



# CODE OF CONDUCT

## PURPOSE, SCOPE AND PRINCIPLES

All staff are expected to perform their duties with honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity in order to give the highest possible standards of service and avoid any conduct which could compromise them and the School. This Code of Conduct applies to all staff who are employed by the school.

Staff should comply with the rules and procedures set by the School and Local Authority in relation to actions and behaviours. These can be found in school documents and the HR zone in the SchoolsWeb section of the Buckinghamshire Council website. The school has a 'log-in' and 'password' which a staff's Line Manager will provide as part of induction and when requested to.

Staff working with young people or vulnerable adults are in a position of great trust. Serious breaches of that trust; assault or sexual misconduct or deliberate disregard of policies and procedures meant to safeguard vulnerable service users and other recipients of School will be regarded as potential gross misconduct.

- Staff have a responsibility for ensuring a safe learning environment for children and young people within the school.
- Staff who believe that a colleague is acting in a way which might be harmful to the school or individual pupils, should raise the matter with the Head Teacher/Line Manager/Designated Safeguarding Lead. The school's Whistleblowing and Management of Allegations against Staff policies outline the procedures for raising concerns and can be found on the T: drive.
- Staff should have regard to the School's Behaviour policy to provide guidance and support in dealing with behaviour issues as they arise.
- Staff should not demean or undermine pupils, their parents, carers or colleagues or display any discriminatory behaviour.
- Staff should comply with statutory provisions, which support the well-being and development of pupils.
- Staff must not enter into a personal relationship with pupils at the school or conduct improper relationships with pupils through, for example mobile phone, e-mail and Internet chat rooms/websites.
- Staff should not bring the reputation and standing of the School into disrepute.

## PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

### WITH CHILDREN

All pupils have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Staff and volunteers must not use any form of degrading treatment to punish or undermine a pupil. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards pupils is not acceptable in any situation. When speaking to pupils, we always consider how we would expect to be spoken to ourselves. Shouting aggressively is not acceptable in any situation. See Appendix A: Professional Behaviours: Children

## **SOCIAL CONTACT**

- Staff should not seek to have social contact with a child or young person or their families unless the reason for this contact has been firmly established and agreed with their line manager. If a parent or child seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the staff should exercise their professional judgement in making a response but should always discuss the situation with their Line Manager. Such examples could be related to Internet social networking sites (i.e. being asked to be a 'friend' on 'Facebook')
- Staff should gain permission from their line manager if there is a need for them to give their personal details such as home/mobile phone number; home or email address to a child or young person. Under normal circumstances this would be discouraged because of the potential implications from such an action. The process of gaining permission examines the reason for the need and allows it to be 'noted' - in the interest of seeking to protect the staff.

## **PHYSICAL CONTACT**

- There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate for staff to have some physical contact with the child or young person with whom they are working, for example those who teach PE, Games, Drama or who offer music tuition. However, it is crucial that in all circumstances, staff should only touch children in ways which are appropriate to their professional or agreed role and responsibilities.
- When physical contact is made with a child this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.
- Physical contact should never be secretive or casual, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff or volunteer believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported.
- In all circumstances where a child or young person initiates inappropriate physical contact, staff should sensitively deter the child and help them understand the importance of personal boundaries and must always report such circumstances to their Line Manager.
- *While Covid-19 measures are in place, physical contact should only be made in an emergency and staff should maintain a 2m distance at all times. For example, when administering first aid. PPE must be worn if physical contact is required.*

## **SEXUAL CONTACT**

- It is an offence for a person over 18 to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual. This applies where the child is in full-time education and the person works in the same establishment as the child, even if s/he does not teach the child. The sexual activity referred to does not just involve physical contact it may also include non-contact activities.
- There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' where the sole purpose is to gain the trust of a child or young person, and manipulate that relationship so that sexual abuse can take place. Staff and volunteers should be aware that conferring special attention without good reason or favouring a pupil has the potential to be construed as being part of a 'grooming' process, which is a criminal offence.
- Any sexual activity between a member of staff and a child or young person with whom they work may be regarded as a criminal offence and will always be a matter for disciplinary action.

## **INFATUATION**

- Occasionally, a child or young person may develop an infatuation with an adult who works with them. When this does occur, words or actions may be misinterpreted. A member of staff, who

becomes aware that a child or young person is developing an infatuation, should discuss this at the earliest opportunity with their line manager so appropriate action can be taken to avoid any hurt, distress or embarrassment.

## **WITH STAFF**

All staff have a right to be treated with dignity at work. Staff should always respect their colleagues, the pupils and the reputation of the School. See Appendix B: Professional behaviours: Staff

- All staff are expected to follow the School's policies on equality and diversity. All forms of harassment, including racial and sexual harassment, and harassment on the grounds of disability, religion, sexuality, age, gender, political affiliation or membership of a trade union are unacceptable.
- All forms of bullying, including threats or verbal aggression towards colleagues, is unacceptable and will be dealt with seriously by the school. Please refer to the School's Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy and the Grievance Procedure.
- If there are work related issues, which cannot be resolved informally with another colleague, the line manager should be advised. Also refer to the School's Grievance Procedure
- Staff should not be involved in decisions relating to any discipline, promotion, performance development review, or pay progression of any staff who is a relative, or with whom they have a close personal relationship. If a member of staff develops a close personal relationship where a conflict of interest might arise they should notify their line manager.
- Staff should maintain an effective and professional working relationship with their colleagues and line manager.
- Staff should participate in initiatives designed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the school.
- School/Council/Statutory policies, procedures and codes of practice should be followed at all times.
- A member of staff should never conceal a matter that should be reported, or damage, alter or falsify any document, form or record.
- It is the responsibility of staff that if their personal circumstances change, i.e. change of address or home telephone number, they should inform the HR manager and their line manager.
- *While Covid-19 measures are in place, staff must maintain a 2m distance from colleagues at all times. Staff should not move between year groups and meetings should be held virtually where possible. If staff, in unavoidable circumstances, do need to speak to a colleague face to face, any meetings should be less than 10 minutes long.*

## **DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

- Staff may have access to confidential information about children and young people in order to undertake their responsibilities. In some circumstances they may have access to or be given highly sensitive or private information. These details must be kept confidential at all times and only shared when it is in the interests of the child to do so. They should gain the permission of the line manager before disclosing this information to any unauthorised party, in order to protect the staff from any accusations of inappropriate use.
- Staff should have an awareness of the confidential, sensitive and important nature of their role and be mindful of this at all times including formal and informal discussions with parents, other members of staff, children and the wider school community. Particular attention should be paid in public areas of the school such as corridors, the playground and the staff room.
- Confidential information about pupils must be held securely. Confidential information about pupils must not be held off the school site other than on security protected school equipment.
- Information held by the School in relation to staff and pupils may be subject to the provision of the Data Protection Act 2018. Staff should never put themselves in the position where the disclosure of information puts themselves, a colleague, a pupil or the reputation of the school/service at risk.

- Staff should respect the confidentiality of School meetings and the contents of any confidential School documents.

## **CONDUCT OUTSIDE WORK**

- Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the staff's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community. In particular, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable. 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.
- *While Covid-19 measures are in place, staff must follow the government guidance with regards to behaviour outside of school.*

## **GIFTS**

- A member of staff's actions must not be influenced by offers of gifts or hospitality and must not give the impression to another member of staff, parent, pupil or service user that they are influenced in this way.
- Staff should only accept gifts of a modest and token value. It is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.
- Staff should not accept a gift of hospitality from anyone who is, or may be in the foreseeable future, tendering for any contract with the School or may be seeking employment with the School. Staff should decline any offer of hospitality if they think the giver has an ulterior motive.
- If staff accept any bribes from an individual (e.g. parent) that provides either the School or Buckinghamshire Council with goods or services, they may be guilty of corruption. Staff should inform their Head Teacher/line manager if anyone tries to bribe them or if there is evidence of improper behaviour by others.
- The giving of gifts or rewards to children or young people should be in line with the school's Behaviour policy for supporting positive behaviour or recognising particular achievements. The giving of a personal gift for a specific reason is only acceptable practice where, in line with the agreed policy, the member of staff has first discussed this with their line manager.
- Staff should be cautious when selecting children and/or young people for specific activities or privileges to avoid perceptions of favouritism or unfairness. Methods and criteria for selection should always be transparent and subject to scrutiny.

## **STAFF DRESS CODE**

- A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, staff and volunteers should recognise that they are role models to the children and their choice of dress should uphold the school's expectations for the children.
- Staff and volunteers must ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake. Those who dress or appear in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations of misconduct.
- Whilst it is not possible to list every possible clothing option, staff should dress in a way that reflects a professional appearance.
- The wearing of casual items such as jeans, sports clothing, football team clothing or items of clothing that could be deemed by others as too revealing should be avoided.
- Tattoos and body art should be covered up and facial piercings removed whilst in school due to the impressionable nature of young children.

- Staff should wear PE clothes and trainers when teaching PE and Games lessons. To be consistent with the expectations for the children, staff should change into these for the morning or afternoon session whenever the lesson is taught and PE clothes should not be worn throughout the day. Staff attending to support the learning of pupils in a PE or Games lesson should at a minimum have a change of appropriate shoes.

## **ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION, INTERNET USE AND SOCIAL NETWORKING**

- The school has a separate policy on Acceptable Use including a Code of Practice which forms part of this Code of Conduct.
- Staff should ensure that they follow the school's security procedures in relation to the use of computers and the proper management of computer held information. Particular care must be taken to observe established procedures when using passwords and logging on and off. Staff should never share a password or similar security device that may lead to unauthorised access to the school's systems or property.
- Under no circumstances should adults in school access inappropriate images. Deliberately accessing pornography on school equipment will be treated as gross misconduct and may be considered a criminal offence.
- Accessing indecent images of children on the internet, and making, storing or disseminating such material, is illegal and is likely lead to criminal prosecution and may result in barring from work with children and young people.
- Personal property of a sexually explicit nature such as books, magazines, DVDs or such material on any electronic media must not be brought onto or stored on the school premises.
- Social networking sites and blogging are extremely popular. Staff must not post material which damages the reputation of the school or which causes concern about their suitability to work with children and young people. Those who post material which could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations of misconduct or disciplinary action. Security settings should be maintained at the highest level in order to prevent members of the public seeing any of your personal information.
- An agreement of trust is promoted regarding the carrying and use of mobile phones within the setting environment, which is agreed to by all practitioners.
- Staff are not permitted to make/receive calls/texts during work time where children are present. (excluding break times)
- Staff should ensure that their mobile phone is silent at all times whilst in classrooms with children and in staffrooms. They should not be left on display.
- Staff are not permitted to use recording equipment on their mobile phones or other personal devices.

## **PROVIDING FIRST AID AND PERSONAL INTIMATE CARE**

- The school has separate policies on First Aid and Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs which form part of this Code of Conduct.
- Staff are expected to do their best at all times and particularly in emergencies, to secure the welfare of their fellow staff, pupils or clients. The consequences of taking no action are likely to be more serious than those of trying to assist in an emergency.
- No personal liability for injuries sustained to a first aid casualty will be attached to any individual first aider, emergency first aider or appointed person acting in the course of their employment as long as they follow any training or other guidance they have been given.
- All members of staff should know what to do and respond accordingly if they become aware that a pupil with a medical condition needs help.

- Although administering medicine is not part of teacher's professional duties, teachers should take into account the needs of pupils with medical conditions that they teach.
- Staff must not give prescription medication or undertake healthcare procedures without appropriate training.

### **LONE WORKING**

- The school has a separate policy on Lone Working which forms part of this Code of Conduct.
- Staff are discouraged from lone working. If you are lone working or in a more isolated area of the school, staff must ensure their immediate superior is aware of the task being undertaken.
- Staff working in one-to-one situations with children and young people may be more vulnerable to allegations. There should be no one-to-one contact between staff and pupils that is not 'open to the casual observer'. They should therefore assess the need to have another adult present, and consider the location and facilities to ensure their own security and safety and that of the child/young person.

### **USE OF REASONABLE FORCE**

- The school has a separate policy on the Use of Reasonable Force which forms part of this Code of Conduct.
- Staff should only use force when
  - The potential consequences of not intervening are sufficiently serious to justify considering use of force.
  - The chances of having the desired result by other means are low.
  - The risks associated with not using force outweigh those of using force.

### **TRANSPORTING CHILDREN**

- The school has a separate policy on the Work Related Road Safety which forms part of this Code of Conduct.
- Staff will only transport children with the knowledge of their parents and ensuring that there are more than two people in the car at all times.

### **WORKING SAFELY**

- It is the duty of all staff to take reasonable care of their health and safety and that of others who are affected by what they do or do not do. They should also ensure that they keep up to date with health and safety guidance as provided by the employer. (Also refer to the Health and Safety Policy and Hygiene Regulations within the School).
- Staff should use any safety clothing and equipment provided by the employer that is needed in their role and ensure that the equipment is not misused, neglected or damaged. Staff must report any accident or "near misses" they have at work as soon as possible and accurately complete an accident report form, this includes verbal and physical assaults.
- Staff must take reasonable care of pupils under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their health and safety. (Also refer to 'Policy & Guidance on Educational Visits' available within the School).
- Alcohol should not be consumed during the working day unless agreed beforehand by the appropriate line manager for a specific occasion. Staff should make sure that if they do drink alcohol at any time when they are off duty, it does not affect their ability to carry out their work or in any way damage the reputation of the School.
- Staff should not take any non-medical substance, such as drugs, that may affect their performance at work. Prescribed drugs may be taken but if a GP gives staff any medication that may have a negative effect on their performance, they should tell their line manager in confidence. The use of

illegal substances may not only result in formal action, including the possibility of summary dismissal, but may also be reported to the police.

- The Council operates a No Smoking Policy. This applies to all Council premises and those where Council services are provided. It also applies when transporting children in vehicles and to visits to children or parents in their own homes or other establishments.
- *While Covid-19 measures are in place, all health and safety measures in place to protect those in school must be followed.*

While every attempt has been made to cover a wide range of situations, it is recognised that this guidance cannot cover all eventualities. It is expected that in these circumstances, adults will seek advice from their line managers.

If at any time, a member of staff feels that a child or young person is at risk of harm, whether this is a child protection or welfare concern, these must be reported to the designated safeguarding lead. Anyone who has any doubt should refer to the document 'Keeping children safe in education: information for all staff' and follow that guidance.

**Date: September 2021**

**Review Date: September 2022**

**APPENDIX A**  
**PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOURS: CHILDREN**

With children:

- We uphold the school's policies and procedures on Behaviour and Child Protection in our dealings with children. We acknowledge that we are in 'loco parentis' and, as such, have a duty of care for all children in the school
- We are consistent in the way that we apply rewards and sanctions to the children, so that each individual child knows that they will receive the same treatment from any member of staff
- We understand that children have a right to be heard
- We are friendly and supportive to all children, but maintain our professionalism at all times. We acknowledge that some interactions that seek to 'be friends' with children can create ambiguity in the relationship and are unhelpful
- We protect ourselves and our pupils by making sure that we avoid being alone with individual children, but if it is unavoidable to do so, we ensure that we are in a place where others can see us
- We use physical contact with children in a careful, sensitive and respectful way
- When speaking to children, we always consider how we would expect to be spoken to ourselves
- We teach and respond to children as unique individuals
- We have a professional responsibility to inform an appropriate person if we believe that a colleague is behaving in a way that compromises the safety or well-being of any child or group of children

**APPENDIX B**  
**PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOURS: STAFF**

With other members of staff:

- We act in a professional manner towards colleagues, irrespective of our relative position or status within the school hierarchy, for example:
- Speaking politely to one another;
- Being approachable, friendly and welcoming to other adults in school – both staff members and visitors;
- Being flexible and understanding of unexpected changes within the school day;
- Communicating clearly and honestly;
- Addressing concerns openly and honestly with the person to whom the concern is addressed, whenever possible, without publicly criticising or undermining anyone;
- Not deliberately discriminating or ostracising certain members of staff;
- Avoiding the establishment of 'cliques' within the staff body;
- Supporting the professional development of all colleagues;
- Sharing concerns confidentially and with the appropriate member of staff.

**APPENDIX C**  
**PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOURS: PARENTS**

With parents:

- Parents have an entitlement to be informed about their child's learning and well-being. We always seek to involve and engage parents in this process
- We recognise parents' entitlement to express any concerns they may have about their child's learning, safety or well-being
- We always seek to work in partnership with parents, using their understanding of their own child to help us to provide the best learning opportunities that we can
- We recognise that parents' worries and concerns can be extremely emotive and we acknowledge that, at times, we will need to speak to parents when they are upset
- If we are concerned that a parent may be aggressive or otherwise inappropriate towards us, we can ask for a colleague (usually a senior leader) to be present
- In extreme circumstances, the Headteacher may decide that it is safer for a teacher to communicate with a parent through different means
- We are honest with parents, without undermining colleagues, and respond fairly to their concerns irrespective of their race, religion, culture or social background
- When speaking to parents, we always consider how we would expect to be spoken to ourselves
- We take responsibility for our actions
- We protect ourselves by ensuring that we meet with parents in areas of the school that are visible and easily accessible to other staff members, while remembering to be sensitive to the confidential nature of some discussions. We always make sure that colleagues know when and where we are meeting with parents and ensure that parents are signed in through the school office
- We recognise the right to confidentiality of all members of the school community