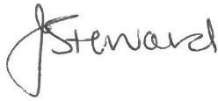





STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

Formally adopted by the Governing Body of Sheringham Community Primary & Nursery School	
On	5 th October 2023
Chair of Governors	
Head Teacher	
Last updated	5 th October 2023
Review	5 th October 2024

Be all that you can be...



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1. Aims, scope and principles

- To create and maintain a shared understanding of how we should all behave towards one another.
- To express our shared commitment to promoting lifelong learning through respect for all.
- To provide clear, unambiguous guidance for members of staff and volunteers about the standards of conduct that are expected of them, both within and outside of our school.
- To provide a reference point for school leaders and managers.

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 pupils 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.

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.

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 whistle-blowing, as well as acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

2. Applicable to

- All employees, parent helpers and outside agencies that work within our school.
- Parents and pupils.

3. Setting an example

All adults who work in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils/students.

All adults must, therefore, demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils/students to do the same.

All adults must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

This Code helps all adults to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable.

4. Safeguarding pupils/students

We all have a duty to safeguard pupils/students from:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- neglect
- risk of radicalisation

The duty to safeguard pupils/students includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil/student to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for Child Protection.

The school's DSL is the Deputy Head, Mr J Amies, alternates are: Mrs R Carter, Mrs J Tupper & Mrs Cat Wall.

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. Staff will receive regular and updated safeguarding training / updates. Staff are expected to read key documents and confirm this using the Data Protection Education site. They are also available on the school's website.

We must not demean or undermine pupils, their parents or carers, or colleagues. We must take reasonable care of pupils/students under our supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.

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

This should be reported to the Headteacher (or chair of governors if the allegation is against the headteacher) without delay.

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.

Low Level Concerns

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'.

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, contrary to school policy
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door, or
- humiliating children.

Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work. 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.

In any such case, any low-level concern should be reported directly to the headteacher.

Whistle-blowing

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.

For our school's detailed whistle-blowing process, please refer to our whistle-blowing policy.

5. Pupil/Student development / relationships

Staff must comply with school policies and procedures that support the wellbeing and development of pupils/students, e.g. The Behaviour Policy, Nurture Policy, SEND Policy, Mental Health and Well-being Policy.

Staff must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of pupils/students. Staff must follow reasonable instructions that support the development of pupils/students.

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

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. Honesty and Integrity

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.

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.

7. 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 will not behave in a way that a transferable risk assessment may conclude they are unsuitable to work with children.

In particular, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable and may result in disciplinary action being taken.

Staff must exercise caution when using information technology, especially social media, and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Staff must not use personal social media e.g. Facebook/Twitter/Instagram/Snapchat with pupils or former pupils unless the former pupil is aged at least eighteen and has not been a pupil at the school for over seven years. Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute. Staff must only use their school email account or school learning platform account when communicating electronically with pupils, parents and colleagues.

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.

All members of staff must declare any business interests outside of school that may be connected either to the supply of goods / services to the school or be rewarded through association with the school.

8. Confidentiality

Where staff have access to confidential information about pupils/students 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/student.

All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a pupil/student is hurt either physically or emotionally by another pupil/student, 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/student'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. However, 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/student. Staff must never promise a pupil/student that they will not act on information that they are told by the pupil/student.

9. Disciplinary Action:

All staff need to recognise that failure to meet these standards of behaviour and conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

10. Professional Relationships

10.1. With children:

- We act respectfully towards children at all times, for example:
 - Speaking in a calm and objective way, even in the face of challenging circumstances.
 - Using a range of vocal volume that is appropriate to the learning activity (we may raise our voices in a controlled way to achieve a desired impact, but we never shout in anger).
 - Showing good manners to children and thereby modelling what good manners are and praising good examples shown by children.
 - Taking seriously what all children tell us. Our first response is always to believe what we are told.
 - Giving children time to express themselves.
 - Considering how we would expect to be spoken to ourselves.
 - Pursuing amicable settlements to conflicts between children in a way that is demonstrably fair and listens to all points of view before making a considered judgement.
 - We judge children based on the current situation and not on past behavior.
 - Making clear to children why a course of action has been necessary and following it through.
- 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, teaching staff and support 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. A hand on the shoulder or head is often a good way of engaging with an individual child. However, any physical contact should be avoided when staff members are alone with individual children, except in emergency. We adopt the principle that parents want their children to be given a certain level of physical reassurance if distressed, hurt or otherwise in need. This is the case for all children, but may be appropriate more frequently for younger children.

- We all take responsibility for our actions and are prepared to apologise when we have made mistakes and undertake to learn from those errors, just as we expect the children to do.
- 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.

10.2. 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 and take these concerns seriously.
- 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, e.g. email.
- 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 acknowledge that we are human and will all make mistakes from time to time.
- We take responsibility for our actions and are willing to apologise when we have made mistakes and undertake to learn from those errors.
- 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.
- We recognise the right to confidentiality of all members of the school community.

10.3. 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 flexible and understanding of necessary changes within the school day.
 - Assuming that the actions of others are carried out in good faith.
 - Communicating clearly and honestly with colleagues.
 - Addressing concerns openly and honestly with the person to whom the concern is addressed, whenever possible, without publicly criticising anyone.
 - Being publicly supportive of colleagues, and dealing with concerns or disagreements privately, with support if necessary.
- We share a responsibility to encourage and support our colleagues in their professional development.
- We consider all members of the staff team to have equal value, irrespective of their job, and we treat them accordingly.
- When speaking to colleagues, we always consider how we would expect to be spoken to ourselves.
- Concerns raised with managers are dealt with confidentially. If further action is required, the manager has responsibility to inform only the appropriate senior person within the school.
- We recognise that we are all accountable for our actions and performance and that from time-to-time leaders and managers will need to deliver feedback that is challenging. All individual feedback is given sensitively, and constructively and should only be shared with those staff members that need to know (e.g. line manager or mentor).
- We approach issues with colleagues in a way that always seeks to solve potential problems in a positive way.
- We never act in a way that publicly undermines a colleague.
- We all take responsibility for our actions and are prepared to apologise when we have made mistakes and undertake to learn from those errors.

11. Social Media

Staff in school should not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. This includes social networking sites such as Instagram, Facebook, Whats App, Twitter and blogging. Staff must not use personal social media e.g. Facebook/Twitter/Instagram/Snapchat with pupils or former pupils unless the former pupil is aged at least eighteen and has not been a pupil at the school for over seven years. Even if a pupil seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise her/his professional judgment in making a response and be aware that such social contact in person, by phone or on the internet could be misconstrued and may place the member of staff in a very vulnerable position. Staff and volunteers must not give their personal details such as home/mobile phone number; home or e-mail address to pupils.

Staff must be aware that comments made on social media are often in a public forum and should therefore uphold our professional standards.

12. 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 / videos of pupils.

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

Staff do not put online any text, image, sound or video that could upset or offend any member of the whole school community or be incompatible with your professional role.

13. Staff Dress

- We dress in a manner that exhibits the importance of the job that we do.
- We wear smart, practical clothes.
- We avoid wearing clothes that could cause offence or embarrassment to others.
- Jeans are not considered acceptable, unless participating in a trip or visit that requires harder wearing clothes (e.g. residential trips.) or for outdoor learning activities.
- When leading physical activities and/or PE lessons (including Sports Day), we change into suitable clothing for that lesson (e.g. trainers and P.E. clothes).
- We do not wear excessive amounts of jewellery and understand our own Health and Safety responsibilities.
- Clothes or body modifications will not be offensive or display political slogans.

14. Other Areas

- Members of teaching staff must be ready to work in classrooms by 8.30 am as stated in the directed time schedule.
- Other staff members arrive in school in good time to begin their contracted hours. Where a member of staff works directly with children, they should be ready to start work with the children at their start time.
- If for any reason staff are delayed in the morning, it is their responsibility to ensure that the appropriate person is informed at the earliest opportunity, leaving a message on the school answering machine is not acceptable.

- Teachers are available after the end of the school day to meet with colleagues, parents and managers.
- We support and use the systems in place for monitoring who is on site and understand that these systems are for the Health and Safety of ourselves and others.
- It is staff's responsibility to inform the school office **personally** (by telephone, not email) of any absence as close to 8 am as possible and by 4pm if the absence will continue the following day.
- Staff and visitor ID badges must be worn when on school grounds.
- Staff and visitors should sign in and out of the school using the electronic system (Inventory) located in the reception.
- Staff should not keep their personal mobile phones on their person during the school working day. They should be left in bags, coats or another secure place away from the children. If staff are expecting an important call it should come through the school office.
- All teaching staff follow and adhere to the Teachers' Standards.
- Emails should be checked regularly, daily as an ideal on working days or every other day if one day is particularly busy or weekly as an absolute minimum.
- Staff will reflect on their own practice and use feedback to help them recognise their own development needs; they will actively seek out opportunities to develop their knowledge, understanding, skills and practice.

15. Monitoring arrangements

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

Our governing board 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.

16. 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
- Child protection and safeguarding
- Online safety
- Whistle-blowing
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Intimate Care Policy