



Staff Code of Conduct

Debden C of E Primary Academy

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1. Aims, scope and principles

This Code of Conduct sets and maintains the standards of conduct expected of all adults working at Debden C of E Primary Academy. The overriding expectation is that employees, volunteers and those engaged to work in the school will adopt the highest standards of personal integrity and conduct both in and outside work.

As role models, adults must behave, through their words and actions, at all times in a manner which demonstrates their suitability to work with children and which upholds the standards and reputation of the school.

Our school vision is 'Live Life in all its Fullness'. Our values of Compassion, Respect, Aspiration, Endurance, Wisdom and Creativity underpin the way we work with pupils, colleagues, families and the wider community. Staff are expected to model these values consistently.

This Code is not intended to be exhaustive. Where a situation is not specifically covered, staff should use sound professional, ethical and moral judgement and act in the best interests of the school, its pupils and its community.

Failure to follow this Code may result in disciplinary action and, in certain circumstances, may lead to dismissal.

Scope

This Code applies to all individuals employed by or engaged by the school, including:

- employees
- relief and casual staff
- supply staff
- third parties providing services to the school, including self-employed workers
- voluntary workers and volunteers

For elements of this Code applying to all individuals above, they are collectively referred to as 'workers'.

2. Legislation and guidance

This Code should be read alongside relevant legislation, statutory guidance, professional standards and school policies and procedures. In particular, staff must comply with the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education, including the requirement for all staff to read Part I, and with the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures.

The Code should also be read in conjunction with the terms of any employment or service contract, relevant professional standards, and the school's other policies and procedures.

3. General obligations

Staff set an example to pupils and will:

- maintain high standards of attendance and punctuality;
- treat pupils, colleagues, parents, carers and visitors with dignity and respect;
- show tolerance and respect for the rights of others;
- never use inappropriate or offensive language in school;
- act professionally, fairly and consistently;
- work cooperatively and supportively with colleagues;
- not discriminate against or unreasonably exclude any individual or group;
- understand and comply with the statutory frameworks and professional expectations relevant to their role;
- act in accordance with the Teachers' Standards where applicable;
- support the school's vision, values and ethos and model these in daily practice;

- act in the best interests of pupils and the school community.

4. Reporting breaches of standards of good conduct

The school promotes an open environment that enables individuals to raise issues constructively and with confidence that they will be acted upon appropriately without fear of recrimination.

All employees, engaged workers and volunteers are expected to bring to the attention of an appropriate manager, the Governing Board or Trustee any impropriety, deficiency in the provision of service, or breach of policy or this Code. Where appropriate, individuals should also refer to the school's Whistle-blowing Policy.

Any breach of this Code will be regarded as a serious matter and may result in disciplinary action.

5. Safeguarding and child protection

All adults working with children are in a position of trust. Adults must understand and follow appropriate and safe behaviours for working with children in paid or unpaid capacities, in all settings and contexts, including outside work.

The relevant requirements are set out in the school's Child Protection and Behaviour Management policies and procedures, Keeping Children Safe in Education and Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with Children and Young People in Education Settings.

Safeguarding is a shared responsibility. Everyone is expected to report safeguarding concerns, no matter how small, as soon as they arise. This includes self-reporting where an individual finds themselves in a situation which may be, or appear to be, compromising or where they have fallen short of expectations.

5.1 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

This section applies where it is alleged that anyone working in the school, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, 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 they may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children, including behaviour inside or outside school.

Such matters will be dealt with quickly, fairly and consistently in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education and the school's procedures. The Headteacher will normally act as case manager. Where the allegation concerns the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors will act as case manager.

5.2 Identifying and reporting safeguarding concerns

Concerns should be referred to the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where concerns relate to the Headteacher, they should be referred to the Chair of Governors or equivalent. Where there is a conflict of interest in reporting internally, the concern should be reported directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

5.3 Low-level concerns about members of staff

A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt', that an adult may have acted in a way which is inconsistent with this Code of Conduct but does not meet the harm threshold.

Examples include (Taken from the DfE's *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)* guidance on low-level concerns)

- being over-friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on a personal mobile phone contrary to school policy;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door;
- humiliating children;
- crossing boundaries between familial and employment/volunteering roles.

All staff should report low-level concerns and are encouraged to self-refer where their own behaviour may have been misunderstood or may fall short of expectations. If staff are unsure whether something constitutes a low-level concern, they should report it.

All concerns will be taken seriously and handled sensitively and proportionately. Possible responses include additional support or training, advice and guidance, performance management, capability procedures, or disciplinary and safeguarding procedures where appropriate. Confidential records of reported concerns and actions taken will be maintained to identify patterns and support improvements in practice.

5.4 Whistle-blowing

Whistle-blowing concerns wrongdoing in the public interest. Staff are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. Concerns may include risks to pupils' or staff members' health and safety, failure to comply with a legal or statutory requirement, or attempts to cover up wrongdoing.

Concerns should normally be reported to the Headteacher. If the concern is about the Headteacher, it should be reported to the Chair of Governors. Staff should refer to the school's Whistle-blowing Policy for the detailed procedure.

6. Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Staff must not engage in sexual harassment and are expected to challenge or report concerns appropriately.

Examples include unwanted physical conduct, sexual comments or jokes, unwelcome advances, sexually suggestive behaviour, offensive emails or messages, and inappropriate sexual material.

Concerns should be reported to the Headteacher or, where the concern relates to the Headteacher, to the Chair of Governors. The school will investigate concerns in a timely, respectful and confidential manner and will provide appropriate support to those affected.

7. Staff-pupil relationships

Staff must observe appropriate professional boundaries with pupils and act in a fair and transparent way.

Where one-to-one contact is necessary, staff should ensure that:

- the activity takes place in a public or appropriately observable place;
- others can see into the room wherever possible;
- a colleague or line manager knows that the one-to-one interaction is taking place.

Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside school hours where possible. Personal contact details must not be exchanged with pupils, including personal social media profiles.

Staff must not show favouritism or provide preferential treatment to individual pupils. Workers related to, or who are carers of, pupils must keep their familial and employment roles separate and must not become involved in the pupil's education or care beyond their professional role.

If an interaction with a pupil could be misinterpreted, staff should report the concern in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

8. Communication and social media

School communications must be professional, appropriate and in accordance with data protection requirements. Staff must not discuss pupils, parents, colleagues or school-related business on personal social networking sites.

Staff must not accept or propose contact with current pupils through personal social networking sites or engage in conversations with them through such sites. Staff should also be circumspect about personal contact with former pupils, particularly those under 18.

Staff must not use or access social networking sites belonging to pupils. Personal social media activity must not bring the school into disrepute or call into question an individual's suitability to work with children.

All media enquiries relating to the school must be referred immediately to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors.

9. Acceptable use of technology

School technology, networks, email and devices must be used responsibly and in accordance with school policies, applicable law and professional standards.

- School business must be conducted through official school email addresses and approved systems.
- Staff must not access, create, store, send or distribute illegal, malicious, offensive, discriminatory or inappropriate material using school systems.
- Personal devices must not be used to photograph or record pupils.
- Personal mobile phones must be stored securely, inaccessible to pupils, switched off or on silent during working hours, and accessed only during authorised breaks except where urgent use has been authorised.

- Staff must not communicate with pupils through personal mobile phones or provide pupils with personal telephone numbers or other personal contact details.
- No personal information relating to school business, pupils or staff may be stored on personal equipment.
- Devices and accounts must be password protected and staff must report loss, damage, unauthorised access or security breaches immediately.
- The school may monitor use of its systems where necessary and proportionate, in accordance with current legislation and the school's policies.

For detailed requirements, staff must follow the ICT Acceptable Use Policy.

10. Confidentiality

Information received in the course of employment, volunteering or engagement with the school should be regarded as sensitive and confidential unless there is a clear reason otherwise.

Confidential information must not be disclosed or divulged except where required for the role, authorised, or required by law. This does not override the duty to report safeguarding concerns.

Any actual, suspected or potential data protection breach must be reported immediately to the school's Data Protection Officer.

Staff must not publish information that could identify a teacher who is the subject of an allegation where reporting restrictions apply.

11. Honesty and integrity

Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity, including when dealing with pupils, handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities.

Workers must not accept gifts or hospitality intended to benefit them personally without the express permission of the school. Any sponsorship of school activities must be related to the school's interests and never for personal benefit.

Staff must ensure information provided to the school is accurate and must notify the school of relevant changes, including matters arising outside school that may affect their employment or suitability to work with children.

12. Relationships and conflicts of interest

Workers must treat members of the school community with dignity and respect and work cooperatively and supportively. Bullying, harassment and victimisation will not be tolerated.

Close personal relationships at work should be disclosed confidentially to the appropriate line manager where they may affect professional conduct, fairness, confidentiality, operational arrangements or conflicts of interest.

No-one should be involved in discipline, promotion, pay or other decisions relating to someone with whom they have a close personal relationship.

Applicants must disclose close personal relationships with people connected with the school where required. A worker must not sit on an appointment panel involving someone with whom they have a close personal relationship.

All professional references for those working with children must be provided in accordance with school procedures. Personal or colleague references must make clear that they are personal and must not be provided on school headed paper.

Employees must disclose secondary employment or engagement where required and must obtain written consent where the school's policy requires it. Secondary employment must not interfere with school duties or conflict with the school's interests.

Workers must not allow personal, political, religious or other views to interfere with their professional responsibilities and must present a balanced view when working with pupils.

13. Dress code

Adults in school are expected to adopt smart standards of dress which project an appropriate professional image to pupils, parents and members of the public. Dress should be appropriate to the role and activity, including PE and outdoor activities, and applies to official school activities and online or virtual teaching.

- Dress must not be offensive, revealing or sexually provocative.
- Dress must not distract or cause embarrassment.
- Clothing must not display political, offensive or otherwise contentious slogans.
- Dress must not be discriminatory or culturally insensitive.

14. Conduct outside of work

The school respects individuals' right to a private life. However, workers must not act in a way that brings the school or their profession into disrepute or calls into question their suitability to work with children.

Workers must immediately disclose to the Headteacher, or to the Chair of Governors where the concern relates to the Headteacher, any wrongdoing or alleged wrongdoing by themselves, including incidents arising from alternative employment or outside work which may have a bearing on their employment.

Workers must also comply with any statutory notification or disqualification requirements relevant to their role.

15. Monitoring arrangements

This Code will be reviewed annually, or sooner where necessary to reflect changes in legislation, statutory guidance or school practice. The Governing Board will ensure that the Code is implemented effectively and that appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard children and address concerns.

The school may monitor use of its electronic systems where required by law, where there is reason to believe that a breach of law or school policy has occurred, where offensive or illegal material is

suspected, for compliance purposes, or where necessary to ensure the effective operation and security of the system. Monitoring will be reasonable and in accordance with current legislation.

16. Links with other policies

This Code should be read alongside the school's:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy and procedures
- Staff Disciplinary Procedure
- Grievance Procedure
- Low-Level Concerns Policy/procedures
- Whistle-blowing Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Gifts and Hospitality Policy
- Attendance and other relevant staff procedures
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with Children and Young People in Education Settings