



# Code of Conduct Policy

All education settings are required to have a clear and effective Code of Conduct for adults working in the setting, as stated in DfE “Keeping Children Safe in Education” – Sep. 2016. This document provides a guide for all adults working in schools (including staff, governors, volunteers and visitors) about acceptable and desirable conduct to protect both pupils and adults.

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# CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SAFER PRACTICE

## Introduction

All education settings are required to have a clear and effective Code of Conduct for adults working in the setting. Indeed, as stated in DfE “Keeping Children safe in education” – Sep. 2016:

47. Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure there are appropriate policies and procedures in place in order for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children’s welfare.

48. This should include:

- an effective child protection policy; and
- a staff behaviour policy (sometimes called the code of conduct) which should amongst other things include - acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communications including the use of social media.<sup>12</sup>

This document provides a guide for all adults working in schools regardless of their position, role or responsibility (including staff, governors, volunteers and visitors) about acceptable and desirable conduct to protect both pupils and adults. It refers to and complements other policies and guidance, including:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy & Procedures
- School Behaviour Policy
- School Policy on the Use of Force to Restrain Pupils
- Record Keeping Procedures
- This policy reflects the requirements set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016, and is based upon the Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with Children and Young People in education settings (Safer Recruitment Consortium, Oct 2015), in which you can find useful examples of acceptable and unacceptable conduct, together with discussion of the issues raised.

References to ‘staff’ throughout the policy relate to all of the following groups:

- All members of staff including teaching and support staff
- Volunteers, including governors
- Casual workers

- Temporary and supply staff, either from agencies or engaged directly
- Student placements, including those undertaking initial teacher training and apprentices.

School requires that all staff have read and agree to comply with this policy.

- Breach or failure to observe this policy will result in action being taken under the school disciplinary procedures including, but not limited to, dismissal.
- This code of conduct is not an exhaustive list of acceptable and unacceptable standards of behaviour. In situations where guidance does not exist in this policy staff are expected to exercise their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the pupils/students and the school.

In particular all adults working in schools should keep the following statements from Keeping Children Safe in Education in mind:

- Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children (paragraph 3)
- All school and college staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn (paragraph 7)
- Staff members working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the interests of the child (paragraph 19)

All adults working in the school must know who the Designated Safeguarding Lead is in the school, be familiar with the school's child protection and safeguarding policy, and understand their individual responsibilities to safeguard and protect children and young people. In addition, the Teaching Standards 2012 (which apply to maintained schools) state that teachers should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.

## BASIC PRINCIPLES

- Adults working in school are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead a reasonable person to question their motivation or intentions
- Adults working in the school must work and be seen to work in an open and transparent manner
- Adults should discuss and/or take advice promptly from their line manager or another senior member of staff about anything which could give rise to concern. This would include for example reporting infatuations by a pupil for that or another member of staff, to ensure that such situations can be handled promptly and sensitively
- The school should keep a record of any such incident and of decisions made/further actions agreed, in accordance with the school's record keeping policy
- Staff should apply the same professional standards regardless of gender or sexuality
- Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.

**As a general principle, when thinking about taking any course of action with a pupil or other child, adults should ask themselves the following questions:**

*Is this needed to meet the pupil's needs?*

*Is there a professional reason for me to do it?*

*Can I do it in a way that is safe for both the pupil and for me?*

*Only if the answer to all three questions is YES should the adult take the course of action.*

## ALL STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS MUST:

Be familiar with and work in accordance with the school's policies, including in particular:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection
- Behaviour

- Physical Intervention/Use of Restraint
- E-Safety
- Health and Safety
- Use of Photography and Video
- Whistleblowing

## PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR AND CONDUCT

All Staff is expected to:

- Demonstrate the highest possible standards of personal and professional conduct and behaviour and consistently act with honesty and integrity. Harrow Primary School expects staff to treat each other, pupils, parents and the wider community with dignity and respect at all times.
- Show fairness in their treatment of children and avoid behaviours such as embarrassing or humiliating pupils, making jokes at the expense of pupils, discriminating against or favouring pupils and sarcasm.
- Act in accordance with their duty of care to pupils and ensure that the safety and welfare of pupils are accorded the highest priority.
- Have regard for the ethos and values of the school at all times and must not do or say anything which may bring the school or governing body into disrepute. Care should be taken by staff to avoid any conflict of interest between activities undertaken outside school and responsibilities within school. Staff should act in accordance with the school's policies and procedures at all times.
- Dress in a manner that is appropriate to a professional role and that promotes a professional image.
- Dress in a manner that is not offensive or revealing and in a manner that is absent from political or contentious slogans.
- Not smoke on school premises or outside school gates. Any member of staff wishing to smoke must leave the school grounds.
- Not smoke whilst working with or supervising pupils offsite.
- Not consume or be under the influence of alcohol, illicit drugs or other illegal substances on or near school premises.

## RELATIONSHIPS WITH PUPILS

All Staff is expected to:

- Maintain professional boundaries with pupils/students appropriate to their position and must always consider whether their actions are warranted,

proportionate, safe and applied equitably. Staff should act in an open and transparent manner that would not lead any reasonable person to question their actions or intent. Staff should think carefully about their conduct so that misinterpretations are minimised.

- Not discriminate favourably or unfavourably towards any child. For example, Treat all pupils equally – never build ‘special’ relationships or confer favour on particular pupils
- Be aware that it is not unusual for pupils or, sometimes, their parents to develop infatuations towards members of staff. All such situations must be responded to sensitively to maintain the dignity of those concerned.
- Be aware that infatuations carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against staff. Any indications of an infatuation towards yourself or another member of staff must be reported to your line manager.
- Not accept any gift/offer of hospitality that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. However, there may be occasions where pupils or parents wish to give a small token of appreciation to staff, for example at religious festivities or at the end of the year.
- Not give pupils personal gifts, and any reward to pupils should be in accordance with the school’s behaviour policy, recorded and not based on favouritism.
- Ensure that your relationship with pupils remains on a professional footing.
- Not behave in a way that could lead a reasonable observer to question your conduct, intentions or suitability to care for other people’s children
- Not make arrangements to contact, communicate or meet with pupils outside your work. Personal phone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via all social media platforms should not be used and staff should not share their home address with pupils. If contacted via an inappropriate route, the member of staff must inform the Headteacher immediately
- Neither accept or initiate friend requests nor follow pupils’ accounts on any social media platform. Staff must not communicate with pupils via social media, websites, instant messenger accounts or text message. The only acceptable method of contact is via the use of school email accounts or telephone equipment.
- Not make contact with pupils’ family members, accept or initiate friend requests or follow pupils’ family member’s account on any social media platform. However, staff who are also parents may wish to make contact with other parents, who are friends, over social media. Staff must exercise caution and professional judgement in these circumstances and should not have any contact with pupils’ family members via social media if that contact is likely to constitute a conflict of interest or call into question their objectivity.
- Not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. If a young person seeks to establish social contact you should exercise your professional



judgement in making a response and be aware that such social contact could be misconstrued.

- Not develop 'personal' or sexual relationships with pupils. In particular your attention is drawn to the provisions of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, which creates a criminal offence of abuse of a position of trust (when a person aged 18 or over is in a 'position of trust' with a person under 18 and engages in sexual activity with or in the presence of that child, or causes or incites that child to engage in or watch sexual activity).

## PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH PUPILS

- 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. A 'no touch' approach is impractical for most staff and may in some circumstances be inappropriate. When physical contact is made with pupils it should be in response to their needs at that time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.
- Where feasible, staff should seek the child's permission before initiating contact. Staff should listen, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and, so far as is possible, use a level of contact which is acceptable to the child for the minimum time necessary.
- Staff should be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described. Staff should never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent. Always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny. Staff must not engage in rough play, tickling or fun fights with pupils/students.
- Extra caution should be exercised where a child is known to have suffered previous abuse or neglect. Such experiences may sometimes make a child exceptionally needy and demanding of physical contact and staff should respond sensitively by deterring the child through helping them to understand the importance of personal boundaries.
- Staff supervising PE and games or providing extra-curricular activities should demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment on another member of staff if possible. However, they may be required to initiate physical contact with pupils to support a child to perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment or to assist them with an exercise. Contact under these circumstances should be done with the pupil's agreement, for the minimum time necessary and in an open environment. Staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the pupil.

- Physical contact must never be secretive, for the gratification of the adult or represent a misuse of authority.
- If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported to your line manager, recorded and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the child's file

#### CHILD IN DISTRESS

- There may be occasions when a pupil/student is in distress and in need of comfort as a reassurance. This may include age appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.
- Such incidents should always be recorded and shared with your line manager. If you have a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance you should seek further advice from your line manager.

#### COMPLIANCE

- All staff must complete the form in appendix 1 to confirm they have read, understood and agree to comply with this policy. This form should be signed and dated and a copy retained on the member of staff's file.

#### REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE) Sep, 2016
- School policies handbook
- Local Safeguarding Children Board - local safeguarding children procedures
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with Children and Young People in education settings (Safer Recruitment Consortium, Oct 2015)
- The Teachers' Standards 2012

#### MONITORING & REVIEW

This Code of Conduct Policy is based upon a Model Policy distributed by Harrow School Improvement Partnership.

#### LINKED POLICIES

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy & Procedures

Code of Conduct Policy



**APPENDIX 1**

**CONFIRMATION OF COMPLIANCE**

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT I HAVE READ, UNDERSTOOD AND AGREE TO COMPLY WITH HARROW PRIMARY SCHOOL'S CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY.

NAME .....

POSITION/POST HELD.....

SIGNED .....

DATE .....

**ONCE COMPLETED, SIGNED AND DATED, PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE HEADTEACHER**

