



William Reynolds Primary School and Nursery

Professional code of conduct for staff working in schools

Introduction

This document outlines the school's expectation in relation to employee conduct and outlines the school's responsibility to the employee. This document mainly refers to conduct expected in the work place but may also cover conduct when representing the school e.g. whilst at training, attending work related functions or activities on social media that may affect the reputation of the school.

It should also be used in conjunction with other relevant policies and standards such as professional standards, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies, Behaviour Policy, contract of employment/written statement of particulars, to name but a few.

Given the nature of this establishment, this document should also be a guide to assist in ensuring children's and employees safety. It therefore explains the responsibilities the school has towards it's employees and children/pupils on a whole school basis

This is reviewed regularly by *Governors* and reissued to staff after the review

Duty of Care

This school has a duty of care to the pupils/children within it and also to all employees. This duty should be at the heart of all employee and employer practice.

Pupils and employees within this school have a duty to keep pupils safe and protect them from harm. Given the position of trust this places employees in, employees are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure pupils' safety and well-being.

This is detailed in a range of policies.

- Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Speak Up Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Emergency Evacuation Policy
- Asthma Policy
- Contenance Policy

- Social Networking Policy
- E-Awareness Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Stress Policy
- Attendance at Work Policy
- Data Protection Policy

Employees - employers should provide a safe working environment and appropriate guidance regarding safer working practices. They should also ensure that employees are treated fairly and reasonably in all circumstances. Employees will be informed of all relevant policies as part of their induction. Where a new or revised policy is adopted, the School will ensure each employee has access to it.

In addition, each employee has a personal duty to take care of themselves and anyone else who may be affected by their actions or failings.

Employees should:

- Understand the responsibilities of their role and the sanctions should these not be followed
- Act and be seen to act in the pupil's best interest
- Act in a way to protect the School's reputation
- Avoid conduct which could lead to questions over motivation and intentions
- Act in line with school policy and procedure
- Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour
- Speak up promptly about any concerns they have

Employers should:

- Clarify what is expected about an employee at work and where relevant, outside of work
- Provide a safe and healthy working environment
- Support for your rights and recognise diversity
- Foster a culture of openness and support
- Ensure that appropriate policies are adopted, implemented, monitored and reviewed e.g. employee policies, safeguarding, child protection, code of conduct
- Ensure that employees have access to and understand guidance, related policies and systems that are in place
- Ensure that employees are not placed in a vulnerable position
- Ensure that those who provide services or activities are aware of safeguarding policies and procedures
- Treat employees reasonably and fairly

Complaints

Should an employee have a concern with the way in which they are being treated by their employer, the grievance process should be followed. Advice should be sought by the employee from their relevant trade union.

Should an employee have a complaint relating to the school then they should use the relevant policy e.g. Speak Up, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy or Complaints Policy.

Should the employer have concerns regarding employee conduct, the employer should always try to resolve the matter at the lowest possible level i.e. through discussion with the employee. For more serious matters, the school may need to refer to the relevant employment policy e.g. discipline.

Code of conduct

This code covers a number of situations but does not cover all eventualities. Where it is necessary to refer to a specific school policy, this will be noted.

As stated in the introduction, a 'Professional Code of Conduct' is also provided as part of an employee's written statement of particulars which should be adhered to and used in conjunction with this document. The document produced by the Government Offices for the English Regions- "Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults Who Work with Children and Young People" is universally regarded as a best practice guide to work alongside local policies.

1. Dress and Appearance

All employees should dress in a manner that is appropriate for their role, individuals they work with and work they undertake.

Clothing and appearance should not:

- cause embarrassment or give rise to any misunderstanding
- be likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative
- be considered to be discriminatory or culturally sensitive
- be political or represent contentious slogans

2. Behaviour

All employees have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in both the school and their own ability to provide an outstanding level of education and care whilst safeguarding the welfare and best interest of the pupils they are responsible for.

Equally, all employees should be able to carry out their duties in an environment where all individuals treat each other fairly and with respect and dignity. Acts of discrimination, harassment or bullying, intentional or otherwise, will not be tolerated.

Employees should foster an approach which is aligned to the ethos of the School and understand the Behaviour Policy. Therefore employees can expect to be treated reasonably and fairly.

It is not acceptable to behave in a manner which could question an employee's suitability to work with pupils or encourage others to make unprofessional comments or comments which could cause offense.

This level of behaviour is to be expected at all times when representing the School which includes attending such events as training and work related social functions.

With the rise of social media, it is not acceptable for employees to behave in such a way that would not uphold public confidence within the school.

Staff should not, without authority, undertake **activities unconnected with their professional role** during working hours. Policies relating to Leave of Absence are laid down in the Personnel Handbook and should be followed.

3. Confidentiality

Employees can expect to have their personal information secured confidentially. Personal matters should also be kept in the strictest of confidence.

Employees within the school may have access to private or sensitive information about the pupils within the school. These details must be kept confidential and only shared when it is in the child's best interest to do so.

Storage of any such information should be in line with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Employers should ensure that employees are clear on confidentiality.

Employees should report concerns to a senior member of the School.

4. Data Protection

The Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA 1998) establishes a framework of rights and duties which makes personal information safe. Personal information is information about a living individual, who can be identified from the information.

This school is committed to protecting the privacy of individuals and handles all personal information in a manner that complies with the DPA 1998. It is the **personal responsibility** of all employees (temporary or permanent), Governors, contractors, agents and anyone else processing information on our behalf to comply with this policy.

Any deliberate breach of this policy could amount to a criminal offence under one or more pieces of legislation, for example the Computer Misuse Act 1990 and the DPA 1998. All breaches will be investigated and appropriate action taken.

Staff should make sure that they do not **disclose confidential information** to anyone who has no right to receive it and do not say or write anything that would constitute a breach of confidence. Confidential information relating to employment or the school should only be communicated on a need to know basis or with the specific permission of the Head.

Staff must not use their mobile phones during their working sessions in school.

5. Gifts

Employees should not receive or accept gifts, loan, fees, hospitality or other reward which influences the way in which duties are carried out.

Employees have a responsibility to report any such reward or suspicions of any such awards to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors.

6. **Use of materials and equipment** provided by the LA or school should not be used for purposes unconnected with employment. Staff should always use public funds to the best advantage of the school, community and LA and adhere to high standards of probity in their use.

7. Use of Internet and Social Media

The use of the Internet and Social Media in the work place can be very useful but also can be open to misuse. Employees must take every step to protect themselves when using such 'media' and **must refer to the Social networking Policy**.

Employees must also be careful when using social media personally to ensure that no activity relates negatively on the school's reputation. Should such information be brought to the Head teacher's attention, the disciplinary process may be followed.

8. Whistle Blowing - Speak Up

If you have any concerns that there may be a breach of a code of conduct, it is important that you speak up. Speaking up early helps to protect you, makes investigations easier and could protect the School reputation. **Please refer to the Speak Up Policy**.

Staff are made aware of the NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline where general guidance can be sought where staff feel that they cannot report a concern and need support to do so <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/>

9. Raising Concerns - Safeguarding

The law recognises that staff act **in loco parentis** in respect of pupils in their charge and must act in the role of reasonably prudent parent in the school context. Through their actions staff must act in accordance with this duty of care to ensure at all times that the safety and welfare of pupils is accorded the highest priority. In this and other ways staff should always maintain standards of conduct which sustain their professional standing and that of the school.

When holding **meetings with pupils** on sensitive issues, staff should exercise proper professional judgement over the arrangements for the meeting. They should safeguard their own position by, for instance, considering the need for a second adult to be present. **Corporal punishment** defined as any intentional application of force as punishment is illegal and may render a member of staff liable to criminal action as well as action under the school's disciplinary procedures.

Corporal punishment includes any form of physical chastisement. **Physical intervention** will not constitute corporal punishment where its purpose is to avert an immediate danger of

injury to, or an immediate danger to the property of, any person including a pupil. In such circumstances, the element of restraint should be the minimum necessary to prevent injury or remove the risk of harm.

Where **physical contact** is necessary (for example in teaching PE or Music), contact should be the minimum necessary for the purpose and comply with accepted good practice. Particular care should be taken in helping pupils with physical or other disabilities (for example in lifting). Further guidance is available in Codes of Practice produced by the professional associations representing staff in these subject areas.

Following any incident where a member of staff has reason to believe that their actions may be open to **misinterpretation**, the Head or Head of Service should be immediately notified and a written report submitted as soon as possible following the incident. Heads should contact a senior officer of the LA.

Further information can be found at www.telfordsafeguardingboard.org.uk.

It also acknowledged that "Working Together" 2015 and "Keeping Children Safe in Education" September 2016 are viewed on the same principle.

On a general level the highest standards of safeguarding conduct are expected from the whole school community. It is important to note that in particular well known and peripheral areas of safeguarding concern should be paramount to a child's welfare namely;

- Four Defined Categories of Abuse-Sexual, Emotional, Physical and Neglect as defined in "Working Together" 2015
- Bullying-In all forms that it takes in that it may transgress across the four defined areas above
- Extremism (Statutory-"Prevent duty guidance" March 2015)

Namely, that we expect staff to encourage pupils to respect the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Staff should ensure that partisan political views are not promoted in the teaching of any subject in the school and where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils, reasonably practicable steps have been taken to offer a balanced presentation of opposing views to pupils.

- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)-Multi Agency Practice Guidelines HM Government 2014 (New mandatory reporting due October 2015)
- Children That Have Gone Missing (T&W Missing Children Process 2014)
- Forced Marriage-"Handing Cases of Forced Marriage" Multi Agency Practice Guidelines HM Government June 2009
- Children Missing From Education-Whether Authorised or Not
- Poor/Irregular Attendance (Protocol for Identifying and Maintaining Contact with Children Not Receiving Education)

- Children Abused Through Exploitation (CATE)-T&W Pathway Process

The Safeguarding Policy takes into account of all these issues and therefore staff conduct in addressing any safeguarding concerns is paramount and doing nothing not being an option.

10. Conflicts of Interest

Employees must be mindful to avoid personal circumstances which could lead to conflict of interest.

11. Health & Safety

The School will endeavour to abide by Health and Safety legislation to ensure the safety and wellbeing of employees at work.

Employees are expected to follow appropriate Health and Safety guidance to keep themselves safe at work. Employees also have their own duty of care to take care of themselves and anyone else affected by their actions or failings.

Failure to observe the provisions of the Code may be relevant in considering action under disciplinary procedures. Should this occur, full consideration will be given to all the relevant facts and circumstances of the case in accordance with the principles of natural justice and following agreed procedures.

The documents referred to in this Statement of Particulars are available on the school T drive, from your Headteacher or your Employment Services team. Requests for information should be made through your Manager in the first instance.

Reviewed January 2017

Signed

Role in school

Date