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## STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY



### Code of Conduct

All schools are required to set out a Code of Conduct for all employees. The Code of Conduct outlines the expected conduct of staff at all times. All communication and interaction between members of staff, children, parents, carers and visitors must reflect our Code of Conduct. Staff are expected to be conscientious and adherent to the aims and objectives of Sholing Infant School. In addition, staff are required to develop and maintain the professional character of the school. All staff employed by Sholing Infant School are to follow the Code of Conduct. Staff should be aware that a failure to comply with the following Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including dismissal.

Sholing Infant School will foster a culture of the highest professional standards. This policy sets out the standards expected and the duty upon staff, volunteers and governors to abide by. All staff, governors and volunteers have a duty to keep pupils and themselves safe and to protect them from physical and emotional harm. This duty is in part exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between adults and pupils and behaviour by adults that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement. Following this policy will help to safeguard staff, governors and volunteers from being maliciously, falsely or mistakenly suspected or accused of professional misconduct in relations to pupils.

### PURPOSE

Staff, governors and volunteers must feel able to raise issues of concern and everyone must fully recognise the duty to do so particularly in terms of child protection. A member of staff who in good faith whistle blows or makes a public interest disclosure, will have the protection of the relevant legislation.

This policy cannot provide a complete checklist of what is or is not appropriate behaviour for staff. However, it does highlight behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable in relation to pupils. There will be occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or take action in the best interests of the pupil where no specific guidance has been given. Adults are expected to make responsible and informed judgements about their own behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the pupils in their charge. The document, **Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings 2015** is incorporated into this policy. This policy forms part of the school's disciplinary rules for staff. A serious breach may result in a disciplinary warning.

Where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff, the governing body will follow the guidance set out in **'Keeping Children Safe in Education (2018)'** in relation to managing allegations that might indicate that a person is unsuitable to continue to work with children in their present position or in any capacity. It will be used where it is alleged that a member of staff, governor or volunteer has:-

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that he or she is unsuitable to work with children.

All staff should be aware of who they should take their concern to.

Safeguarding or child protection allegations about **members of staff** must be reported immediately to the headteacher.

Allegations against the headteacher should be taken to the **Chair of Governors**.

These concerns must be discussed immediately with the LADO-Sue Sevier.

### **Confidentiality**

Staff and governors may have access to confidential information relating to pupils in order to undertake their responsibilities. In some circumstances, the information may be highly sensitive. Confidential or personal information regarding a pupil or his or her family must never be disclosed to anyone other than on a need to know basis. In circumstances where the pupil's identity does not need to be disclosed, the information should be used anonymously. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate or embarrass a pupil. There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a pupil e.g. when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a duty to pass information immediately to those with designated pupil protection responsibilities or to report to Childrens Services (MASH) themselves if necessary (briefing the DSL as soon as possible afterwards in such a case). Confidential information regarding pupils must not be held off the school site other than on security protected school equipment. Information must only be stored for the length of time necessary to discharge the task for which it is required. If a staff member is in any doubt regarding the storage or sharing of information, he or she must seek guidance from a senior member of staff. Any media or legal enquiries must be passed to the Headteacher.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Any inappropriate sexual behaviour by a member of staff, volunteer or governor with or towards a pupil is illegal. Children are protected by the same laws as adults in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour. They are furthermore protected by specific legal provisions regardless of whether there is consent or not. All adults working with children are in a position of trust.

### **Gifts**

It is against the law for public servants to take bribes. Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed by others as a bribe or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. There are occasions when pupils or parents wish to give small tokens of appreciation to staff e.g. at Christmas or when a child leaves the school. This is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value. It is also unacceptable to receive cash gifts. Any reward given to a pupil should be consistent with the school's Behaviour Policy.

## **Social Contact and Networking**

Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils or their parents for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. This includes social networking sites such as MySpace, Facebook, Twitter and blogging. Should a pupil or parent seek to establish social contact or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise his or her professional judgement in making response and be aware that such social contact in person, by telephone or on the internet, could be misconstrued and may place the member of staff in a very vulnerable position. All staff must have social networking profiles set as private. Staff, governors and volunteers must not give out their personal details e.g. address telephone or email to pupils and parents unless the need to do so is agreed with the Headteacher. Staff should be mindful of the school laptop agreement

## **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. 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 e.g. Facebook with pupils and parents. Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, schools or wider community into disrepute. Staff must only use their school email account when communicating electronically for work purposes.

## **Contact and 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. When physical contact is made, this should be in response to the pupil's need at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact since an action that is appropriate with one pupil in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another or with a different pupil. 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, governor or volunteer believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported. Physical contact which occurs regularly with a pupil or pupils, is likely to raise questions unless the justification for this is part of a formally agreed plan e.g. in relation to pupils with special needs or physical disabilities. Any such contact should be the subject of an agreed and open school policy and subject to review. Where feasible, staff should seek the pupil's permission before initiating contact. Staff should listen, observe and take note of the pupil's reaction or feelings and as far as possible, use a level of contact which is acceptable to the pupil for the minimum time necessary.

There may be occasions when a distressed pupil needs comfort and assurance. This may include physical contact appropriate to age. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation. Where a member of staff has a particular concern regarding the need to provide this type of care and assurance, he or she should seek further advice from a senior leader. Some staff e.g.

those who teach PE and games or who provide music tuition, will on occasions have to initiate physical contact with pupils in order to support a pupil so that they can perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument or assist them with an exercise. This should be done with the pupil's agreement. Contact in these circumstances should be for the minimum time necessary to complete the activity and take place in an open environment. Staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the pupil. Pupils are entitled to respect and privacy when changing. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard pupils, satisfy health and safety considerations. This supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the pupils concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment. Staff with a job description which includes intimate care duties, will have appropriate training and written guidance will be followed (Toileting and Continence Policy). No other staff member or volunteer should be involved in intimate care duties.

### **Guidelines**

- Staff should set an example to pupils in the way that they dress for work with clothing that is not sexually provocative and shoes that do not constitute a health and safety risk around a busy and large school site. Staff should at all times, dress appropriately for their role and the activity they undertake, recognising their responsibility for setting an example to pupils.
- The school works hard to ensure that pupils wear the appropriate uniform and as such, staff are encouraged to match them in their standards of dress. Jeans/casual trousers and trainers are not acceptable as working dress. Where off-site activities are involved, pupils are advised of the dress code for all events. Staff should recognise this in their own attire and the need to be able to respond to emergencies.
- Staff are not to use mobile telephones during lessons and should not make or receive telephone calls at any time they are supervising children or in areas where children are present.. Mobile phones must be safely stored in classrooms and turned off, support staff must store their mobiles in lockers in the staffroom, for which a key will be provided. Any emergency calls received during teaching hours will be received in the school office and relayed immediately by the office staff to the member of staff concerned.
- Staff should at all times be aware that their conduct must be of the highest moral standards and when supervising children, they must accept their duties of trust and care to act in the best interests of the child and the school.

### **Behaviour Management and Physical Intervention**

All pupils have the right to be treated with respect and dignity. Corporal punishment is unlawful in all schools. Staff, governors and volunteers must not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a pupil. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards pupils is not acceptable in any situation. Shouting aggressively or hectoring is not acceptable in any situation. Deliberately intimidating pupils by physical presence is not acceptable in any situation. **The circumstances in which staff may physically intervene with a pupil are covered in the DFE document 'Use of Reasonable Force' 2013** Staff may legitimately intervene to prevent a pupil from committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property,

engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline. Staff should have regard to the health and safety of themselves and others. In no circumstances should physical force be used as a form of punishment. The use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence. The school has a separate policy on the use of physical intervention which forms part of this Code of Conduct. All schools must have trained first aiders/paediatric first aiders/ appointed persons. Staff must have had the appropriate training before administering first aid or medication except in an emergency.

### **Vulnerable Situations**

Staff are more vulnerable to allegations when working in one-to-one situations with children. Staff must recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure that the safety and security needs of both staff and pupils are met. Where a staff member's work deems that they are required to work in a one-to-one situation e.g. in the delivery of one-to-one tuition, it is advisable to avoid remote or secluded areas of the school and essential to ensure that the **door of the room is left open** and/or visual/auditory contact with others is maintained. Teachers must not work in a closed classroom with an individual pupil e.g. at lunchtime as a child completes unfinished work. Should an individual child need to stay in and complete work, they should be sent to a member of SLT for this purpose or be supervised working in an open area. Teachers may, if necessary, keep a group of pupils in to complete tasks, but always with the classroom door fully open. Any arrangements should be reviewed on a regular basis. Pre-arranged meetings with pupils away from the school premises or on the school site when the school is not in session are not permitted unless approval is obtained from parents and the headteacher or other senior colleague with delegated authority. Staff must ensure that they use pupils' given names as stated on their admission form and must not use nicknames or shortened versions of a pupil's name. They should not use endearments in their interactions with pupils e.g. 'darling' as such behaviour, may be perceived as 'grooming' and less than professional conduct.

### **Pupil Transport**

In certain situations such as school trips or home visits etc, staff, pupils may, with parental permission, be transported in staff vehicles. This is only with the headteacher's permission and whereby the member of staff has the relevant level of business insurance and has provided their mot certificate as well as a copy of insurance. This will, with staff permission, be stored in the member of staff's file.

Transport arrangements should be made in advance by a designated member of staff. Wherever possible, practicable transport should be provided other than private vehicles, with at least one additional adult, acting as an escort. Adults should ensure that their behaviour is safe and that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. The vehicle must be roadworthy and appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.

### **Visits and Clubs**

Staff and volunteers should take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere of an educational visit or an after school club. Staff and volunteers remain in a position of trust and the same standards of conduct apply. The school has a policy on educational visits which forms part of this policy.

## **Photography**

At Sholing Infant School there may be some activities which involve recording images. These may be undertaken as part of the curriculum, extra school activities, publicity or achievement celebration. GDPR 2018 affects the use of photography. An image of a child is personal data and therefore, a requirement under the act that consent be obtained from the parent for any images made such as those used for school websites or productions etc. Photographs may only ever be taken on school owned cameras-never on mobile phones or using equipment owned by members of staff-this includes all mobile devices. Staff need to be aware of the potential for such images to be misused to create indecent images of children for 'grooming' purposes. Careful consideration should be given as to how these activities are taking place. Staff should be sensitive to any pupil who appears uncomfortable and should recognise the potential for misinterpretation. It is also important to take into account the wishes of the child, remembering that some children will not always wish to have their photograph taken.

Using images of pupils for publicity purposes will require the age appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their legal guardians. Images must not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without such consent. The definition of a public place includes areas where visitors to the school have access. When using a photograph, the following guidance must be adhered to:-

- If the photograph is used avoid naming the child.
- If the pupil is named, avoid using the photograph.
- Images must be securely stored and used only by those authorised to do so.
- Be clear about the purpose of the activity and what will happen to the photographs after use.
- Ensure that a senior member of staff is aware that the image is being used and for what purpose.
- Ensure that all images are available for scrutiny in order to screen for suitability.
- To be able to justify images made.
- Do not make images in a one-to-one situation.
- Do not take, display or distribute images of pupils unless there is consent.

The school has additional guidance on the use photography which includes a consent form. The guidance forms part of this policy.

## **Internet and ICT**

The school has a separate policy on internet use, electronic communication and security which forms part of this policy. In no circumstances should any adult in school access inappropriate images. Deliberate accessing of pornography on school equipment will be treated as gross misconduct and may be a criminal offence. Accessing indecent images of children on the internet and making, storing or disseminating such material, is illegal and is likely to lead to criminal prosecution and may result in permanent exclusion of working with children. All staff are asked to sign the laptop agreement annually and to adhere to it.

## **Incident Recording**

All staff, governors and volunteers must be vigilant and report and share concerns. Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns made in good faith without fear of repercussion. The following 'red flag behaviours' give indications of the kinds of situations which MUST be shared with the headteacher:-

- An adult who allows a pupil to be treated badly and/or pretends not to know this is happening.
- Inappropriate gossiping or sharing of information.
- An adult who demonstrates inappropriate discriminatory behaviour and/or uses inappropriate language.
- An adult who dresses in an inappropriate manner.
- An adult who does not treat pupils fairly and/or demonstrates favouritism.
- An adult who demonstrates a lack of understanding regarding personal and professional boundaries.
- An adult who uses his or her position of trust to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine.
- An adult who appears to have special or different relationships with a pupil.
- An adult who seems to seek out unnecessary opportunities to be alone with a pupil.
- An adult known to be breaching any of the school code of conduct.

### **Safeguarding Competences**

The following emotional competences are necessary:-

- Aware of the range of emotions in self and others.
- Demonstrates empathy for the concerns of others.
- Listens to and understands directly and indirectly expressed feelings.
- Encourages others to express themselves openly.
- Manages strong emotions and responds constructively to the source of problems.
- Listens to personal comments without becoming defensive.
- In stressful situations, manages to keep own feelings in check, takes constructive actions and calms others.
- Has a range of mechanisms for dealing with stress and can recognise when to implement them.
- Shows respect for others feelings, views and circumstances.

The following competences are necessary for working within professional boundaries:-

- Demonstrates professional courtesy.
- Accepts responsibility and accountability for own work and can define these to others.
- Recognises own limitations of authority within the role.
- Seeks and uses professional support appropriately.
- Understands the principle of confidentiality and self-awareness.
- Has a balanced understanding of self and others.
- Has a realistic knowledge of personal strengths and weaknesses.
- Can demonstrate flexibility of approach.
- Shows a realistic appreciation of the challenges of working with this client group.
- Ability to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Appreciates the significance of safeguarding and interprets this accurately for all children whatever their life circumstances.
- Has a good understanding of the safeguarding agenda.
- Can demonstrate an ability to contribute towards a safe environment.

- Is up-to-date with legislation and current events.
- Can demonstrate how to promote best practice.
- Shows a personal commitment to safeguarding children.

**Staff Relationships**

The maintenance of the highest professional and ethical standards is essential in the pursuit of good practice in teaching, learning and administration. In this context and to avoid conflict of interest, it is important that staff avoid situations where a close personal relationship with another member of staff could influence professional judgements or decisions. However, where a member of staff discloses a relationship, the matter should be treated with complete confidentiality. In order to promote the school's commitment to a quality teaching and learning environment, the boundaries of the professional role of staff must be fully recognised and respected. At Sholing Infant School, we expect all staff will maintain these boundaries and respect the educational environment in which they work.

I agree, as a member of Sholing Infant school, to adhere to all aspects of the school Staff conduct policy.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Dare:** \_\_\_\_\_