



# **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL STAFF, GOVERNORS AND VOLUNTEERS**

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# **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL SCHOOL STAFF**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The governors' expectations are that all pupils receive the highest possible quality of teaching and learning within a positive and respectful environment.

It is important, therefore, that staff understand that their own behaviour and the manner in which they conduct themselves with their colleagues, pupils, parents and other stakeholders sets an example and affects the school environment.

The governors recognise that the majority of staff always act in an appropriate manner and treat others with dignity and respect. However, we consider it important to make clear the standards we expect from staff so that misunderstandings and/or misinterpretation of rules are kept to a minimum.

This Code is intended to set out our expected standards of conduct, our rules and values. It applies to all staff, regardless of status. It is not an exhaustive compilation of what staff can and cannot do but is hoped that it will ensure everyone is clear about what is acceptable and what is not.

The Code is binding on all school staff. It is expected also that those staff deployed within the school who are employed by external Agencies or the Council will adhere to its principles. Breaches of the code and the standard expressed in it could result in disciplinary action, including dismissal for serious offences. We hope, of course, that such action won't be necessary and that all staff will ensure they read the Code and act in accordance with it.

## **2. GENERAL STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS**

As a member of the Federation's staff, it is important that you:

- Provide a high standard of service in your dealings with colleagues, pupils, parents and other stakeholders whether this is in person, by telephone, letter or e-mail. Always be polite, responsive and treat people with respect and consideration. Be as clear as possible about any decisions and actions you take and the reasons for them.
- Always use appropriate language and never demean, distress or offend the decency of others. This may happen, for example, by displaying material or pictures that could be seen as offensive, or by making degrading, suggestive or insensitive comments or remarks.
- Respect the rights of others and treat them with dignity. Never threaten, bully, fight with or assault anyone.
- Never steal, damage or take items home that belong to others. Hand lost property into the office.
- Do not discriminate against, harass or victimise anyone you meet in the course of your work, on any grounds, including:
  - race
  - ethnic or national origin

- gender
- sexual orientation
- marital status
- religious or other beliefs
- disability
- HIV status
- age
- Trade Union involvement
- having responsibility for dependants
- working on a temporary or part time basis

(Note that discrimination, harassment and victimisation include the use of language, making remarks, telling jokes, displaying materials or behaving in a way that may be interpreted as discriminatory, even if not directed at a particular individual(s))

- raise any concerns about inappropriate behaviour by pupils, parents, or colleagues, or about the internal workings of the School or Council, by following the appropriate procedure, such as the Grievance Procedure. (Member of a Professional Association/Trade Union should also take care to observe any Code, or rules, it has in place in relation to dealings with colleagues)
- promote the School's vision, ethos and values
- comply with School policies and any other rules, regulations or codes that apply to your work and the workplace
- do not make public statements about the school without first obtaining authorisation from the Headteacher
- keep within the law, both at work and outside of work
- avoid actions that may discredit the school or bring it into disrepute
- ensure that you are not under the influence of alcohol during working hours
- do not abuse drugs
- do not disclose or misuse confidential information
- do not engage in, or encourage, gossip, rumour or innuendo.

### **3. WORKING PRACTICES**

#### **(a) Professional Relationships**

As a member of staff, you should promote the school in a positive manner at all times.

*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
  - Positively promote and encourage the inclusion of all children in lessons and activities within our school community

- 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 never shout in anger)
- Showing good manners to children and thereby modelling what good manners are
- 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 settlements to conflicts between children in a way 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 past behaviour
- Making clear to children why a course of action has been necessary
- 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, following the Behaviour Policy, so that each individual child knows that they will receive the same treatment from any member of staff
- We understand 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 respectable 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 an emergency. We adopt the principal 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
- When speaking to children, we always consider how we would expect to be spoken to ourselves
- 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 – see Whistleblowing & Safeguarding Policies.**

*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
- 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 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
- 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

*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)
- By approaching issues with colleagues in a way that 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 willing to apologise when we have made mistakes and undertake to learn from those errors

### **(b) Reporting Malpractice and Improper Conduct ('Whistleblowing')**

Most problems and concerns within the workplace can be fairly easily resolved, often informally. Sometimes it is necessary to use a more formal route, such as the school's Grievance Procedure. Very occasionally, however, more serious issues may arise involving, for example, unlawful conduct, financial malpractice, corruption, health and safety issues or other actions, which are not in the best interest of the pupils or the school.

You may be worried about raising serious issues, perhaps concerned that you may be mistaken, it's only a suspicion, that you may lose your job or otherwise suffer some form of retribution as a result. However, there is a 'Whistleblowing Policy' available to enable you to raise concerns about malpractice at an early stage, in the right way. The Policy sets out how you should raise a concern. Provided that you are acting in good faith, it will protect you from victimisation or other detriment, even if you are mistaken about the matter. However, you must never raise unfounded allegations maliciously. This would be viewed as a disciplinary matter.

The Policy is available from the School Office or Head Teacher. Remember though, the Whistleblowing Policy is for raising concerns about serious malpractice. If you are aggrieved about your own personal position or have a complaint covered by another policy, such as Grievance Procedure, then you should refer to that instead.

If you have a safeguarding concern you must raise it with the Senior Designated Person immediately. If you are unable to do so, see the Alternative Designated Person or the next senior member of staff (see the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy)

### **(c) School Policies and Procedures**

All members of staff must comply with the school's policies and procedures. Files of policies are kept in the School Office. Copies are also kept on the Google drive in the Policy folder.

#### **(d) Health and safety**

The Governors aim to promote good health and ensure safe working practices for staff, pupils, parents, other stakeholders and visitors. Staff of the school also have a legal responsibility to contribute to a safe working environment. Failure to accept this responsibility may put themselves and/or other at risk.

You should ensure that you:

- Read and understand the school's Health and safety Policy
- Comply with Health and safety Regulations and use any safety equipment and protective clothing which is supplied to you by the Council or by the Governors
- Comply with any hygiene requirements
- Never act in a way which might cause risk or damage to any other members of the school community, or visitors.
- Inform your line manager of any paid work you undertake elsewhere. Any member of staff asked to undertake private tutoring of pupils within the school must first discuss the situation with the Headteacher.

#### **(e) Staff Dress**

- We dress in a manner that exhibits the importance of the job that we do
- We wear smart, practical clothes. Footwear is smart, and should be appropriate to the tasks required within your working environment
- We avoid wearing clothes that could cause offence or embarrassment to others
- Jeans are not acceptable, unless participating in a trip or visit that requires harder wearing clothes (e.g. residential trips)
- All clothes should be clean.
- When leading physical activities and/or PE lessons (including Sports Day), we change into suitable clothing for that lesson (e.g. training shoes and tracksuit), uniform has been provided
- We do not wear excessive amounts of jewellery and understand our own Health and Safety responsibilities
- Body piercings and tattoos should be covered whilst at work where possible.

#### **(f) Hours of Work and Attendance**

It is important that all staff are in school at their agreed starting time and do not leave before their agreed finishing time. Bad timekeeping and poor attendance increases costs, causes disruption for others and has an adverse effect on pupils' education.

The Governors recognise that the majority of staff are punctual and do not take time off without good cause or obtaining prior permission.



Our expectations are that:

- You attend work in accordance with your contract of employment and associated terms and conditions in relation to hours, days of work and holidays
- Wherever possible, you make routine medical and dental appointments outside of your working hours or during holidays. The only exceptions to this requirement will be in the event of an emergency or particular difficulty, in relation to hospital appointments (which are rarely negotiable) or to attend for ante-natal care if you are pregnant. Pregnant employees are entitled to paid time off for ante-natal appointments. In any circumstances, however, you should agree time off with your manager at the earliest opportunity to ensure that adequate cover arrangements can be made
- Prior to making any request, you refer to the County policy on special leave if you need time off for any reason other than personal illness. Any member of staff taking such leave without permission will be subject to disciplinary action.
- The school follows NCC policy on 'Leave and Time off'.

#### **(g) Sickness Absence**

Staff should notify the Deputy Headteacher by 7.30am on the first day of absence. A further call should be made by 3.00pm to provide details of a return to work or further absence. All staff should also notify their immediate team and the School Office of their absence.

#### **(h) Sensitive Information and Confidentiality**

It is expected that staff will use sensitive information properly and have due respect for confidentiality.

If you have access to such information, you should ensure that you:

- Know what information the school treats as confidential (check with your manager if you are unsure)
- Know who is entitled to have access to what information (check with your manager if you are unsure)
- Are responsible and professional in using and allowing access to personal information on pupils, parents, staff, governors and any others
- Use personal information in line with the principles of the GDPR. Such data must:
  - be obtained lawfully and fairly
  - be held only for specified and lawful purposes
  - be relevant and just sufficient for those purposes
  - be used or disclosed for no other purpose
  - be accurate, up to date, and kept only as long as is necessary
  - be held securely to prevent unauthorised access or tampering
  - be available for inspection and correction by the person it is about

- not be transferred to countries outside the European Economic Area without adequate protection.
- Staff will complete GDPR training every two years and will seek advice from the Data Protection Officer or HT should they have a query.

**(i) Use of School Resources**

**School communications system and equipment, including electronic mail and Internet systems**, along with their associated hardware and software, are for official and authorised purposes only.

**(j) Social Networking**

Social networking, e.g. Facebook, ~~My Space~~, TikTok, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and texting is a way of life for many adults. Staff and governors should be aware of potential risk to their professional reputation and the comments made on a social network site which relate to the school, pupils, staff or governors could lead to a disciplinary action.

Please observe the following:

- Staff and governors should not use school equipment, or the school internet connection, to access or update personal social websites
- It is strongly recommended that staff and governors do not have parents or ex-pupils as “friends”
- Staff and governors should use strong passwords and apply security settings so that all aspects of their profile are secured and controlled
- Staff and governors should NOT post anything, on a social website or text, about the school community including about incidents, pupils, staff or governors, not even in response to another comment.
- Staff and governors are expected to uphold professionalism and dignity on a public website, which would include the use of language, including profile name and content, including photos. They should think of this in respect of being a role model. Staff and governors should not use inappropriate comments in relation to gender, race, disability, age religion or sexual orientation
- Images of pupils taken during school time or on educational visits must **never** be posted
- Images of work colleagues or governors should not be posted without their permission
- Personal emails and telephone numbers must not be used for communicating with parents or pupils at any time and they should not be shared with parents or pupils. This is a safeguarding issue and breach of this could lead to disciplinary action.

### **(k) Technology**

- Only school equipment should be used to take photos of pupils. Photos should be uploaded to the secure staff shared drive and images erased from the portable device
- Staff should ensure that they have absolute control of a school laptop allocated to their use
- Staff are expected to restrict internet access to work related sites within work hours and on school equipment. Any abuse of this privilege may result in disciplinary action
- Only the ICT technician should install software onto school equipment
- Staff computers should have a lock screen which should be activated when away from your PC.
- Only work emails should be used for work business.
- Staff should follow the ICT code of conduct at all times and should complete the GPDR training. Staff should abide by all expectations delivered through training.

### **(l) Financial Regulations**

The school has adopted the LA's Schools' Financial Regulations. All staff with financial responsibility should comply with the powers delegated by the Governing Body.

### **(m) Reputation**

Staff and governors must be careful to ensure that nothing they say or do brings the school's name into disrepute. Gossip in our communities can be very damaging. Staff should not gossip, or speak inappropriately, about the school, pupils, parents, staff or governors, including incidents.

The reputation of our school is very precious. It takes a long time to build and can be knocked down in a moment.

**Date of Policy: September 2023**

**Review Date: September 2024**

**Green Shoots Federation**

**Staff, Governors and Visitors**  
**Code of Conduct**

I have read and understood the Staff, Governors and visitors code of Conduct 2023-2024. I understand that breaches of this policy can lead to disciplinary action.

Signed..... Date.....

Print name.....