

Staff Code of Conduct Policy

Swanbourne CE School

Mursley CE School

Drayton Parslow Village School

Kingfishers Pre-School (Mursley)

(In this policy known as the Three Schools)



This policy was adopted on – **September 2023**

The policy is to be reviewed by – **September 2025**

(Copies of this policy are available for staff, parents, visitors and volunteers on request from the school office).

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Introduction

At The Three Schools, we are committed to ensuring that our pupils are and feel safe. All our schools' staff are valued members of their school community. Each one is expected to set and maintain the highest standards for their own performance, to work as part of a team and to be an excellent role model for our pupils. This code of conduct sets out the key principles for the creation and maintenance of a safe school culture.

All staff are expected to treat pupils, colleagues, parents and governors with respect and dignity, to be honest and to act professionally at all times. Staff members should be aware that any breach of a school's Code of Conduct for staff could result in disciplinary action.

This Code of Conduct is an addition to our Safeguarding/Child Protection policies, Safe Internet Use policies, Teaching Learning and Assessment policies and other policies regarding the employment and management of the performance of our staff.

The Code of Conduct aims to give guidance to all employees as they carry out their roles within The Three Schools. It is important that the environment which we create is one which is enjoyable, supportive, non-threatening, safe, clean and conducive to working and learning.

2. Scope

This guidance applies to:

- Employees in Schools employed under the terms of Bucks Pay Employment Conditions.
- All temporary, casual and agency workers including supply teachers.

Teachers are expected to conduct themselves in a way consistent with both the Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers and, where applicable, this guidance.

Governors are expected to conduct themselves in a way consistent with the provisions of their own Code of Conduct and, where applicable, this guidance.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Both Teachers/Headteachers/Line Managers and employees have a responsibility within this guidance.

Teachers/Headteachers/Line Managers will:

- Apply the policies and procedures detailed in this document in addition to the provisions of any Code of Conduct operational within the individual School.
- Ensure all new employees are made aware of the Guidance on Code of Conduct on commencing employment at the School.
- Deal promptly, thoroughly and fairly with any matter arising from a breach of this guidance.

Employees will:

- Act in accordance with the Principles set out in this document in addition to the provisions of any Code of Conduct operational within the The Three Schools.
- Never use their position for personal gain.
- Through procedures outlined in the relevant Schools' policies, bring to the attention of the appropriate level of management any deficiency in the provision of service or breach of this guidance.
- Maintain conduct of the highest standard such that confidence in their integrity is sustained.

Employees in roles that have their own professional code of conduct must:

- Appropriately apply the standards of their profession in line with this guidance.

In relation to employees in Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools with delegated budgets, the obligations of the employer reside with the Governing Body as agent of the County Council.

In relation to employees in Foundation and Voluntary Aided Schools with delegated budgets, the obligations of the employer reside with the Governing Body.

Principles

This Guidance on Code of Conduct in Schools is founded on the following principles:

- To ensure the highest standards of conduct and integrity from all employees of the Council/Governing Body.
- To support the Council/Governing Body's visions and values, policies and procedures.
- To set out clear objectives and expectations for all employees and Teachers/Headteachers/Line Managers.
- To ensure all employees and Teachers/Headteachers/Line Managers treat colleagues and those they interact with during the course of their work with dignity and respect.
- Not to discriminate against any individual in the application of this guidance on any grounds including grounds of sex, race, trade union activities, disability, age, sexual orientation, trans-gender status, religion, belief or any other personal characteristic or quality.

Dignity and Equality at Work

The Three Schools wish to create an environment where all employees are treated with dignity and respect.

The Three Schools are committed to achieving equality of choice as an employer of people, provider of services, educator and community leader.

All employees are expected to adopt the School's vision of equality of opportunity.

The Three Schools' Equalities and Diversity Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures must be adhered to at all times.

4. Professional Behaviour and Conduct

All Three Schools staff should:

- place the safety and welfare of pupils above all other considerations;
- treat all members of the school community, including pupils, parents, colleagues and governors with consideration, respect and tolerance;
- where firmness/admonition is called for this should be exercised calmly;
- adhere to the principles and procedures contained in our safeguarding policies, in teaching and learning policies and for teaching staff the DfE Teachers' Standards;
- exercise due confidentiality towards matters that are either discussed or overheard;
- be punctual and well-prepared, including being ready to teach/ support promptly at the very beginning of every lesson;
- carry out all tasks to the best of their ability, taking pride in their work;
- ensure that all absence is genuine;
- demonstrate a clear understanding of and commitment to non-discriminatory practice;
- recognise the power imbalances between pupils and staff, and different levels of seniority of staff and ensure that power and authority are never misused;
- have a proactive approach to safeguarding (it is essential that all staff have regular safeguarding training and are alert to, and report appropriately, any behaviour that may indicate that a child is at risk of harm);
- know the procedures for dealing with and reporting safeguarding concerns (see Child Protection Policy for detail);
- never condone inappropriate behaviour by pupils or staff;
- take responsibility for their own continuing professional development;
- refrain from any action that would bring The Three Schools into disrepute;
- value themselves, taking care of physical and mental wellbeing, including maintaining a healthy work/life balance;
- seek appropriate support for any issue that may have an adverse effect on their professional practice;
- when necessary access counselling and support, which can be provided internally or externally. Trade Unions can also provide support and advice for their members; membership of a Trade Union is strongly recommended;
- share a responsibility to look after the resources of the school and exercise due financial care; not wasting resources unnecessarily (including resources such as heat/light), following the principles of 'reduce, re-use, recycle' where appropriate;
- be aware of how to record/report concerns of 'Whistleblowing' (see Whistleblowing Policy for further details).
- be sensitive and considerate in the way we communicate with our colleagues and our children. We should talk to others in the way in which we would like to be spoken to ourselves.

5. Disclosure of Information and Confidentiality

Employees may, in the course of their employment become aware of personal or other confidential information, some of which may fall within the scope of the Data Protection Act 2018. The confidentiality of this information must be respected.

Employees must not use 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 unless it is necessary and within the law to do so i.e. where a police investigation is necessary.

Information concerning an employee's private affairs will not be supplied to any person outside of the School unless the consent of the employee is obtained first. This includes inappropriate use of social networking websites such as Facebook.

Within The Three Schools communication should be open and accessible to all. However, all information should be considered confidential to outsiders and Academic Records of children should not be divulged unless required by law or expressly authorised to do so.

Personal information on anybody is internally confidential unless part of agreed procedures. Any breach of confidence is a serious disciplinary matter.

However, there are circumstances in which it is our responsibility to share information (when the safety of a child is at risk) in which case you need to be precise about the information that you give.

This means:

- That staff are expected to treat information they receive about children in a discreet and confidential manner
- That staff in doubt about sharing information they hold or which has been requested of them, should seek advice from a member of the SLT
- Information should never be used to the staff's own or other staffs' advantage. Nor should it be used to intimidate, humiliate or embarrass children
- REMEMBER you can never tell a child that you will keep a secret if you believe that secret contains information that leads you to believe there are child protection concerns for that child or any others.
- It is your duty to notify the DSL with safeguarding concerns.

6. Dress and Appearance

School staff should ensure that they are dressed and present in a manner that is **suitable** and **professional**, taking into account their position as **role models** for the pupils in the school. This includes suitable sports kit for PE sessions. We would also expect that staff would also be respectful of the different cultural and religious backgrounds of the pupils in our schools.

The Three Schools are committed to promoting diversity and will therefore respect individual preference in terms of customs, culture and tradition. However, the style of dress or appearance should not interfere with the key role of teaching and learning, modelling and demonstrating such learning through, for example, modelling phonic sounds for younger pupils and providing a role model for our pupils.

7. Relationships with Pupils

All school staff should:

- treat each child as an individual and make adjustments to meet individual needs;
- encourage all pupils to reach their full potential;
- understand that school staff are in a position of trust and that sexual relationships with a child, even over the age of 16, may be an offence.

8. Relationships with Parents/Carers

- Staff should aim to create a welcoming and open relationship with parents and carers.
- All parental concerns should be treated seriously and dealt with promptly.

9. Physical Contact with Pupils

All school staff should:

- avoid inappropriate physical contact with pupils;
- ensure that the safe handling practices of Team Teach or similar professional methods are put into practice if physical intervention/restrain is required.

There are times in a non-restraint context when physical contact between a pupil and a member of staff may be deemed appropriate. These situations will be in a caring context when pupils need reassurance or support.

It is important that the member of staff assesses the 'reasonableness' of their actions taking the following in account:

- the age of the pupil;
- the severity of the distress of the pupil;
- the knowledge of the individual child;
- the relationship that exists between the member of staff and the pupil
- the situation for such contact including seeing pupils on your own, after school or in isolated situations

The level of contact used should be the minimum necessary to achieve the desired outcome. Due care needs to be taken to ensure that this supportive contact is agreed and open, with the circumstances in which this takes place clear to all concerned.

On some occasions it may be appropriate for staff to have physical contact with children. Take care how you touch children, make sure all touching/ hugging is age and situation appropriate. Any such contact must not be secretive or for the gratification of the adult. Where feasible staff should, seek permission from the child before any contact.

Any form of physical punishment is unlawful as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour unless it is by way of restraint.

- That staff should be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or anyone to whom the action is described
- Never touch a child in a way in which may be considered indecent
- Always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny
- Never indulge in horseplay, tickling or fun fights
- Consideration should be made to children for whom touching is particularly unwelcome (SEN, ASD; certain cultural backgrounds etc...)

Children in Distress

There may be occasions when a distressed child needs comfort and reassurance.

You should use your discretion in such cases.

You should remain self-aware at all times in order that contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

- Staff should consider the way in which comfort is offered
- Make sure that the physical contact is what the child wants

Care, Control and Physical Intervention

There may be occasions where it is necessary for staff to restrain a child to prevent them from inflicting injury to others, self-injury, damaging property, or causing disruption. In such cases only the minimum force necessary should be used and any action taken must be to protect the child. Whilst the school does not expect you to physically intervene with children, there may be certain circumstances where there is no option.

- Staff should always seek to defuse situations using strategies other than physical intervention
- Always use minimum force for the shortest period – preferably with assistance from a colleague
- Staff should understand that the school will support staff if they have had to physically intervene – if they have used minimum reasonable force
- Staff should be aware that the school will take action if they have acted unprofessionally, used force to punish a learner or used unnecessary force

Positive Behaviour Management

All children have a right to be treated with respect and dignity.

You should not use any form of degrading treatment; nor use sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards children.

Working in a 1 to 1 capacity with pupils

If you are working in a one to one situation with children you may be more vulnerable to allegations.

- Try to avoid being alone with a child for long periods of time
- Avoid meetings with children in remote or secluded areas
- Ensure there is a visual access and/or open door
- Inform other staff that you are working 1-1 in case they are needed in an emergency
- Always report any situation where a child becomes distressed or angry to a member of SLT

Intimate Care

All children have a right to safety, privacy and dignity.

Children should be encouraged to act independently and to undertake as much of their personal care as possible.

Children with SEN have a 'Care Plan' signed by their parents.

- Avoid changing children and never do the personal things the child is able to do themselves (trouser flies etc...)

10. Transporting Pupils

The transportation of pupils within teachers' cars for professional purposes is only to take place with permission from the parent/carer of the child. Where possible the teacher should transport more than one child rather than a pupil on their own.

Each school will assess the insurance and other needs prior to this eventuality.

11. Photography, Video and Images of Pupils

All school staff should:

- take images of pupils and/or staff only for professional purposes in accordance with The Three Schools' policy and with the knowledge of the Senior Leadership Team;
- ensure that photographs are stored only in the appropriate file on the school network;
- ensure that only pupils who have had consent given by their parents are included in photographs;
- ensure that only photographs containing pupils whose parents have given their consent are placed on the school website and given to third parties;
- use only school tablets, cameras and other recording devices to record images or videos. Where an alternative camera is used to take a photograph, the pictures need to be transferred to the appropriate school file and deleted from the camera before the device is taken off the school site.

12. E-Safety

All school staff should:

- ensure that all electronic communication with pupils, parents, carers, staff and others is compatible with their professional role and in line with school policies;
- use school ICT systems and resources for school business only; this includes school email addresses;
- not talk about their professional role in any capacity when using social media such as Facebook and YouTube.
- not normally become 'friends' with parents of school pupils on social networking sites such as Facebook;
- not put online any text, image, sound or video that could upset or offend any member of the whole school community or be incompatible with their professional role;
- not use social networking sites linked to the school to express political views without making clear if necessary, that those views are their own not those of their employer
- not give out their own personal details, such as mobile phone number, personal email address or social network details to pupils, parents, carers and others;
- not disclose any passwords and ensure that personal data is kept secure and used appropriately.

13. Alcohol and Drugs Misuse

Buckinghamshire Council (The Local Authority) has a policy on Substance Misuse in the Workplace which is aimed at ensuring that all employees are aware of their responsibilities regarding alcohol and drugs at work.

Those representing The Three Schools are personally liable for their conduct, specifically in relation to consumption of drugs and alcohol.

Inappropriate behaviour as a result of substance misuse will be dealt with under the relevant policy e.g. Conduct and Discipline, Capability.

14. Close Personal Relationships at Work

The Governing Body will not interfere unduly in the private lives of employees but with the public interest in mind will take legitimate action when close personal relationships at work have an actual or potential impact on School services.

The Governing Body will regard as wholly unacceptable any close personal relationship between an employee and a child or young person who is under the age of 18 (19 if still at school), whom they meet as a result of their employment.

Issues involving close personal relationships at work will be approached sensitively and managed promptly, effectively, fairly and lawfully.

15. Breach of the Guidance on Code of Conduct

Failure to comply with this guidance and associated School policies may result in disciplinary action being taken.

The Governing Body reserves the right to take legal action against employees where breaches of the guidance warrant such action.

16. Conclusion

By adhering to this code of conduct, staff can be assured that they are playing their part in safeguarding pupils and protecting themselves.

The school's Code of Conduct for staff will be provided to new staff during their induction period and a signed copy will be held on file for each employee.

It is recommended that staff are asked to review the code annually and invited to re-sign to reinforce the need for exemplary professional behaviour.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Policy agreed by governing body – **September 2023**

Policy to be reviewed – **September 2024**

Appendix A

DEALING WITH ANY NEW OR UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES

In such cases, we are expected to make judgements about our behaviour, in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the children in our charge and colleagues they, or we, work with, and in so doing, will be seen to be acting reasonably. If it isn't clear what the right action is, staff are expected to consult the Headteachers.

This means that where no specific guidance exists staff should:

- discuss the circumstances that informed the action, or the proposed action, with a senior colleague

This will help to ensure that the safest practices are employed and reduce the risk of actions being misinterpreted.

- always discuss any misunderstanding, accidents or threats with the Headteachers.
- always record discussions and actions taken with their justifications.