Staff code of conduct

Ballaugh Primary School

Ratified by Governing Body 14/5/2024

Date: [14/5/2024]

1. Aims, scope and principles

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow.

This policy applies in all environments.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

Many of the principles in this code of conduct are based on the [Teachers' Standards](#).

School staff have an influential position in the school and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards.

We expect all support staff, governors and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

The ethos of our school is that all stakeholders nurture children towards becoming aspirational, independent learners. We promote an environment where it is "safe" to learn from mistakes both academically and socially. An environment where academic learning has an appropriate level of challenge as depicted in every classroom through our adopted model of "the pit". An environment where all children have the courage to stand up for our values and "tell" when they need help. An environment where **all** interactions are compassionate and we model how to show respect, resulting in all stakeholders feeling safe and welcome.

Our Core school values are Kindness, Compassion, Courage, Honesty and Respect

Kindness = helpfulness towards someone in need, not in return for anything. Kindness is not just "not being unkind". The mental health benefits to ourselves from acts of kindness are significant.

Compassion = Allowing ourselves to be affected by someone's suffering and wanting to help make it less or prevent it.

Respect = Showing someone care, concern, or consideration for their needs or feelings. They should feel safe and welcome

Honesty = Being truthful when asked but only expressing negative opinions when prompted.

Courage = to stand up for, and do, the "right" thing in the face of popular opposition

Failure to follow this code of conduct may result in action being taken, as set out in our "Fairness at Work" policy and "Managing Safeguarding Allegations against Staff" policy, Capability or Disciplinary procedures.

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils. Ballaugh School's conflict resolution process is used to resolve disputes.

2. Legislation and guidance

In line with statutory safeguarding guidance, we must have a staff code of conduct, which should cover low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistle-blowing, as well as acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

3. General obligations

Staff set an example to pupils. They will:

> Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality

> Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school

> Treat pupils and others with dignity and respect

> Show tolerance and respect for the rights, needs and neurodiversity of others

> Not undermine fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

> Not express personal beliefs in a way that exploits pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law

> Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within

> Adhere to the Teachers' Standards

4. Safeguarding

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils, and colleagues, from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect.

Staff will familiarise themselves with our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

Our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures are available in the staff room "blue box", as well as in the policies section of our school website.

4.1 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

This section should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the 'Dealing with Safeguarding Allegations against staff' document for clarification about the forms of harm. (physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect)

This section applies to all cases in which 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, and/or

> Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or

> Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or

> Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place inside or outside of school

We will deal with any such allegation quickly and in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be the headteacher, or the chair of governors where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation.

4.2 Low-level concerns about members of staff

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child, or member of staff, by a member of staff that does not meet the harm 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

> Favouritism

> Taking photographs of children on a personal device

> Engaging in 1-to-1 activities where they can't easily be seen

> Unintentionally humiliating a child(ren) in front of peers or other staff.

> Shouting

> Any behaviours that are perceived to be condescending behaviour

> Gifting (all gifting to children from staff must be cleared by the headteacher. All gifts received must be recorded and comply with Treasury regulations)

If a child is adversely emotionally affected by a member of staff's actions (intentional or unintentional, breaching this code or not) then they must share this with the parent(s) as soon as is reasonably practicable, or at the end of the school day, at the latest. The child may have an unidentified, underlying mental health deficit.

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.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

4.3 Whistle-blowing

Whistle-blowing reports wrongdoing that it is "in the public interest" to report (public interest is "**the welfare or well-being of the general public" and society,** not merely of interest to the public).

See Isle of Man Government Whistle Blowing Policy (October 2022)

5. Staff-pupil relationships

Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so.

If staff members and pupils must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

> This takes place in a public place that others can access

> Others can see into the room

> A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of school hours if possible.

Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes social media profiles.

While we are aware many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to pupils must be equitable and authorised by the headteacher.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, or if a staff member is concerned at any point about a fellow staff member and a pupil, this should be reported in line with the procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

6. Communication and social media

School staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name, as pupils may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead, and set public profiles to private.

Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship. They will not make any efforts to find pupils' or parents' social media profiles.

Staff will ensure that they do not post online any images or videos relating to the school unless hosted on the school website and agreed by the headteacher.

Staff should be aware of the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

7. Acceptable use of technology

Staff will not use technology in school or belonging to the school to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.

Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops in front of pupils. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.

8. Confidentiality

During our role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive, confidential, and potentially contentious information about the school, staff, pupils, parents, wider family, and the community. This information must not be shared beyond the school or discussed within school in a non-supportive way. The sharing of this information could cause reputational damage due to it being misinterpreted without a context and shared more widely.

Information must never be:

> Disclosed to anyone unless required by law, policies or with consent from the relevant party or parties when applicable.

> Discussed in a casual or unconstrained conversation. (gossip)

> Used to humiliate, embarrass, or blackmail others.

> Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for.

This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, as detailed in our child protection and safeguarding policy and the Safeguarding Board's rules for information sharing.

All information about a pupil, including their name, is "pupil data" and as such must be treated confidentially and not shared without the explicit consent of the data controller or parent.

All conversations with the public (anyone not employed by Ballaugh School) about the school or its community must be convivial and supportive.

9. Honesty and integrity

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities.

Staff will not accept bribes. Gifts that are worth more than £25 must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register according to IOM treasury DFM regulations and online training.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the school is correct. This should include:

> Background information (including any past or current investigations/cautions related to conduct outside of school)

> Qualifications

> Professional experience

Where there are any updates to the information provided to the school, the member of staff will advise the school of these as soon as is reasonably practicable. Consideration will then be given to the nature and circumstances of the matter and, in consultation with OHR, whether this may have an impact on the member of staff's employment.

10. Dress code

Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner.

Clothes will not display any offensive or political slogans.

11. Conduct outside of work

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school, or the teaching profession, into disrepute. This covers conduct including but not limited to relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school on social media.

12. Physical Contact

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with children. This means that staff should be aware that even well-intentioned however, it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role and in relation to the pupil's individual needs and any agreed care plan.

Not all children feel comfortable about certain types of physical contact; this should be recognised and, wherever possible, adults should seek the pupil's permission before initiating contact and be sensitive to any signs that they may be uncomfortable or embarrassed.

Staff should acknowledge that some pupils are more comfortable with touch than others and/or may be more comfortable with touch from some adults than others.

Staff should listen, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and, so far as is possible, use a level of contact and/or form of communication which is acceptable to the pupil.

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one pupil, in one set of circumstances, may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child.

Any physical contact should be in response to the child's needs at the time, of limited duration and

appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Adults should therefore, use their professional judgement at all times.

Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action by them or a colleague could be misinterpreted, or if an action is observed which is possibly abusive, the incident and circumstances should be immediately reported to the headteacher and recorded. Where appropriate, the manager should consult with DESC.

Extra caution may be required where it is known that a child has suffered previous abuse or neglect. Staff need to be aware that the child may associate physical contact with such experiences. They also should recognise that these pupils may seek out inappropriate physical contact. In such circumstances staff should deter the child sensitively and help them to understand the importance of personal boundaries.

- never touch a pupil in a way 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 or fun fights

- always allow/encourage pupils, where able, to undertake self-care tasks independently

- ensure the way they offer comfort to a distressed pupil is age appropriate

- always tell a colleague when and how they offered comfort to a distressed pupil

- establish the preferences of pupils

- consider alternatives, where it is anticipated that a pupil might misinterpret or be uncomfortable with physical contact

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

- report and record situations which may give rise to concern

- be aware of cultural or religious views about touching and be sensitive to issues of gender

13. Other activities that require Physical Contact

In certain curriculum areas, such as PE, drama or music, staff may need to initiate some physical

contact with children, for example, to demonstrate technique in the use of a piece of equipment, adjust posture, or support a child so they can perform an activity safely or prevent injury.

Physical contact should take place only when it is necessary in relation to a particular activity. It should take place in a safe and open environment i.e., one easily observed by others and last for the minimum time necessary. The extent of the contact should be made clear and undertaken with the permission of the pupil. Contact should be relevant to their age / understanding and adults should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the pupil.

Any incidents of physical contact that cause concern or fall outside of these

protocols and guidance should be reported to the senior manager and parent or carer.

It is good practice that all parties clearly understand at the outset, what physical contact is necessary and appropriate in undertaking specific activities. Keeping parents/carers and pupils informed of the extent and nature of any physical contact may also prevent allegations of misconduct or abuse arising.

This means that staff should:

- treat pupils with dignity and respect and avoid contact with intimate parts of the body

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

- seek consent of parents where a pupil is unable to give this; e.g., because of age or disability

- consider alternatives, where it is anticipated that a pupil might misinterpret any such contact

- be familiar with and follow recommended guidance and protocols

- conduct activities where they can be seen by others

- be aware of gender, cultural and religious issues that may need to be considered prior to initiating physical contact

14. Intimate / Personal Care

Arrangements for intimate and personal care should be open and transparent and accompanied by robust recording systems.

Permission for new starters in Reception to be given intimate and personal care is contained in the "School's Transition into School Interview". This is shared with parents by the Reception class teacher before the academic year in which the child starts school.

Pupils should be encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their own personal care as is possible and practicable.

When assistance is required, this should normally be undertaken by one member of staff and only if signed permission from the parent has been recorded. The member of staff should try to ensure that another appropriate adult is in the vicinity who is aware of the task to be undertaken and that, wherever possible, they are visible and/or audible.

A record must be kept of all intimate and personal care tasks undertaken and, where these have been carried out in another room, should include times left and returned. A pastoral note will be recorded by the class teacher in Arbor. This includes when children have sorted themselves following a toileting "accident".

Pupils are entitled to respect and privacy at all times and especially when in a state of undress, including, for example, when changing, toileting and showering. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard pupils, satisfy health and safety considerations and ensure that bullying or teasing does not occur. This supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the children concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

If a member of staff must enter a toilet area they must knock, announce themselves and give children sufficient time to act on the announcement and make themselves presentable.

15. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as needed and familiarised with annually. It will be approved by the governing body.

16. Links with other policies

This policy links with our policies on:
- Fairness at Work
- Disciplinary Procedures (IOM)
- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Gifts and hospitality (Treasury DFM regulations)
- Online safety

- Whistle-blowing (IOM)
- Acceptable Use Policy