

THE STOKE POGES SCHOOL

Code of Conduct for Staff

Governors Committee Responsible for the Policy	Finance, Pay and Personnel Committee
Date Approved	September 2019
Recommended Review Period	One year
Date for Review	September 2020
Person Responsible for the Policy	Headteacher

Introduction

A code of conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all staff are expected to observe, and the school should notify staff of this code and the expectations therein. Staff are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that models the highest possible standards. Each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school whether inside or outside working hours.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

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.

It is an expectation that all members of staff (and adult volunteers, governors and visitors) model courteous and respectful behaviour to the children through their appearance and all aspects of their conduct. This includes the way in which adults talk to the children as well as to each other.

Staff are expected to be conscientious and loyal to the aims of The Stoke Poges School and to model the school values. In addition, staff are required to develop and maintain the professional character of the school.

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.

Legislation and Guidance

We are required to set out a code of conduct under regulation 7 of The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009.

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', we are required to have a staff code of conduct, which should cover acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

Safeguarding

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

Staff will familiarise themselves with our safeguarding policy and procedures and the Prevent initiative, and ensure they are aware of the processes if they have concerns about a child.

Our safeguarding policy and procedures are available on the g-drive and in the staff file held in the classrooms. New staff will also be given copies on arrival.

School Policies

This Code of Conduct should be read and adhered to in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Staff disciplinary policies and procedures, which will be used if staff break this code of conduct. These set out examples of what we will deem as misconduct and gross misconduct.
- Safeguarding Policy
- E-Safety Policy

General Standards and Expectations

Appearance/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 here, it is hoped that staff will support the need to 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. Staff should wear PE clothes and trainers when teaching PE 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.

Attendance

Our expectations are that staff members:

- Attend work in accordance with their contract of employment and associated terms and conditions in relation to hours, days of work and holidays.
- Make routine medical and dental appointments outside of their working hours or during holidays, except in the case of emergencies or to attend ante-natal appointments. In any event time should be agreed with the Headteacher.
- Refer to the school's policy on special leave if they need time off for any reason other than personal illness. Leave should be agreed with the Headteacher.
- Follow the school's absence reporting procedure when they are absent from work due to illness or injury.

Staff Relations

An atmosphere of mutual confidence, trust and respect between staff is essential to achieving the aims and targets of the school and in providing a high quality teaching and learning environment. Staff are expected to:

- Promote the school in a positive manner.
- Work reliably and conduct themselves within the overall values of the school, school policies and procedures and their contractual obligations.
- Carry out reasonable instructions given by line managers or the Headteacher.
- Recognise their important role as part of a team and the positive impact of the team in achieving overall benefits for pupils.

Relationship with Pupils

Staff are expected to:

- Encourage the highest possible level of achievement for all pupils.
- Value and respect all pupils regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, belief, disability, special educational needs.
- Treat all pupils in a polite, positive, respectful and considerate manner.
- Act in accordance with the school's safeguarding policies.
- Implement the planning for positive behaviour policy and set appropriate professional boundaries that promote self-discipline and self-esteem.

Staff must not seek to establish social contact with children for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. They must not have any sort of friendship or romantic or sexual relationship with any child who is under the age of 18.

Staff members must not misuse or misrepresent their position, qualifications or experience or bring the school into disrepute. The Headteacher must be informed if a member of staff is subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution.

When dealing with any new or unforeseen circumstances staff are expected to make judgements about their behaviour, in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the children in their charge and colleagues they work with and in doing so, will be seen to be acting reasonably. If it isn't clear what the right action is, they are expected to consult with the Headteacher.

Principles of Professional Practice

All staff are expected to:

- Adhere to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within.
- Place the well-being and learning of pupils at the centre of their professional practice.
- Seek to work in partnership with parents and carers, respecting their views and promoting understanding and co-operation to support pupil learning and well-being in and out of school.
- Model those characteristics they wish to instil in pupils, including enthusiasm for learning, a spirit of enquiry, honesty, tolerance, social responsibility, patience and a genuine concern for others.
- Reflect on their own practice, develop their own skills, knowledge and expertise and adapt appropriately to learn with and from colleagues both within and external to the school.
- Have high expectations for all pupils, be committed to addressing underachievement and work to help pupils progress (narrowing the gap) regardless of their background or personal circumstances.
- Adhere to the E-Safety Policy in relation to social networking sites and must refrain from discussing any matters relating to the school.
- Take responsibility for managing their workload and short-term priorities (in-line with the overall vision of the school).
- Express personal beliefs in a way that will not influence pupils, and will not exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- **Refrain from using mobile phones during teaching or supervision times and during meetings e.g. staff, phase and leadership meetings.** Staff phones should be switched off/be on silent unless special consent has been issued by the Headteacher. Mobile phones should not be used in teaching areas when pupils are present.

Probity of Records

The deliberate falsification of documents is not acceptable. Where a staff member falsifies records or other documents, including those held electronically, this will be regarded as a serious disciplinary matter and potentially a criminal offence.

Confidentiality

Staff are likely to have access to confidential information about pupils in order to undertake their responsibilities. In some cases, information may be highly sensitive. Such information should never be disclosed to anyone other than on a need to know basis.

Confidential information must be held securely. In the case of Safeguarding information, all information is kept in a locked cabinet in the Headteacher's office.

Confidential information or information pertaining to data protection must not be held off the school site other than on security protected equipment. Information should only be held for the time taken to discharge the task for which it is required. All paper work must be disposed of in the correct manner i.e. shredding, not put in the general waste or re-cycling bins.

Propriety, Behaviour and Reputation

- All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of pupils. High standards of personal conduct should be adopted in order to maintain the respect of pupils, colleagues and the public in general.
- Social networking sites are extremely popular; staff must not post materials which damages the reputation of the school or causes concern about their suitability to work with children or young people.

- The acceptable use of ICT facilities 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, staff and children.
- All adults working in school who have contact with pupils are in a position of trust. Staff are expected to be fully cognisant with the safeguarding policies of the school and undertake a minimum of level 1 safeguarding training and undertake the annual refresher.
- A relationship between a member of staff, a volunteer or a governor and a pupil cannot be a relationship of equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of pupils and all adults have a responsibility to ensure that the unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.
- There are occasions when pupils or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff e.g. at Christmas or end of year, and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis of any significant value.
- Personal gifts must not be given to pupils. This could be misinterpreted as a gesture to bribe or to single out an individual. Any reward to a pupil should be in line with the school's behaviour policy.

Declaration of Interests

Staff members are required to declare their interests where the group or organisation would be considered to be in conflict with the ethos of the school. Membership to a trade union or staff representative group would not need to be declared.

Staff members should also carefully consider whether they need to declare their relationship with any individual where this might cause a conflict with school activities.

Failure to make a relevant declaration of interests is a very serious breach of trust and, therefore, if employees are in doubt about a declaration, they should seek advice from the Headteacher.

All declarations, including nil returns, should be submitted in writing to the Headteacher on the Register of Business Interests.

Data Protection

Staff are required, under the Data Protection Act 1998, to collect, maintain and dispose of sensitive or personal data in a responsible manner.

Staff members should not disclose sensitive information about the school, its employees to other parties, unless it gives rise to concerns about the safety or welfare of a pupil.

Staff have the right to request access to data that is held about them and such requests should be made to the Headteacher.

School Contacts

Staff members shall not use school business contacts for acquiring materials or services at trade/discount prices for non-school activities, unless participating in concessionary schemes arranged by trade unions or other such groups.

Use of School Resources

All staff must endeavour to use school time, resources and property responsibly and efficiently at all times. Inappropriate or dishonest use of resources can merit disciplinary action. Similarly, if staff become aware of dishonesty or maladministration by another employee, they are expected to draw this to the attention of the Headteacher or Business Manager.

Outside Activities

Membership of Societies

The school encourages membership of societies and professional bodies. However, should staff find that when acting in an official capacity they may be influenced by a membership or association, they should report the conflict of interests to the Headteacher.

Other Employment

Staff should not engage in other employment if doing so will have an adverse effect on the way in which they perform their duties, or could result in a conflict of interest. If they have any doubts then they should speak to the Headteacher.

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. In particular, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable.

Physical Contact and Personal Privacy

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. Physical contact should never be secretive or represent a misuse of authority.

There may be occasions when a distressed child needs comfort and reassurance. Physical contact should be age-appropriate and of a necessary duration.

Physical contact which occurs regularly with a pupil should be subject to agreed and open school policies e.g. Intimate Care Plans, Health Care Plans, Behaviour Management Plans.

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 may be used and any action must be to restrain the child.

Whilst the school does not expect a member of staff to physically intervene with children, it recognises that some staff will feel they have no option in certain situations. This should happen only in the most extreme and unusual occasions. Staff should be aware that any such physical intervention could be open to challenge and must only be at a minimum level of restraint.

Under no circumstances should physical force be used as a form of punishment. Staff should have regard to school policies and procedures. The use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence.

Where an employee has taken action to physically restrain a child they should make a written report of the incident to the Headteacher.

One to One Situations

When working in one to one situations with children, staff may be more vulnerable to allegations. Staff should:

- Avoid meetings with children in remote or secluded areas
- Ensure there is visual access and/or an open door
- Inform other staff of the meeting beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by
- Always report any situation where a child becomes distressed or angry to the Headteacher
- Consider the needs and circumstances of the child involved

Transporting Children

Wherever possible transport arrangements should be made in advance by a designated member of staff. Transport by a member of staff must meet the requirements outlined by the County Council and school policies.

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 should be aware of the school's e-safety policy.

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 unless permission has been granted by the Headteacher. Any photographs of children should be deleted immediately after they have been downloaded to the school system.

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

Photography, Videos and Mobile Phones

Many school activities involve recording images. These may be undertaken as part of the curriculum, extra school activities, for publicity or to celebrate achievement. The Data Protection Act 1998 affects the use of photography. All staff are expected to check with the school office to ascertain whether or not parental consent has been given to use pupil images.

Health and Safety

Staff members must:

- Be familiar with and adhere to the school's Health and Safety Policy and must ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and everyone in the school environment safe and well.
- Comply with the health and safety regulations and use any safety equipment and protective clothing that is supplied to them.
- Comply with hygiene requirements.

Whistle-blowing

Most problems and concerns within the workplace can usually be easily resolved, often informally. Sometimes however it is necessary to follow the school's grievance procedure. Very occasionally more serious issues may arise that cause suspicion and the implementation of the Whistle-blowing policy.

The Whistle-blowing policy is a mechanism that enables staff to raise concerns in the proper manner and identify malpractice at an early stage. Staff concerns should be shared with the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors if related to the Headteacher. Staff are expected to ensure they have read and adhere to this policy.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually, but can be revised as needed. The full governing board will ratify it.

Headteacher		Date	
Chair of Governing Board		Date	

Appendix 1 – aide memoire for all staff

Use your common sense and good judgement at all times – don't take action (physical or verbal) in the heat of the moment. Always ask yourself 'how will this look to others?'

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 a situation
- Use a calm 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.
- Maintain confidentiality about anything that we see or hear in the workplace or in schools, so that colleagues, parents, children and outside agencies 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.
- Work within the policies and practices set out by The Stoke Poges School, so that what we do is consistent with what has been agreed between all members of the staff.
- Treat everyone with respect.
- Dress appropriately to show that we are here to work.
- Behave in a positive way despite any personal problems that we have, especially in front of children.