



## Staff Code of Conduct

September 2021

To be read in conjunction with the national guidance: 'Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings - May 2019'.

### [Professional and Personal Relationships](#)

Alongside:

'Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings - Addendum April 2020.

### [Professional and Personal Relationships](#)

This addendum is intended as a temporary supplement to the Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings during Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic restrictions.

### [Professional and Personal Relationships](#)

#### **1. Definition**

1.1. References made to 'child' and 'children' refer to children and young people under the age of 18 years. However, the principles of the document apply to professional behaviours towards all pupils, including those over the age of 18 years. 'Child' should therefore be read to mean **any pupil** at the education establishment.

1.2. References made to adults and staff refer to all those who work with children in an educational establishment, in either a paid or unpaid capacity.

1.3. The term 'allegation' means where it is alleged that a person who works with children 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; or,
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

## **2. Introduction**

2.1. In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), we should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

### **Keeping children safe in education 2021**

2.2. The school seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the wellbeing and very best outcomes for children in our care. The following code draws together existing laws, regulations and conditions of service designed to protect the interests of staff and volunteers and the children with whom they work and this has been agreed following consultation with recognised trade unions and is recommended for adoption.

2.3. Staff should be aware that a failure to comply with this code could result in disciplinary action including dismissal.

## **3. Purpose and Scope**

3.1. All staff and volunteers working in a school setting have a legal and moral duty to keep children safe and protect them from harm. Staff should ensure they do not put themselves in situations in which allegations of abuse or inappropriate behaviour could be made.

3.2. This code applies to all adults working in schools whatever their position, role or responsibilities.

3.3. All staff have a responsibility to be aware of systems within their school which support safeguarding, which should be explained as part of staff induction and through regular staff training.

3.4. The code should be read in conjunction with the relevant statutory and other guidance documents issued nationally or by the DfE and Home Office as well as other related school policies (see **Appendix 1** of this policy).

3.5. This code cannot cover every eventuality. Its purpose is to show the standard expected of staff but it does not replace the general requirements of the law.

3.6. All staff employed under Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Employment have a statutory obligation to adhere to the 'Teachers' Standards 2012' and in relation to this code, Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct which this code supplements.

### **(2012) Teachers' Standards.**

3.7. It is recognised that the vast majority of adults who work with children act professionally and aim to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the wellbeing and very best outcomes for children in their care. Achieving these aims is not always straightforward, as much relies on child and staff interactions where tensions and misunderstandings can occur. This code aims to reduce the risk of that.

#### **4. Core Principles**

- 4.1. The welfare of the children is paramount.
- 4.2. Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should seek to avoid any conduct that would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation or intentions.
- 4.3. Staff should dress appropriately at all times for the tasks they undertake and ensure they promote a positive and professional image.
- 4.4. Staff should apply the same professional standards regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and sexual orientation.
- 4.5. Staff should not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or substances, including prescribed medication that may affect their ability to care for children.
- 4.6. Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in disciplinary action being taken against them, criminal action and/or other proceedings including barring by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) from working in regulated activity, or for acts of serious misconduct, prohibition from teaching by the National College of Teaching & Leadership (NCTL).
- 4.7. Staff and managers should continually monitor and review practice to ensure this guidance is followed and should understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children.
- 4.8. Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from their line manager or another senior member of staff over any incident which may give rise to concern.
- 4.9. Records should be made of any incident and decision made or where further actions have been agreed, in accordance with school policies and confidentiality.
- 4.10. All staff should know the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead and be familiar with local child protection arrangements, arrangements for managing allegations against staff, whistleblowing procedures and their Local Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures.
- 4.11. Staff should be aware of and comply with the school's financial and administrative regulations and any other procedure manuals.

#### **5. Conduct and Behaviour**

- 5.1. All staff who work in a school setting are in a position of trust in relation to individuals in their care and so must adopt high standards of personal integrity and conduct and behave in such a way that does not compromise their position both within and outside of the workplace or the safety and/or welfare of children and young people.
- 5.2. Staff should be aware that it is a criminal offence (Sexual Offences Act 2003: abuse of a position of trust) to engage in sexual activity with a pupil under the age of 18.

5.3. Teachers are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct in accordance with the minimum professional Teaching Standards.

5.4. Staff should never make (or encourage others to make) unprofessional comments or use physical force as a form of punishment.

5.5. Staff should always adhere to the school's policies on Behaviour Management and Use of Reasonable Force.

5.6. Staff should not use any information obtained in the course of their employment for personal gain or benefit. Nor should they pass it on to others who might use it in such a way.

## **6. Equality Issues**

6.1. All staff should adhere to the school's Equal Opportunities Policy, in addition to the requirements of the law.

6.2. All adults and children at the school have a right to be treated at all times with fairness, equality and without discrimination.

## **7. Employment Matters**

7.1. All staff involved in recruitment and selection processes should ensure that appointments are made on the basis of merit, without discrimination and in accordance with the school's recruitment and selection policy and procedure.

7.2. Any staff involved in tendering processes should ensure that these are made on the basis of merit.

7.3. No member of staff should be involved in any appointment or decision relating to discipline, promotion, or pay adjustments for any individual who is a relative or with whom they are in a close personal relationship.

7.4. All relationships of a business or private nature with external contractors, or potential contractors, should be made known to the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors (if the Headteacher).

## **8. Public Duty and Private Interest**

8.1. Staff should not put themselves in a position where their duty to the school and their private interests conflict.

## **9. Other Employment/Private Work**

9.1. Any external work undertaken must not bring the school into disrepute or conflict with the school's interest.

9.2 Any copyright created by a member of staff during their employment with the school becomes the property of the school.

## **10. Safeguarding**

10.1 Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils/students from:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- neglect

10.2. The duty to safeguard children and young people includes the duty to report child welfare concerns to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL),

10.3. Staff should be aware of and adopt the recommended procedures and best practice guidance outlined in the national Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings May 2019.

### [Professional and Personal Relationships](#)

10.4. Staff should be aware of and follow the statutory responsibilities outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020.

### [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 - Part one](#)

10.5. Staff should be aware of the risks to children from radicalisation and being drawn into terrorism as outlined in the Prevent Duty guidance.

### [Revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales](#)

- **Guidance for Safer Working Practice**
  - (i) This document will be used to support the Code of Conduct and as such may be referred to in any disciplinary proceedings.
  - (ii) Staff should read this document in conjunction with this code.
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education**
  - (i) This document sets out the statutory duties schools must follow and includes guidance on mandatory reporting requirements. It is advised that this is read alongside **Working Together to Safeguard Children**.
  - (ii) [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#)

- (iii) Staff should ensure they understand and are familiar with their responsibilities and where this includes mandatory reporting expectations they understand their role and any locally agreed procedures for reporting, such as informing the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- (iv) Staff should be aware of the personal reporting duty with regard to known cases of female genital mutilation (FGM). Supplementary to Keeping Children Safe in Education, staff can obtain further guidance in the '**Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation – procedural information**' document.
- (v) Staff should refer any concerns about another member of staff to the Headteacher, or if the concern is about the Headteacher to the Chair of Governors or equivalent.
- (vi) Staff should raise concerns of poor or unsafe practice or potential failures in safeguarding, using the school's whistleblowing policy.
- (vii) **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 harms 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 one-to-one activities where they can't easily be seen

Using inappropriate language

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 in the policies section of our school website and a copy available in the main staffroom.

- **Prevent Duty**

- (i) Under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, staff must have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'
- (ii) Staff should refer any concerns regarding radicalisation to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead or a senior member of staff, following the school's normal safeguarding procedures.
- (iii) Relevant staff should understand when it is appropriate to make a referral to the Channel programme, a mechanism for schools to make referrals if they are concerned that an individual might be vulnerable to radicalisation.
- (iv) Staff should ensure they have undertaken some form of Prevent awareness training

### **11. Financial inducements, gifts, hospitality and sponsorship**

11.1. Staff should not seek or receive preferential rates for themselves by virtue of their dealings on behalf of the school

11.2. Staff should ensure that gifts are declared if they are received.

11.3. Where staff provide gifts they should ensure they are of insignificant value and given to all children equally.

### **12. Use of School Time and Facilities**

12.1. The school's property and facilities (e.g. stationary, computers, photocopiers, mobile phones) may only be used for school business unless permission for their private use has been granted.

### **13. Publication of Books/Articles**

13.1. Staff must consult with the Headteacher before publishing a book, articles, letters, dissertations etc where they are described as holding an appointment at the school.

### **14. Disciplinary Action**

14.1. All staff should be aware that a failure to meet these standards of behaviour and conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

## **15. 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.

<b>Date effective</b>	September 2021	<b>Approval</b>	FGB
<b>Maintenance</b>	SLT	<b>Role/responsibility</b>	Moira Bearwish - Deputy Headteacher
<b>Date of next review</b>	September 2022	<b>Date of last update</b>	September 2020

## **APPENDIX 1**

POLICIES AND OTHER DOCUMENTS TO BE CONSIDERED AND READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT (Listed in alphabetical order)

<b>Policy/Procedure/Guidance</b>
<b>Working Together to Safeguard Children</b>
<a href="#">Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018</a>
Allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers
Child Protection Policy**
Data Protection Policy
Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
Drugs and Alcohol Policy
Equal Opportunities Policy
E- Safety/Internet Use/Social Networking/ICT Policies
<b>Guidance for Safer Working Practice*</b> national guidance for those working with children and young people in Education Settings. <a href="https://www.saferrecruitmentconsortium.org/GSWP%20Sept%202019.pdf">Link:https://www.saferrecruitmentconsortium.org/GSWP%20Sept%202019.pdf</a>
Health and Safety Policy
Intimate Care
<b>Keeping Children Safe in Education*- DfE statutory guidance</b> <a href="#">Link:Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK</a>
Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation procedural information* <a href="#">Link:FGM Mandatory reporting duty</a>
Use of Positive Force
Prevent Duty Guidance* <a href="#">Link: Revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales</a>
Recruitment and Selection Policy
School Record Keeping Policy
Whistleblowing Policy

\*It is expected that staff will adhere to the statutory duties and/or best practice outlined within these documents as applicable to their role and responsibilities.

\*\*The Child Protection Policy is available from the Safeguarding and Standards Team. Please contact [sasteam@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:sasteam@dorsetcc.gov.uk) for further details.