

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

This Code of Conduct aims to give guidance to all employees as they carry out their roles within the school. It is important that the environment that we create is one that is enjoyable, supportive, non-threatening, safe, clean and conducive to working and learning.

We are all expected to present and conduct ourselves in a responsible and professional manner when undertaking our duties and to comply with lawful and reasonable instructions from the Headteacher.

The Code is designed to give clarification about key issues that we may come across in the course of our work. It cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour. It does highlight behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable.

PERSONAL CONDUCT:

We should set and maintain high standards in terms of language, behaviour and personal appearance in order to present good models to our children and fellow employees and to respect the views of visitors to our school.

Appearance / Dress Code:

Whilst there is no formal dress code, we are expected to present ourselves in a manner that reflects our professional role.

Please remember that we are working with young children and should dress appropriately.

We should ensure we are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks we undertake

This means:

- Wearing clothing that is not revealing or offensive to the more conservative members of our school community
- Comfortable footwear that has a back
- No faded or ripped fashion wear
- Short nails that will allow safe contact.
- Discreet jewellery and piercings
- Wearing suitable clothes and footwear for class PE sessions.
- Visible tattoos should be inoffensive to others
- Hair is maintained to support health and safety guidelines.

General conduct at work:

We are expected to conduct ourselves in a manner that personifies the values of the school, the school policies and procedures, and our contractual obligations.

Smoking is **NOT PERMITTED** in any area of the school site, including the outside grounds.

Mobile Telephones:

- Please ensure that your mobile phones are switched to silent and out of sight whilst you are working with children.
- Personal mobile phones **MUST NOT** be used during timetabled hours.
- Personal mobile phones **MUST NOT** be used to take photographs/ videos of pupils at ANY TIME.

Language and attitude:

We are expected to be sensitive and considerate in the way we communicate with our colleagues and our pupils.

We should talk to others in the way in which we would like to be spoken to ourselves.

For Example:

- Criticism can be expressed in a clearly constructive manner, which allows the other person retain their dignity and self-respect.
- Grievances between members of staff should not be aired in any manner in front of school pupils.

Confidentiality and corporate responsibility:

We should all be aware of our duty to manage a united school approach when dealing with members of the public and children. This means taking responsibility for incidents of dispute or dissatisfaction and not airing these publically. This applies equally to criticising the school publically and using the press to air your concerns or grievances.

Please be aware that there are certain actions that the school would consider as general or gross misconduct.

For Example:

- Staff should avoid publicly blaming colleagues for failures in process or experience;
- Staff with concerns should always follow school procedures in the first instance;
- It is a disciplinary offense to 'go public' with information that could potentially harm the school's reputation.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

The 'Need to Know':

Within the school community, **most** communication should be open and accessible to all.

However, **some** information should be considered confidential to outsiders: Academic Records of children should not be divulged unless required by law or expressly authorised to do so.

Personal information on anybody is internally confidential unless part of agreed procedures. Any breach of confidence is a serious disciplinary matter.

However, there are circumstances in which it is our responsibility to withhold information, (when the safety or dignity of a child is at risk), in which case you need to be precise about the information that you give.

This means:

- That staff are expected to treat information they receive about children in a discreet and confidential manner
- That staff in doubt about sharing information they hold or which has been requested of them, should seek advice from a member of the SLT
- Information should never be used to the staff's own or other staffs' advantage. Nor should it be used to intimidate, humiliate or embarrass children
- **REMEMBER** you can never tell a child that you will keep a secret if you believe that secret contains information that leads you to believe there are child protection concerns for that child or any others.
- It is your duty to notify the DSL with safeguarding concerns.

PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH CHILDREN:

Appropriate contact:

On some occasions it may be appropriate for staff to have physical contact with children. Please make sure all touching / hugging is age and situation appropriate.

Contact must not be secretive or for the gratification of the adult. Where feasible, staff should seek permission from the child before any contact.

Any form of physical punishment is unlawful as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour unless it is by way of restraint.

This means:

- Staff should be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or anyone to whom the action is described
- Always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny.
- Never indulge in horseplay, tickling or fun fights.
- Consideration should be made to children for whom touching is particularly unwelcome (ASD; certain cultural backgrounds etc).

Children in distress:

There may be occasions when a distressed child needs comfort and reassurance. You should use your discretion in such cases.

You should remain self-aware at all times in order that contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

This means:

- Staff should consider the way in which comfort is offered
- Make sure that the physical contact is what the child wants

Care, control and physical intervention:

There may be occasions where it is necessary for staff to restrain a child to prevent them from inflicting injury to others, self-injury, damaging property, or causing disruption. In such cases only the minimum force necessary should be used and any action taken must be to protect the child.

Whilst the school does not expect you to physically intervene with children, there may be certain circumstances where there is no option.

This means:

- Staff should always seek to defuse situations using strategies other than physical intervention
- Always use minimum force for the shortest period – preferably with assistance from a colleague
- Staff should understand that the school will support staff if they have had to physically intervene – if they have used minimum reasonable force
- Staff should be aware that the school will take action if they have acted unprofessionally, used force to punish a learner or used unnecessary force

Positive behaviour management:

All children have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. We all have the right to be able to make mistakes. Misbehaviour should be dealt with a growth mindset, which allows pupils to understand their choices and decisions

You should not use any form of degrading treatment, including demeaning or insensitive comments towards children.

This means:

- Staff should follow the agreed Behaviour Policy

One to one situations:

Working in an isolated one to one situation with children makes staff more vulnerable to allegations.

This means:

- Avoid being alone with a child for long periods of time
- Avoid meetings with children in remote or secluded areas unless there is a visual access and / or open door
- Inform other staff that you are working 1-1, in case the pupil is needed in an emergency
- Always report any situation where a child becomes distressed or angry to a member of SLT

Physical Education (PE):

Some staff may have to initiate contact to support a child (Gymnastics). The child's consent should always be asked for.

Changing for PE (and showering for swimming) – although we respect a child's privacy there should be appropriate supervision whilst changing to safeguard and satisfy health and safety considerations and to prevent bullying.

- Refer to 'Safer Practice in PE' document.

Intimate care:

All children have a right to safety, privacy and dignity. Children should be encouraged to act independently and to undertake as much of their personal care as possible.

Children with SEN have a 'Care Plan' signed by their parents.

This means:

- Try to avoid changing children and never do the personal things the child is able to do themselves (trouser zips etc)

Transporting children:

The transporting of children in private vehicles should be planned and risk assessed, (except in an emergency) with at least one adult additional to the driver, to act as an escort.

- Only give children a lift in a car with permission from the Headteacher

RELATIONSHIPS:

Positions of trust:

All adults working with children in an education setting are in positions of trust. A relationship between a member of staff and a pupil cannot be of equals as this increases the possibility of exploitation and harm.

Staff have a responsibility to ensure that the balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.

We should conduct ourselves at all times in ways that are consistent with school policy and procedures.

This means:

- That staff should not behave in a manner that would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or act as a role model.

Personal relationships:

Should a personal relationship already exist, (a pupil is a relative or child of close family friend), it should be declared to the Headteacher, as it is better if that child is placed within an alternative class.

For example:

- Class teachers/ teaching assistants with relatives in their class.
- Lunchtime supervisors / Play leaders with relatives on their playground

Social contact:

Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship.

This means:

- Never give your personal e-mail address, social network details, phone number or home address to pupils
- That staff should not compromise their position within the work setting by behaviour outside of work.

Sexualised behaviour:

Staff should make the DSL aware of all inappropriate sexual talk or touching made by a pupil

Sexualised behaviour includes causing or inciting children to engage in or watch sexual activity; making sexual remarks; discussing personal sexual relationships in the presence of children.

Any sexual contact between staff and children is illegal.

Please note:

There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' where the sole purpose is to gain the trust of the child and manipulate the relationship so that sexual activity can take place.

Staff should be aware of conferring special attention on a child as this could be considered as part of the 'grooming' process.

USE OF ICT AND SOCIAL NETWORKING:

Use of ICT equipment:

The acceptable use of ICT is clearly outlined within the 'Acceptable Use of ICT' policy.

The aim of the guidelines are to ensure security of school IT systems and to safeguard the school, our employees and our children.

Staff should recognise the potential for misinterpretation and abuse of images taken in school,

This means:

- Photographs and videos of children must only be taken using school devices
- Give consideration to how images are organised and potentially interpreted by others.
- Photographs may only be published with written parental permission

Social Networking:

Whilst Social Networking is a way in which members of the school community can communicate with each other, staff need to be aware of the implications of their comments/ postings.

Comments made taken out of context, which may be regarded as humorous or flippant by the people making them, can be misinterpreted or cause great offense to a wider audience and bring the school or individual into disrepute.

We all work in a professional environment so we are obliged to behave in a professional manner on social networking sites, where there is minimal control over who sees comments.

This means:

- All conversations / images that relate to pupils, or members of their family, are prohibited
- Any conversations / photographs related to school policy, procedures or staff members are prohibited
- Specific reference to the school or MAT should not be made over social networking sites.
- Negative comments/ postings can be construed as cyber-bullying and can constitute gross misconduct.

GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY:

Staff receiving gifts:

We all have to take care that we do not accept any gifts that may be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.

Invitations to working meals, a social function to which other employees are invited, or some other general celebration are usually acceptable.

This means:

- There are occasions when learners or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff (at Christmas or as a Thank you) and this is acceptable, as are small gifts from companies such as calendars, diaries, pencils etc
- Ensure that gifts received or given in situations that may be misconstrued are declared.

Staff giving gifts/ rewards:

Any reward given to a child should be recognised practice within the establishment, consistent with the agreed protocols, and not based on favouritism.

This means:

- Generally, only give gifts to an individual child as part of an agreed reward system.

OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES:

Membership of Societies:

The school encourages membership of societies and professional bodies. However, should you find a conflict of interest arises you should discuss this with the Headteacher.

Other Employment:

You should not engage in other employment if doing so will have an adverse effect on the way in which you perform your duties, or could result in a conflict of interest.

Staff are required to register any business interests on the appropriate form which is available from the office. If you have any doubts you should speak to the Headteacher.

For Example:

Private work or work connected with an outside interest must not be done in school time, nor with the use of school materials, without the consent of the Headteacher.

WHISTLEBLOWING:

Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of SLT and / or relevant external agencies. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

All staff should be aware of the school's safeguarding policy and procedures and know where, when and how to use **MY CONCERN** to record if they have concerns about a child.

- Please refer to 'Whistleblowing' Policy and Safeguarding Policy

BULLYING, HARASSMENT AND VICTIMISATION:

At Wrotham Road we firmly believe that the dignity of all employees must be respected, that staff should behave courteously and that the school environment should be pleasant for all.

This school is firmly opposed to any form of discrimination.