

# Staff Code of Conduct

Chiltern Primary School

2023 – 2024



Together, over time, we are proud to learn to make a difference  
to ourselves and others

Approved by:

Date:

Last reviewed on:

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## 1. Aims, scope and principles

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. As a school which celebrates difference and diversity within a safe and nurturing environment this is essential

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. Such as staff who have pupils that attend the school must remain professional and the school will work to help avoid conflicts of interest.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

We are required to establish procedures for the regulation of staff conduct under regulation 7 of [The School Staffing \(England\) Regulations 2009](#).

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.

### 3. General obligations

Staff set an example to pupils. They will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school
- Treat pupils, colleagues and others with dignity and respect
- Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others
- Not undermine fundamental British values and be fully inclusive of all needs, races, orientations and preferences, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Uphold equality expectations: showing no unconscious bias
- Not express personal beliefs in a way that exploits pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within
- Adhere to the Teachers' Standards

### 4. Safeguarding

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect.

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.

Our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures are available on MyConcern, the school website and paper copies are in the staff room and the main office. New staff will also be given copies on arrival.

#### 4.1 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

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.

#### **4.2 Low-level concerns about members of staff**

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'. For example, this may include:

- Being over-friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on a personal device
- Engaging in 1-to-1 activities where they can't easily be seen
- Humiliating pupils including ridiculing, reprimanding in public (rather than private) or leaving out of activities

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

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy. 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.

Reporting and responding to low-level concerns is covered in more detail in our child protection and safeguarding policy. This is available on MyConcern, the school website and paper copies are in the staff room, main office and the DSL's office.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

### **4.3 Whistle-blowing**

Whistle-blowing reports wrongdoing that it is "in the public interest" to report. Examples linked to safeguarding include:

- Pupils' or staff's 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/appropriate senior leader. 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 on MyConcern, the school website and paper copies are in the staff room and the main office.

## **5. Staff-pupil relationships**

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 in to the room
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of school hours if possible. If this is difficult due to family/personal circumstances then staff are expected to maintain an appropriate professional approach with pupils outside of their family circle.

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 unless openly whole class treats or given consistently and fairly.

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. Communication and social media**

School staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name, as pupils may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead, and set public profiles to private.

Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship. They will not make any efforts to find pupils' or parents' social media profiles.

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at the school without their consent.

Staff may reply to questions posed on the school's PTA Facebook page but must never engage in any disputes or grievances posted on the pages.

Staff should be aware of the school's following policies: Online Safety policy, KCSIE, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Equality policy and Staff Code of Conduct.

## **7. Acceptable use of technology**

Staff will not use technology in 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 of pupils.

We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system and searches are constantly scanned via the filtering system with reports sent to the school.

The ICT and internet acceptable use policy provide further information

## **8. Confidentiality**

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the school, staff, pupils and their parents.

This information should never be:

- Disclosed to anyone unless required by law or with consent from the relevant party or parties
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, as detailed further in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

## **9. Honesty and integrity**

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities.

Staff will not accept bribes. Gifts that are worth more than £50 must be declared and recorded by the school business manager to avoid conflict.

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.

## **10. Dress code**

Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner.

Outfits will not be overly revealing, and suitable for the age of children you are working with

Clothes will not display any offensive or overtly political slogans.

Only tailored dark blue or black denim jeans/jeggings are permitted as daily work wear. No ripped, scruffy or faded denim is allowed, except on mufti days. Trousers should be no shorter than the knee. Staff should also consider, depending who they work with, whether it is safe to wear scarves, jewellery or open toed sandals. Flip-flops may be worn, but these are at the wearer's risk as they can cause trip hazards upstairs or on uneven surfaces.

## **11. Conduct outside of work**

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. Any such conduct could lead to dismissal.

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 could lead to dismissal.

Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Staff must not use social media with current or past pupils (until the pupil is at least 25 of age).

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites, which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute. This includes posting inappropriate images on Facebook after nights out/ using offensive language or making personal attacks on others.

Staff must use only their school email account or school learning platform account when communicating electronically with pupils, parents and colleagues.

Staff should never talk about school children in a public place with any other adult as anyone could be listening and this could be instant dismissal as it would breach confidentiality rules.

Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school and is not to a level, which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance or attendance.

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.

## **12. Attendance and Punctuality**

All staff should have an attendance of at least 95% a year. We will track any regular days people have off or when there are 3 or more periods of absence across a full term. Attendance below 95% i.e. a maximum of 10 days may result in a referral to establish any issues they might have fulfilling their role.

Staff should be punctual in order to arrive at school in time for their contracted working hours. All staff must sign in and out using the electronic sign in system every time they enter or exit the school premises.

## **13. Break Times**

Staff are entitled to one break of reasonable length between school sessions, this will be 30 or 60 minutes depending on the individual's contract.

Morning breaks are directed time and staff can be asked to perform break or first aid duties on a rota. A short comfort break can be taken following a break time supervision.

Staff that smoke must fully leave the school grounds and ensure that they cannot be seen by pupils or parents.

## **14. Monitoring arrangements**

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

## **15. 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
- Behaviour
- Equality

## **16. Appendix 1 – aide memoire for all staff.**

When we speak to others we will:

- use a positive statement rather than a negative one so that children can learn what we expect of them in any situation.
- use a calm tone of voice at all times, to explain something to or instruct the children, so that they can follow our words without feeling threatened or uncomfortable.
- avoid using sarcastic words or phrases as these demean children and prevent them from developing high self-esteem.
- speak respectfully to other adults at all times, even if we disagree with them.

As professionals we will:

- avoid workplace gossip and negativity as it breeds resentment and becomes a roadblock to effective communication and collaboration. We all have a duty to take active steps to divert conversations away from this if we come across it. See your line manager if you have a genuine grievance.
- maintain confidentiality about anything that we see or hear in the school, so that parents and children can trust us, and as a way of showing respect to our fellow professionals.
- work as part of a team, contributing as well as learning from others and helping to build up a strong workforce so that we can provide the best possible learning opportunities for the children.
- work within the school's policies and practices, so that what we do is consistent with what has been agreed between all members of the staff and the governors.
- treat everyone with respect.
- dress appropriately, so that we set a good example for the children and to show that we are professionals who are at Chiltern to work effectively for the good of our families.
- behave in a positive way despite any personal problems that we may have, especially in front of the children.

## **17. Appendix 2 – consent form.**

# Staff Code of Conduct 2023

I agree to the above terms:

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Updated : September 2023

Next review: September 2024