



Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.”

Proverbs 22:6

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

Adopted	Autumn Term 2023
Committee	Standards
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We are a Christian school where quality and opportunities make a difference. We value all children as unique ‘Children of God’ and nurture each other to show **LOVE** in our relationships and a **RESPECT** for all. We foster **HOPE** within our community and encourage children to find **PEACE** by creating times and places for stillness and reflection. We strive for excellence, inspiring dreams both now and in the future. We promote **POSITIVITY**, celebrate **COURAGE**, demonstrate **RESPONSIBILITY** and share **JOY** through...

‘Learning, loving, laughing in the light of Jesus’.

OVERVIEW

Relationships amongst staff and with pupils at Forsbrook CE Primary School are friendly and mutually respectful. At Forsbrook, we seek to provide a safe and supportive environment that ensures the wellbeing and best outcomes for all pupils and supports our aims and values.

The Staff Code of Conduct has been formulated in order to maintain this balance by:

- clarifying the professional responsibility of all staff, teaching and non-teaching;
- giving clear advice about what constitutes illegal behaviour and what might be considered as misconduct; and
- establishing expectations of standards that all staff must maintain when carrying out school business or representing the School in any circumstance.

The school recognises that it has a duty of care towards its employees to provide a safe working environment for staff. It is intended that this guidance will help ensure that staff maintain the safest possible working practice and thereby safeguard all pupils in their care as well as safeguard themselves against accusations of improper or unprofessional conduct.

Specifically, staff should be aware that:

- allegations of unprofessional conduct or improper contact can arise at any time;
- professionalism and vigilance are required in order to ensure the safety of children in our care and to reduce the risk of an allegation of impropriety against a member of staff;
- forming inappropriate relationships with children or young people who are pupils at another school may also be regarded as gross misconduct.

STANDARDS OF PERSONAL BEHAVIOUR

Equality of opportunity

The school seeks to promote inclusivity and values diversity. It also seeks to ensure that the work environment for its employees is supportive, and one where individual respect is shown to all. All members of staff and pupils, regardless of their gender, race, ethnic background, culture, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, age, religion, socio-economic status or any other factor will be supported and encouraged to perform to their potential.

Harassment and bullying

To secure an environment in which pupils and members of staff are able to flourish and to achieve their full potential, the school is committed to ensuring that everyone is able to work and to participate in the life of the school without fear of harassment, bullying or intimidation. Everyone in the school has a part to play by ensuring that their own behaviour, whether intentional or unintentional, does not constitute harassment. The school will take action against inappropriate behaviour, which shows lack of respect for others, or which leads people to feel threatened.

Health and safety

The school places a high priority on providing a safe working and learning environment and will act positively to minimise the incidence of all workplace risks as required by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and

other associated legislation. All activities should be carried out with the highest regard for the health and safety of employees, students, visitors and the public. Our aim is excellence in health and safety, by means of continuous improvement of standards, and the comprehensive use of risk assessments so as to systematically remove the causes of accidents/incidents and ill-health. This, together with more specific aims and objectives, reflects the school's commitment to promote employee wellbeing. (*See the Health and Safety policy for further information.*)

Security

In the interests of security, employees must carry a means of identification whilst in school and produce their ID badge on request. The school reserves the right to search the outer clothing, bags, lockers and vehicles etc. of staff members whilst on site. The staff member may have a colleague in attendance on such (rare) occasions.

Relationships with other members of staff and other clients and customers of the school

The school does not concern itself with the private lives of its staff unless they affect its effective operation or its reputation. Members of staff who are relatives or who have a close personal relationship should not normally have a supervisory, assessing or authorising relationship with each other. Employees must inform their line manager if they have a close personal relationship with another employee or a client or customer of the school, which could be considered by colleagues, pupils or others, as impacting on the way they conduct themselves at work. All staff, irrespective of job role, should be polite, helpful and professional towards each other. They should seek to be considerate and courteous at all times, even on occasions when there may be differences of opinion or challenge.

Performance

The school expects individuals to follow all reasonable rules and instructions given by those supervising or managing their activities and/or work areas.

Use of language

Staff must ensure that they use appropriate language at all times.

Staff must:

- avoid words or expressions that have any unnecessary sexual content or innuendo;
- not use language that could be considered racist, sexist or homophobic;
- not use language that promotes extreme political ideas or that promotes any form of radicalisation;
- avoid any words or actions that are over-familiar;
- not swear, blaspheme or use any sort of offensive language in front of pupils; and
- understand that the use of sarcasm or derogatory words should be avoided when punishing or disciplining pupils and unprofessional comments about anyone must also be avoided

Smoking

The school is a non-smoking site.

Misuse of drugs and alcohol

Staff must not drink alcohol during the normal school working day nor should they drink alcohol with pupils outside of the normal school working day.

It is a disciplinary offence to be on school premises and/or carrying out official duties when under the influence of non-medically prescribed drugs.

Gambling

Gambling activities must not be conducted on school premises; discretion may be used in relation to small raffles for charitable purposes, national lottery syndicates, occasional sweepstakes etc.

Conduct outside work

The school does not seek to dictate how employees conduct themselves in their personal lives outside work. However, unlawful, anti-social or other conduct by employees which may jeopardise the school's reputation or position will be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure. In particular, a member of staff accused of a criminal offence is expected to inform the school at the earliest opportunity and failure to do so may be a disciplinary offence.

Dress code

The school does not operate a formal dress code for its employees, other than for those who are provided with a uniform and/or protective clothing. However, employees must ensure that their dress is appropriate for the situation in which they are working and that they present a professional image.

Use of Mobile Phones and Cameras

Photographs will only be taken of children with their parents' permission (provided via consent forms). Photographs will only be taken by a designated staff member/s. Where photographs are taken by staff to give evidence of children's progress, photos can only be taken on school Ipads. They must then be downloaded onto school computers, where they will be monitored. Photos cannot be used or passed on outside the school.

Neither staff nor children may use their own mobile phones to take photographs of pupils in our school.

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR

Professional behaviour is a generic term, but within this Code of Conduct includes such aspects as:

- acting in a fair, courteous and mature manner to pupils, colleagues and other stakeholders;
- ensuring that leadership/management decisions are challenged in an appropriate manner and not in a public domain;
- co-operating and liaising with colleagues, as appropriate, to ensure pupils receive a coherent and comprehensive educational service;
- endeavouring to assist the school achieve its corporate and strategic objectives – in particular, by adopting a positive attitude to marketing and the achievement of quality and equality;
- respect for school property;
- maintaining the image of the school through standards of dress, general courtesy, correct use of school stationery, etc.;

- taking responsibility for the behaviour and conduct of pupils in the classroom and sharing such responsibility elsewhere on the premises;
- being fit for work (i.e., not adversely influenced by drugs, alcohol, etc.).
- being familiar with job requirements (e.g., proper preparation, use of suitable methods/systems, maintenance of appropriate/required records, etc.), including keeping up to date with developments relevant to the job.
- ensuring all assessments are conducted in a fair manner, and that procedures are strictly followed with respect to confidentiality and security;
- respect for the rights and opinions of others.

GUIDELINES ON THE PREVENTION OF ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

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. Staff should, therefore, use their professional judgement at all times. Staff should not have unnecessary physical contact with pupils and should be alert to the fact that minor forms of friendly physical contact can be misconstrued by pupils or onlookers.

Physical contact should never be secretive, or of 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 recorded as soon as possible, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (“DSL”) informed and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the pupil's file.

Physical Restraint

Any physical restraint is only permissible when a child is in imminent danger of inflicting an injury on himself/herself or on another, and then only as a last resort when all efforts to defuse the situation have failed. Another member of staff should, if possible, be present to act as a witness. All incidents of the use of physical restraint should be recorded in writing and reported immediately to the DSL/Headteacher who will decide what to do next. Where this relates to the school's nursery/EYFS setting, parents will be informed of any physical restraint used on their child the same day or as soon as reasonably practicable.

Physical education and other activities requiring physical contact

Where exercises or procedures need to be demonstrated, extreme caution should be used if the demonstration involves contact with pupils and, wherever possible, contact should be avoided. It is acknowledged that some staff, for example, those who teach PE and games will, on occasions, have to initiate physical contact with pupils in order to support a pupil so 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 under 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 child.

One to one situations

Staff working in one to one situations with children and young people are more vulnerable to allegations. Teachers and others should recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure the safety and security needs of both staff and pupils are met.

Pre-arranged meetings with pupils away from the school premises are not permitted unless approval is obtained from their parent and the Headteacher or another senior colleague with delegated authority.

Staff should:

- avoid meetings with pupils in remote or secluded areas of the school;
- ensure there is visual access or an open door;
- inform other staff of the meeting beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by; and
- always report any concerns to a senior colleague.

Intimate care

All children have a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of an intimate nature is required (for example assisting with toileting or removing wet/soiled clothing). A care plan should be drawn up and agreed with parents for all children who require intimate care on a regular basis.

Children should be encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their own personal care as is practicable. When assistance is required, staff should ensure that another appropriate adult is in the vicinity and is aware of the task to be undertaken.

Intimate care may be defined as any activity required to meet the personal care needs of each individual child. Parents have a responsibility to advise staff of the intimate care needs of their child, and staff have a responsibility to work in partnership with children and parents.

Intimate care can include:

- Feeding
- Oral care
- Washing
- Dressing/undressing
- Toileting
- Menstrual Care
- Treatments such as enemas, suppositories, enteral feeds
- Catheter and stoma care
- Supervision of a child involved in intimate self-care

Our principles for intimate care are as follows:

- Every child has the right to be safe.
- Every child has the right to personal privacy.
- Every child has the right to be valued as an individual.
- Every child has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- Every child has the right to be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities.
- Every child has the right to express their views on their own intimate care and to have such views taken into account.
- Every child has the right to have levels of intimate care that are as consistent as possible.

If staff observe any unusual markings, discolorations or swelling including the genital area, they must report immediately to your designated safeguard lead. If during the intimate care of a child you accidentally hurt them, or they misunderstand or misinterpret something, reassure the child, ensure their safety and report

the incident immediately to your designated lead. Report and record any unusual emotional or behavioural response by the child on Safeguard.

Transporting Pupils

It is inadvisable for a member of staff to give a lift in a car to a pupil alone. Wherever possible and practicable it is advisable that transport is undertaken other than in private vehicles, with at least one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort. If there are exceptional circumstances that make unaccompanied transportation of pupils unavoidable, the journey should be made known to a senior member of staff e.g., taking pupils to hospital / doctor's appointments.

Staff homes

Pupils should not visit staff in their own homes. Staff must not allow pupils to stay in their homes overnight unless there is a friendship between a pupil and the child of a member of staff. In these cases, all such arrangements must be made with full parental consent.

Communication with Pupils including the use of social media

Staff should not give their personal mobile phone numbers or email addresses to pupils/parents, nor should they communicate with them by text message or personal email. If they need to speak to a parent by telephone, they should use one of the school's telephones and email using the school system. Staff should be aware that it is not appropriate to use social media to communicate directly with pupils/parents.

FINANCIAL PROBITY

Self-employment, other employment or consultancy work

The school understands that these types of opportunities can bring benefits to the school as well as to individual members of staff. All staff proposing to undertake a self-employment, other employment or consultancy work must secure the approval from the Headteacher and ensure that the proposed work is not in conflict or detrimental to the school's aims and objectives.

Financial regulations

The school's financial regulations create a framework of financial controls within which the staff of the school must operate. These regulations are designed to protect the school and individual members of staff. Failure to comply with these regulations may lead to the loss of assets, significant delays in payments to employees and suppliers, and additional work for colleagues.

Employees must not accept gifts or hospitality that could give rise to a suspicion that they have a conflict of interest or have been influenced in a decision. Breaches of the regulations will normally be a serious disciplinary offence.

Conflicts of interest

The highest standards of behaviour are also expected in all areas of school life, especially where individuals are in positions to make decisions, which may have significant impact on others. In all such cases it is important that decisions are taken in a fair and balanced way that can withstand external scrutiny. Conflicts of interest should be identified so that individuals are not involved in decisions where their actions could be seen as biased.

Access to confidential information

Although the school strives to conduct its business in an open fashion there will be times when individuals, through their positions as members of committees, selectors/recruiters, line managers etc, become aware of confidential information, either about other individuals or in connection with the school's commercial/academic activities. Individuals should be aware of the need to keep such matters confidential and to respect the proper channels of communication for such information.

Staff members should never give absolute guarantees of confidentiality to pupils or adults wishing to tell them about something serious. They should guarantee only that they will pass on information to the minimum number of people who must be told in order to ensure that the proper action is taken to sort out the problem and that they will not tell anyone who does not have a clear need to know. They will also take whatever steps they can to protect the informing pupil or adult from any retaliation or unnecessary stress that might be feared after a disclosure has been made.

For specific guidance on the disclosure of any child protection related issues, please refer to the Safeguarding Policy.

Use of equipment for non-work purposes

The school will allow employees reasonable use of school equipment and facilities, provided that authorisation has been obtained from the head, that the use does not interfere or conflict with the work of the school, and that any costs are met by the individual.

Private telephone calls

Staff may use school telephone facilities to make occasional private calls for essential or emergency matters.

Use of IT equipment, internet and social media

Users of the school's IT and internet facilities must behave reasonably towards other users and in public areas they must behave appropriately. Users who do not behave reasonably and appropriately may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with relevant procedures. In particular, employees must not use school facilities to create, display, produce, store, circulate or transmit inappropriate material in any form or medium.

Employees must keep the use of school internet facilities for personal matters to a minimum and only during lunch breaks or after contracted hours.

PROCEDURES

Raising matters of concern

Employees have a right and a duty to raise concerns, which they may have about breaches of the law or propriety by the school. This should normally be through their line manager but in circumstances where this is not appropriate they may approach the headteacher/ chair of governors in confidence. No individual who expresses their views in good faith and in line with this guidance will be penalised for doing so. See the School's Whistleblowing policy.

Breaches of this code

This code of conduct has been drawn up to provide a source of guidance to the school's employees. It is not a contractual document and can be amended at any time by the school. All staff must comply with both the provisions of this code and the school's policies and procedures, breaches of which will be taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Staff are also reminded that this code is not exhaustive. The school's primary duty is towards the welfare of pupils and its staff. Individuals are encouraged to take a common sense approach towards their conduct. Any staff member who has a concern or is unsure about an event that has arisen should discuss the matter with a senior colleague as soon as possible.