff.

- 3.6. Some teaching staff are deployed for the teaching of sport and games at public facilities, including those used by other schools and colleges. The NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU)<sup>3</sup> provides guidelines to support individuals and organisations to consider issues relevant to their particular contact; and to develop and implement policies and procedures that provide a safe environment for children and young people. Supervision of children whilst changing should involve a minimum of two adults and adults entering changing rooms should announce their arrival prior to entry to those within.
- 3.7. You may be required to conduct home visits to pupils' homes as part of your professional duties, and any such visits planned must only be carried out by prior agreement with your line manager. School visits of this kind will usually be for reasons of welfare and support and will always be diarised and documented in writing by the visitors for the benefit of the school.
- 3.8. Under no circumstances are adult staff, visitors, or volunteers to enter/establish an inappropriate relationship with a student within the school, irrespective of age. Teaching, Administrative and Support staff are in a position of trust with all of our children, whatever their age, and breaking that trust is forbidden by law. Your conversation with children needs to use appropriate language and be contained within appropriate boundaries. If you suspect a child or other adult is becoming unreasonably attentive to you, please notify the Headteacher immediately and seek appropriate support.
- 3.9. Staff must have due regard for all elements of our Safeguarding policy, including Child Sexual Exploitation, Female Genital mutilation, where staff have a statutory duty to report where pupils are risk as well as when they suspect it may have occurred.
- 3.10. Staff must have due regard for all elements of our Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation as outlined in our Child Protection policy. Teaching staff have a duty to uphold the teaching of fundamental British Values, and support PSHE documentation exists to support staff in this duty. Under no circumstances are staff to invite extremists' speakers into the school, nor are pupils permitted to invite such speakers directly.
- 3.11. The school and its activities are spread over sites. We have strict limitations around the use of staff cars, and where such use is authorised, the school carries appropriate insurance cover for the carriage of pupils. It is inadvisable for a teacher to give a lift in a car to a pupil alone. Wherever possible and practicable it

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<sup>3</sup> <https://thecpsu.org.uk>

is advisable that transport is undertaken with at least one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort. If there are exceptional circumstances that make unaccompanied transportation of pupils unavoidable, the journey must be authorised by the Headteacher.

#### **4. Physical Contact with Pupils<sup>4</sup>**

- 4.1. Staff must maintain professional boundaries with pupils appropriate to their position and must always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportional, safe and applied equitably. Staff should act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to question their actions or intent. Staff should think carefully about their conduct so that misinterpretations are minimised.
- 4.2. Staff should avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abuse or unprofessional conduct and be very careful in making physical contact with a child, either for instruction or for pupil management. Staff should not have unnecessary physical contact with pupils and should be alert to the fact that minor forms of friendly physical contact can be misconstrued by pupils or onlookers.
- 4.3. For reasons of instruction, such as physical education, contact may be inevitable, because you are supporting a gymnast for example, where you should work within the subject association's professional guidelines. On occasion, physical contact will be required for control, for reasons of H&S or pupil direction. Such force as used should be reasonable in the circumstances and for appropriate purpose.
- 4.4. If you are involved in a pupil management incident requiring physical intervention of a child, do make sure that the nature of the physical intervention used is written down on the physical incident form and is recorded in the school physical restraint file. Any physical restraint is only permissible when it is necessary, proportionate, and justified. For example, when a child is in imminent danger of inflicting an injury on himself/herself or on another, damaging property or acting in the best interest of the pupil. Another member of staff should, if possible, be present to act as a witness or in an area covered by CCTV.
- 4.5. All incidents of the use of physical intervention must be reported immediately to the Headteacher and or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the deputy DSL who will decide what to do next.
- 4.6. Irrespective of the circumstances, parents/carers will be informed of any physical restraint used on their child. The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our pupils and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Failure to inform parents of use of physical restraint within a reasonable timescale will be viewed as serious.
- 4.7. Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action could

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<sup>4</sup> Further DfE guidance on the use of reasonable force can be found online:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools>

be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be recorded as soon as possible, the DSL informed and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the pupil's file.

## **5. Pupil Development**

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

## **6. Honesty and Integrity**

- 6.1. Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.
- 6.2. 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.
- 6.3. Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to the Headteacher, with the exception of "one off" token gifts amounting to less than £50 from pupils or parents/carers. Personal gifts from individual members of staff to pupils are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted.

## **7. Conduct Outside Work Hours and Online Safety (e-safety)**

- 7.1. 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.
- 7.2. In particular, criminal offences that involve violence or possession, or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable.
- 7.3. Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Social media or other information technology platforms may be accessible by parents/carers, staff, pupils, and the wider community. Behaviour which impacts on the reputation of the school or is not

behaviour that is not conducive with the professional conduct of a member of school staff may result in disciplinary action being taken.

- 7.4. 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.
- 7.5. Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute.
- 7.6. Staff must not use social media such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter for inappropriate contact/direct messaging with children, and liking their pages etc. is not permitted. In short, professional staff should not use any form of social media for private contact with children. You are advised to keep your own Social Media identity as locked down as possible, so that children and parents at school cannot find out inappropriate information about you and your family.
- 7.7. Take particular care not to expose children to inappropriate images online

## **8. Confidentiality**

- 8.1. Where staff have access to confidential information about pupils 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.
- 8.2. All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a pupil is bullied by another pupil, 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 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. Our School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our pupils and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all pupils fulfil their potential.
- 8.3. Staff have an obligation to share with their manager or the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a pupil. Staff must never promise a pupil that they will not act on information that they are told by the pupil.

## **9. Dress and Appearance, Smoking, Alcohol and other Substances**

- 9.1. The school recognises that dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expressions. However, all staff must dress and appear in a manner that is appropriate to a professional role and that promotes a professional image.
- 9.2. Staff should dress safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake.

- 9.3. The school is a non-smoking site. This includes the use of e-cigarettes and any other smoking related materials. Staff must not smoke on school premises or directly outside the school gates.
- 9.4. Staff must not smoke whilst working with or directly supervising pupils' offsite.
- 9.5. Staff should not consume, or be under the influence of, alcohol, illegal drugs or other illegal substances on school premises or whilst on school business. Where alcohol is available to adults at school events when children are not present, be restrained in your use of same.
- 9.6. It is the responsibility of employees in consultation with their GP or pharmacist to ensure that prescribed, over the counter (OTC) medication does not impact upon their conduct or ability to work safely or to required standards of care. Any employee with concerns in this regard should confer with their manager.

## **10. Disciplinary Action**

- 10.1. All staff need to recognise that failure to meet these standards of behaviour and conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.
- 10.2. The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our pupils and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Whilst setting out these expected standards, please be advised that we cannot (and do not wish to) be entirely prescriptive about expected behaviour. However, we believe that the adherence to the above general principles will ensure that our work environment remains both professional and inclusive.

Acknowledgement of the Code of Conduct will be signed annually by staff to ensure that all staff are fully aware of the standards the school expects.



## APPENDIX 1

### Our School Values



That children feel that they belong to a community



That children are prepared for life as citizens in modern Britain



That children learn at pace, ensuring academic understanding



That children are taught how to become resilient so that they can cope with setbacks



That children are supported to be healthy and safe.