



Code of Conduct and Guidelines for Safe Working Practices for the Protection of Children and Staff

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy and the Child Protection Procedures. It sets out standards of conduct which staff are expected to follow when within, or representing the School. This code is written to assist staff and it is important that staff should take advice and guidance if necessary. If in doubt, ask.

Introduction

1.1 The Governors of West Melton Primary School have a legal duty under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by creating and maintaining a safe learning environment.

1.2 In this regard, all West Melton Primary School staff have a duty to keep children and young people safe and protect them from harm. Staff should ensure that they do not put themselves in situations in which allegations of abuse or inappropriate behaviour could be made.

1.3 The Public are also entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from school staff, governors and volunteers and to have trust and confidence in their integrity.

1.4 All adults working in West Melton Primary School must therefore act with the utmost good faith with regard to the business of the school and not do anything, which may adversely affect its reputation.

1.5 The following Code has been drawn up with a view to reducing the risk of staff being accused of improper or unprofessional conduct in all aspects of

their work. It aims to help staff work safely and professionally and clarify what behaviour constitutes safe practice and what is unacceptable and/or illegal.

1.6 The Headteacher should also ensure that all staff are aware of the Code's contents and are fully briefed on its implications.

1.7 Reference to this Code will be made in all contacts of employment, and copies will be given to all staff. In addition, the induction programme for all new staff will reinforce the principles of this Code.

1.8 Investigations of alleged breaches of this Code will be covered under the School's Disciplinary procedures and related codes of practice.

2. Scope

2.1 The Code applies to all adults working in schools whatever their position, roles or responsibilities and is therefore aimed at all school-based staff and volunteers.

2.2 The Code is predominantly geared towards safe working practices for the protection of children.

2.3 The Code cannot cover every eventuality. Its purpose is to show the standard expected of employees, but it does not replace the general requirements of the law.

2.4 In respect of teachers specifically, the Code supplements the General Teaching Council (GTC) Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers.

3. General obligations

3.1 Staff should understand the responsibilities that are an intrinsic part of their employment or role. They should make a professional judgement about their actions and behaviour and seek to avoid conduct, which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation or intentions.

3.2 Staff should display the highest possible standards of professional behaviour that is required in an educational establishment, seeking to cooperate with their colleagues, providing support, help and guidance as required by them and their line manager, and enable effective communication throughout the School.

3.3 Staff should not use their position in the School for private advantage or gain and should avoid words and deeds that might bring the School into disrepute or might undermine colleagues in the perception of others (staff/pupils/parents/community).

3.4 Staff should retain professional independent objectivity and not promote dogma or political bias to others in their working activities.

3.5 Continuing professional development and support shall be provided by the School and, where appropriate and agreed, will be based on the objectives of the School Development Plan. Periodically, employees will be required to attend certain training activities.

3.6 Staff should attend their place of work punctually in accordance with their conditions of service and at the times agreed with their line manager. Those unable to avoid being late or absent should, whenever possible, give as much notice to the Headteacher so that alternative cover arrangements may be made.

3.7 If there is an incident where staff feel there may be a concern, they should discuss the circumstances that informed their action, or their proposed action with a senior colleague, to help ensure that the safest practices are employed and the risk of actions being misinterpreted reduced.

3.8 Records should be made of any incidents and decisions made or further actions agreed, with their justifications, in accordance with school policy.

3.9 All staff should know the designated person for child protection, be familiar with local child protection arrangements and understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children and young people.

4. Good practice guidelines

4.1 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;
- 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.
- being familiar with communication channels and School procedures applicable to both pupils and staff;
- ensuring all assessments/exams/tests are conducted in a fair and proper (prescribed) manner, and that procedures are strictly followed with respect to confidentiality and security;
- respect for the rights and opinions of others.

4.2. Propriety and Behaviour

4.2.1 All adults working with children and young people are in a position of trust in relation to the individuals in their care. Staff are expected to adopt high standards of personal integrity and conduct and behave in such a way that does not compromise their position both within or outside West Melton Primary School.

4.2.2 The General Teaching Council for England's Statement of Professional Values and Practice also sets out the minimum professional standards for the regulation of the teaching profession and recognises that 'professionalism involves using judgement over appropriate standards of personal behaviour'.

Staff should not:

- behave in a manner, which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or act as a role model;
- use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine pupils;
- make (or encourage others to make) unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate other individuals or might be interpreted as such.

4.3 Confidentiality and Information disclosure

4.3.1 Staff should not use any information obtained in the course of their duties to the detriment of West Melton Primary School or for personal gain or benefit or pass this information on to others who might use it in such a way.

4.3.2 Staff must also take all reasonable steps to ensure that the loss, destruction, inaccuracy or disclosure of information does not occur as a result of their actions, including information relating to school business and pupil data.

4.3.3 There are some circumstances in which staff may be expected to share information about a child, for example, when child protection issues arise. In such cases staff have a duty to pass information on without delay in line with local procedures.

- staff should not use their position to gain access to information for their own advantage or to intimidate, humiliate or embarrass a child;
- staff are expected to treat any information they receive about children and young people in a discreet and confidential manner;

-staff need to be cautious when passing on information to others about a child/young person and if in any doubt about sharing information, seek the advice of a senior member of staff.

4.4 Employment matters

4.4.1 All staff involved in appointments and/or tendering process should ensure that these are made on the basis of merit.

-staff should not be involved in an appointment or decisions relating to discipline, promotion or pay adjustments for any individual who is a relative or with whom they are in a close personal relationship;

-all relationships of a business or private nature with external contractors, or potential contractors should be made known to the Headteacher.

4.5 Public duty and private interest

4.5.1 It is important that staff do not put themselves in a position where their duty to West Melton Primary School and their private interests conflict.

-Staff should not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work and the provision of a balanced and professional service, ensuring that they work to the professional standard required.

4.6 Other employment/private work

4.6.1 Any external work that staff undertake must not bring West Melton Primary School into disrepute or conflict with the school's interest.

4.6.2 Any copyright created by a member of staff during their employment with West Melton Primary School becomes the property of the school.

private work should not be undertaken in the school's time, or using the school's premises or equipment, without prior approval of the Headteacher;

4.7 Dress and Appearance

4.7.1 Staff should ensure that they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks that they undertake and that through their appearance, they promote a positive and professional image.

4.7.2 Where dress codes exist in schools these should not discriminate in any way.

4.8 Use of School Time and Facilities

4.8.1 The School's property and facilities (eg stationery, computers, photocopiers) may only be used for school business unless permission for their private use has been granted.

4.9 Social contact

4.9.1 Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils to secure or strengthen a friendship. This includes giving any personal details to a pupil such as a home/mobile phone number, home or email address. Only in exceptional circumstances can this be with the prior approval of a senior member of staff.

Do not give out personal details such as home/mobile numbers, home address or e-mail address to pupils.

Staff should not use social media sites such as facebook to interact in any way with pupils or parents.

If staff have social media accounts then they are responsible for ensuring privacy settings are secure and personal data is inaccessible.

Staff and parents should not use social media to make any negative/offensive comments about pupils/staff at the school.

4.10 Physical contact

4.10.1 It is unrealistic to suggest that teachers should never touch pupils. There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, such as when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance or as an integral part of some lessons such as PE and music.

4.10.2 However, innocent actions and appropriate physical contact can often be misconstrued and it is therefore crucial that staff only initiate physical contact for the minimum time necessary and in ways appropriate to their own role and the needs of the child.

4.10.3 Staff should use their professional judgement at all times. Where feasible, staff should seek the child's permission before initiating contact. Where a member of staff thinks that an incident could have been misinterpreted it should be reported to the headteacher.

4.10.4 Any formally agreed plan for children with SEN or physical disabilities should be understood and agreed by all concerned and staff should be provided with relevant information about vulnerable pupils in their care where it is relevant for this to be provided in order for staff to be able to undertake tasks appropriately.

4.10.5 Extra caution may also be required where it is known that a child has suffered previous abuse or neglect. Many such children are often needy and seek out inappropriate contact, thereby leading staff to be vulnerable to allegations of abuse.

In this regard, staff should:

always explain to a pupil the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take;

look at alternatives, where it is anticipated that a pupil might misinterpret contact and consider involving another member of staff, or a less vulnerable pupil in a demonstration;

always tell a colleague when and how they offered comfort to a distressed child and record any situations, where they think they may give rise to concern;

4.11 Changing

4.11.1 Children are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes.

4.11.2 However, there does need to be an appropriate level of supervision to safeguard young people and satisfy health and safety considerations. Any supervision must therefore be appropriate to the needs and age of the young people concerned.

-staff should avoid any physical contact when children are in a state of undress or any visually intrusive behaviour where there are changing rooms;

-staff should announce their intention of entering a changing room and avoid remaining in the room unless pupil needs require it;

-staff should not change in the same place as children.

4.12 Behaviour management and physical intervention

4.12.1 Corporal punishment is unlawful in all schools and physical force should never be used as a form of punishment; to do so is likely to constitute a criminal offence.

4.12.2 However in some circumstances, staff in schools have the right to use physical intervention/reasonable force for the shortest period necessary to control or restrain pupils. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 provides

the legal power for school staff to use reasonable force to prevent pupils from committing a crime or causing injury, damage or disruption.

-staff should try to defuse situations before they escalate;

-staff should keep parents informed of any sanctions;

4.13 One to one situations and overnight supervision

4.13.1 When staff work regularly on an individual basis with children, they are generally more vulnerable to allegations.

4.13.2 To avoid such situations arising meetings should, wherever possible, be arranged so that staff are visible and/or audible and not in secluded areas of the school.

4.13.3 Staff should not arrange to meet a pupil away from the school premises without good reason, but if this is necessary, only with the expressed approval of parents and a senior member of staff.

Staff should:

-ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in one to one situations;

-inform other staff of the meeting beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by;

-avoid the use of 'engaged' or equivalent signs wherever possible, as they may create an opportunity for secrecy or the interpretation of secrecy;

-always report to a senior colleague any situation which gives rise to complaint, disagreement or misunderstanding or where a child becomes distressed or angry.

4.14 Transporting children

4.14.1 In such cases where children need to be transported between different locations, a designated member of staff should be appointed to plan and provide oversight of all arrangements.

4.14.2 Wherever practicable, an adult additional to the driver should act as an escort and all arrangements agreed with relevant parties in advance.

All staff:

- should avoid using private vehicles wherever possible;
- must ensure that they have the appropriate insurance (for business use) where they do have to use their private vehicle;
- should ensure that they are alone with a child for the minimum time possible;
- should be aware that the safety and welfare of the child is their responsibility until this is safely passed over to a parent/carer;

4.15 Educational visits and after school clubs

4.15.1 Staff should always take care to have another adult present during out of school activities, unless otherwise agreed with senior staff. Health and safety requirements should be strictly adhered to.

4.15.2 Staff should ensure that they display professional behaviour during activities that take place off the school site and ensure that their behaviour cannot be interpreted as seeking to establish an inappropriate relationship or friendship. Staff should therefore maintain a professional relationship with pupils at all times.

4.15.3 Where out of school activities include overnight stays, particular consideration should be given to sleeping arrangements, if applicable and pupils, staff and parents informed of the arrangements in advance.

In this regard, staff should therefore:

- undertake risk assessments;
- have parental consent to the activity;
- ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times.

4.16 First aid and administration of medication

4.16.1 In cases where first aid or medication needs to be administered, all staff should adhere to West Melton Primary School Health and Safety policy.

4.16.2 A health care plan should be drawn up in circumstances where the child needs to take regular medication and any such agreement between the child, parents/ carers and the school must be negotiated, agreed and recorded.

4.16.3 Where possible, children should be encouraged to administer the medication themselves, with the permission of parents.

5) DISCIPLINARY RULES

The following are examples of behaviour which the School finds unacceptable. The list is not exhaustive and it is acknowledged that it will be necessary to exercise judgement in all cases and to be fair and reasonable in all the circumstances.

5.1. Any form of physical/verbal violence towards pupils.

5.2. Physical violence, actual or threatened towards other staff or visitors to the School.

5.3. Sexual offences, sexual insults or sexual discrimination against pupils, other staff or visitors to the School.

5.4. Racial offences, racial insults or racial discrimination against pupils, other staff or visitors to the School.

5.5. Theft of School monies or property and of monies or property of colleagues or visitors to the School. Removal from School premises of property which is not normally taken away without the express authority of the Principal or of the owner of the property may be regarded as gross misconduct.

5.6. Deliberate falsification of documents such as time sheets, bonus sheets, subsistence and expense claims for the purpose of gain.

- 5.7. Acceptance of bribes or other corrupt financial practices.
- 5.8. Wilful damage of School property or of property belonging to other staff or visitors to the School.
- 5.9. Wilful disregard of safety rules or policies affecting the safety of pupils, other staff or visitors to the School.
- 5.10. Any wilful act which could result in actionable negligence for compensation against the School.
- 5.11. Refusal to comply with reasonable instructions given by staff with a supervisory responsibility.
- 5.12. Gross neglect of duties and responsibilities.
- 5.13. Unauthorised absence from work.
- 5.14. Being untruthful and/or engaging in deception in matters of importance within the School community.
- 5.15. Deliberate breaches of confidentiality particularly on sensitive matters.
- 5.16. Being incapable by reason of alcohol or drugs (not prescribed for a health problem) from fulfilling duties and responsibilities of employment.
- 5.17. Conduct which substantially brings the name of the School into disrepute or which seriously undermines confidence in the employee.
- 5.18 The following are examples of behaviour which could lead to formal disciplinary warnings.
 1. Unsatisfactory timekeeping without permission.
 2. Neglect of safety rules and procedures. Some offences of wilful neglect may be regarded as gross misconduct.
 3. Breaches of confidentiality. Deliberate breaches on sensitive matters maybe regarded as gross misconduct.
 4. Failure to comply with reasonable work related requirements or lack of care in fulfilling the duties of the post.

5. Behaviour towards other employees, pupils, and visitors which gives justifiable offence. Certain behaviour giving rise to offence may be regarded as gross misconduct.

6. Acting in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as rude, impolite, contemptuous or lacking appropriate professional demeanor. In certain circumstances such behaviour may be regarded as gross misconduct.

7. Conduct which it is considered adversely affects either the reputation of the School or affects confidence in the employee. Certain conduct may be regarded as gross misconduct.

Approved by Governors

Signed.....*R. Peck*.....Chair of Governors...19.5.16..(Date)

Signed.....*K. Norris*.....Head Teacher.....19.5.16...(Date)

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for the Protection of Children and Staff

Declaration of receipt

I confirm that I have read the *Code of Conduct and Guidelines for Safe Working Practice* and understand that any unlawful or unsafe behaviour could lead to appropriate legal or disciplinary action being taken.

Name: (please print):

Signature: Date:

Please return this slip to your Headteacher as soon as possible