

# **Code of conduct for employees in schools/PRU's**

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This code sets out the expected standards of behaviour for all employees working within schools/PRU's (and aided schools, academies and trusts where adopted by the relevant body).

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The school seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment, which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for pupils in their care. This document clarifies what is expected in terms of professional behaviour.
- 1.2 In addition to this code, anyone employed under teachers' terms and conditions of employment has a statutory obligation to adhere to the 'Teachers' Standards 2012'. The relevant extract 'part 2 – personal and professional conduct' is contained at appendix 1.
- 1.3 Employees should be aware that failure to comply with the code of conduct could result in disciplinary action which may potentially include dismissal.
- 1.4 This code does not form part of the contract of employment and can be amended at any time.
- 1.5 The code shall apply to all staff (including the Headteacher) employed in community schools, voluntary controlled schools and pupil referral units and. The code of conduct may also be used for employees of aided schools, academies and trusts where the appropriate body has adopted it.
- 1.6 The standard of conduct as detailed in this policy is expected of all adults working in a paid or unpaid capacity in school, including supply staff, volunteers, and contractors. Concerns regarding the conduct of any adult working in school should be reported in line with the school's child protection and safeguarding procedures.
- 1.7 This code is supplemented by additional policies and guidance which are listed at appendix 2

## **2. Core Principles**

- 2.1 The welfare of pupils is paramount.
- 2.2 The safety and welfare of pupils is dependent on the vigilance of staff and the prompt reporting of any concerns. Employees should report all concerns, no matter how small these seem, even where the concern causes no more than a sense of unease or "nagging doubt" about another person's suitability to work with children.
- 2.3 Employees are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others or conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- 2.4 Employees should work, and be seen to work in an open and transparent way.
- 2.5 Employees should discuss and/or take advice promptly from their line manager or another senior member of staff over any incident, which may give rise to concern.

- 2.6 Records should be made of any such incident and of decisions made/further actions agreed.
- 2.7 All employees should know the name of their designated person for child protection, be familiar with child protection arrangements and understand their responsibilities to safeguard children.
- 2.8 Employees should be aware that breaches of criminal law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.

### **3. Setting an example**

- 3.1 All employees who work in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils. Employees must act as role models, demonstrating high standards of conduct in order to encourage pupils to do the same. Employees must therefore avoid using inappropriate and/or offensive language at all times.
- 3.2 Employees should adopt and maintain professional relationships and boundaries with pupils and avoid behaviour that could be viewed as over-familiarity or befriending behaviour such as sharing inappropriate comments, humour or details of personal life.
- 3.3 Employees should be aware of and adhere to the school's rules in respect of behaviour such as use of mobile phones, eating/drinking in corridors and classrooms, chewing gum etc.
- 3.4 Employees should avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct. If a member of staff feels that they may have put themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they may have behaved in a way that falls below the expected professional standards they should speak to their Headteacher or DSL, self-reporting demonstrates awareness of the expected standards and can protect staff from false allegations and misunderstandings.
- 3.5 Employees should ensure that their clothing and appearance promotes a positive and professional image and is in line with the school's dress code.

### **4. Appointments and other employment matters**

- 4.1 All employees involved in staff appointments and/or tendering processes should ensure that these are made on the basis of merit.
- 4.2 Employees need to take care that they do not accept any gift that may be construed as a bribe by others or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. It is acceptable to receive small tokens of appreciation from parents or pupils at Christmas or the end of term. However, if the gift is high value or the employee is concerned that it may be construed as a bribe then it should be reported to the Headteacher
- 4.3 Employees must not be directly involved in any staff appointment or decisions relating to discipline, pay, promotion or pay adjustments for any individual who is a relative or

with whom they have a close personal relationship. In this event they must inform their Headteacher as soon as they become aware of the application or matter in question.

- 4.4 Any external work that employees undertake must not bring the school into disrepute or conflict with the school's interests.

## **5. Personal interest**

- 5.1 Employees must declare to the Headteacher any financial interests which could conflict with the school's interests
- 5.2 All relationships of a business or private nature with external contractors, or potential contractors should be made known to the Headteacher. In the case of the Headteacher, any financial interests or relationships of a business or private nature must be declared to the Governing Body or PRU Management Committee.

## **6. Confidentiality and information disclosure**

- 6.1 Information obtained in the course of employment should not be used to the detriment of the school, for personal gain or benefit or passed on to others who might use it in such a way.
- 6.2 Employees must 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. The storing and processing of personal information about children and young people is governed by the Data Protection Act 1998 and the school will give clear guidance to employees about their responsibilities under this legislation.
- 6.3 There are circumstances where employees are expected to share information about a child, for example, when child protection issues arise. In such cases employees have a duty to pass information on without delay in line with school policy/local procedures. If employees are in doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential they should seek guidance from a senior manager or person with designated child protection responsibilities.
- 6.4 Whilst employees who work with children and young people need to be aware of the need to listen to and support them, they must not make promises to keep secrets, neither should they request this of a child or young person under any circumstances.

## **7. Use of school facilities, resources and time**

- 7.1 The school's property and facilities (eg stationary, computers, photocopiers, and mobile phones) may only be used for school business unless permission for their private use has been granted.

- 7.2 Employees must ensure that they use school funds entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner.
- 7.3 Only duties relating to their employment at the school should be undertaken during work time unless the express permission of the Headteacher is sought.

## **8. Duty of trust and care**

- 8.1 All employees have a duty to keep young people safe and to protect them from sexual, physical and emotional harm. This is exercised through the development of respectful and caring relationships between adults and children and young people and also through the behaviour of the adult, which at all times should demonstrate integrity, maturity and good judgement.
- 8.2 Employees must, at all times, act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in them as an employee of the school. Employees are expected to be ready and able, at the agreed times, to carry out their job. Politeness and courtesy should be expressed to the public and to internal and external clients at all times. Customer care and courtesy must be maintained with appropriate professional boundaries.
- 8.3 All members of the local community, clients and employees have a right to be treated fairly and equally and with dignity and respect. Employees should be aware that their behaviour may inadvertently intimidate or offend other employees, parents, pupils or members of the public.
- 8.4 The school is opposed to and will not tolerate all forms of discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and bullying and has procedures in place to deal with complaints of this nature.

## **9. Whistleblowing**

- 9.1 Employees have a duty, without fear of recrimination, to report suspicions or knowledge of any wrong-doing they become aware of, for example:
- activities which they believe to be illegal, improper, unethical or otherwise inconsistent with the code
  - anything which involves, or they think involves, irregularities with money or other property of the school
  - school employees, or other individuals, being involved in potentially fraudulent or corrupt activities, or theft.
- 9.2 Employees must report any alleged impropriety or breach of procedure to the Headteacher so that the matter may be investigated immediately. If any suspected wrongdoing involves the Headteacher then reports should be made to the chair of the governing body/PRU management committee.

## **10. Conduct outside of work**

- 10.1 Employees must not engage in conduct or behaviour outside of work in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children
- 10.2 Employees must not engage in conduct outside of work which could damage the reputation of the school or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community. Refer to appendix 1, extract from school teachers standards.
- 10.3 Any employee facing criminal charges must notify their Headteacher as soon as possible whether they feel the matter is relevant to their employment or not.

## **11. Communications (including the use of technology)**

- 11.1 Employees must not give their personal contact details (including their mobile telephone number, home address and e-mail address) to pupils unless there are exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher has granted permission. They should not request any personal information from a pupil.
- 11.2 Communication with pupils must at all times take place within appropriate professional boundaries and must be transparent and open to scrutiny. Contact should only be made for appropriate professional reasons.
- 11.3 'Communication' refers also to the wider use of technology, including mobile phones, text messaging, instant messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites, social networking sites, online gaming and blogs.
- 11.4 Internal e-mails should only be used to communicate in line with the protocols laid out within the schools policy on internet and e-mail usage.
- 11.5 Please refer to the school policy on the use of mobile phones when on school premises.

## **12. Social media and internet usage**

- 12.1 Employees should not post any comments on social media or the internet that could potentially be defamatory to the school or damage the school's reputation. Comments must not disclose confidential information relating to the school, its pupils, governors or employees.
- 12.2 Bullying, harassment and victimisation of employees, pupils or other persons affiliated with the school through online means will not be tolerated and will be subject to disciplinary action.
- 12.3 Photos and/or personal details of pupils must not be uploaded to any employee's personal social media account.
- 12.4 Employees must not allow current or recent pupils access to their social media accounts, including adding them as 'friends'. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that their accounts/passwords are secure and any potential breach should be reported to the Headteacher immediately.

- 12.5 It is advised that employees do not identify themselves with the school on their personal social media accounts. If they do identify themselves as an employee of the school then they must behave appropriately and in line with the school's values.
- 12.6 It is advised that employees make all social media profiles 'private' so that pupils and parents do not have access to their personal details and images. Employees should be aware that they leave themselves open to a charge of professional misconduct if inappropriate images of them are made available on a public profile.
- 12.7 It is advised that employees exercise caution and do not accept friend requests from parents other than where close personal or familial relationships already exist.
- 12.8 Accessing, marketing and storing child pornography or indecent images of children is illegal and will invariably lead to a criminal conviction and the individual being barred from working with children and young people.
- 12.9 Under no circumstances should employees in schools use school equipment to access inappropriate images on the internet or access any other site which could call into question their suitability to work with children. The same rule applies to the use of the school's equipment by members of staff at home eg laptops and tablets. Equipment containing such images or links must not be brought in to the work place.
- 12.10 If an employee becomes aware that they are in an online game with a pupil, they should cease the game immediately. Under no circumstances should employees seek out pupils or share tags/ID's with them to play online games.

### **13. Photography, video recordings and other creative arts**

- 13.1 Some school activities may involve the taking or recording of images. Any such work should take place with due regard to the law and the need to safeguard the privacy, dignity and safety of pupils. Informed written consent from parents or carers and agreement, where possible from the pupil, should always be sought before an image is taken for any purpose.
- 13.2 Care should be taken to ensure that all parties understand the implications of the image being taken especially if it is to be used for any publicity purposes or published in the media or on the internet. There also needs to be an agreement as to whether the images will be destroyed or retained for further use, where these will be stored and who will have access to them.
- 13.3 It is not appropriate for employees to take photographs of children for their personal use or using their own personal mobile phones.

### **14. Curriculum**

- 14.1 The curriculum can sometimes include or lead to discussion about subject matter of a sexually explicit or sensitive nature and employees may wish to seek guidance from a senior member of staff when responding to pupils' questions. Employees should not enter into, or encourage inappropriate or offensive discussions about sexual activity.

## **15. Intimate care**

- 15.1 A care plan should be agreed and drawn up with parents for all pupils who require intimate care on a regular basis. The views of the pupil should be actively sought where possible when drawing up a care plan. Depending on their age, maturity and ability, pupils should be encouraged to act as independently as possible. This plan should be reviewed regularly.
- 15.2 Where any changes to the agreed plan are required, consultation should take place with senior staff and parents/carers.
- 15.3 A record should be made of any variations from the agreed plan and the justification for this and this must be shared with the pupil's parents/carers.
- 15.4 When assistance is required, employees should ensure that another appropriate adult is in the vicinity and is aware of the task being undertaken.

## **16. First aid and medication**

- 16.1 Employees should be suitably trained and qualified before administering first aid and/or any agreed medication. The school will have trained and named individuals to undertake first aid.
- 16.2 Where possible, employees should ensure that another adult is aware of the action being taken. Arrangements will be in place to ensure that parental consent is obtained for the administration of first aid. Parents/carers should always be informed when first aid has been administered and a record made.
- 16.3 In circumstances where pupils need medication regularly, a health care plan should be in place to ensure the safety and protection of the pupil and the adults working with them.

## **17. Extra curricular activities (including school trips, out of school clubs and overnight supervision)**

- 17.1 Where activities take place off the school site or out of normal school hours, an additional appropriate adult should be present unless otherwise agreed with senior staff.
- 17.2 Parental consent must always be obtained for the activity.
- 17.3 Employees should ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times during such activities and stays within clearly defined professional boundaries.
- 17.4 Where activities include overnight stays, careful consideration needs to be given to sleeping arrangements and pupils, adults and parents should be informed of these prior to the trip.

## **18. Transporting children**

18.1 It is advisable that private vehicles are not used for transport, with at least one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort. If private vehicles are being used, the Headteacher should be aware and the vehicle must be roadworthy. At all times the driver must ensure that they have appropriate insurance and that maximum capacities are not exceeded in vehicles.

## **19. One to one situations**

19.1 Employees working in one to one situations with pupils are more vulnerable to allegations and therefore should plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure that the safety and security needs of both employees and pupils are met.

19.2 Meetings should be conducted in an area where there is visual access or with an open door.

19.3 A colleague should be informed about the meeting beforehand, assessing the need to have them nearby.

19.4 Employees should always report a situation where a pupil becomes distressed or angry during a one to one meeting to a senior member of staff.

## **20. Behaviour management and use of reasonable force**

20.1 All employees are expected to adhere to the schools behaviour management policy.

20.2 The use of physical intervention should be avoided wherever possible and should only ever be used in line with the guidance issued within the schools behaviour management policy.

20.3 Under no circumstances should physical force or intervention be used as a form of punishment. The use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence.

20.4 In settings where restrictive physical interventions may need to be employed regularly eg PRU's, there will be a clear policy in place on the use of such intervention as part of a wider behaviour management policy. Risk assessments should be carried out and individual care plans should be in place in consultation with parents/carers and where appropriate pupils.

20.5 In all cases where physical intervention is employed, the incident and subsequent actions must be recorded. This includes written and signed accounts from all those involved (including the pupil). Parents/carers must be informed of the incident on the same day.

20.6 Training will be provided to employees in respect of behaviour management and the use of physical intervention.

## **21. Sexual contact**

- 21.1 Any sexual contact between an employee and a pupil is both inappropriate and illegal. This does not just refer to physical contact but also to non-contact activities such as causing children to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of pornographic material.
- 21.2 Employees must not pursue sexual relationships with children and young people either in or out of school.
- 21.3 Employees should avoid any kind of behaviour which could be construed as 'grooming' a pupil such as singling out pupils for special attention and buying gifts for pupils. There should be a clear policy within school for supporting positive pupil behaviour or recognising particular achievements. If there is any doubt about how a certain behaviour/action may be construed then employees should speak to their Headteacher beforehand.
- 21.4 Employees must avoid any form of communication with a pupil which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative ie verbal comments, letters, notes, e-mail, texts and physical contact. This includes making sexual remarks about or to pupils and discussing personal sexual relationships within their presence.

## **22. Social contact**

- 22.1 Employees should not seek to have social contact with pupils or their parents/carers unless the reason for this contact has been firmly established with a senior manager/Headteacher.
- 22.2 If a pupil or parent attempts to establish social contact or if this occurs coincidentally then the employee should exercise their professional judgement in making a response and must make their manager and the parent of the pupil aware of the situation.
- 22.3 Where the nature of the employee's role involves work in the community, care should be taken to maintain appropriate personal and professional boundaries.

## **23. Physical contact**

- 23.1 There will be circumstances where physical contact between employees and pupils is entirely appropriate, for example as an integral part of some lessons such as PE, drama and music. Employees should use their professional judgement at all times about the appropriateness of physical contact with pupils and where feasible, seek the child's permission before initiating contact.
- 23.2 Physical contact should only be initiated for the minimum time necessary; it should be appropriate to the age and stage of the pupil and appropriate to the employee's role and the needs of the child. Please refer to sections 15 and 16 for guidance on intimate care and administering first aid and medication.

23.3 Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult or represent a misuse of authority.

23.4 If an employee thinks that an incident of physical contact may have been misinterpreted, they must report this immediately to the Headteacher.

## **24. Personal care**

24.1 Pupils are entitled to respect and privacy at all times and especially when changing clothes, washing/showering or undertaking any form of personal care. Supervision may be required to safeguard young people or satisfy health and safety considerations. This should be appropriate to the needs and age of the pupils concerned.

24.2 Employees must not have any physical contact with pupils when they are in a state of undress, change in the same room as pupils or shower or bathe with them.

24.3 Employees should announce their intention to enter rooms where pupils are changing and avoid any visually intrusive behaviour whilst in the room.

## **25. Personal living space**

25.1 No pupil should be in or invited into the home of an employee unless the reason for this has been firmly established and agreed with parents/carers and a senior manager/Headteacher. If there are exceptional circumstances (eg familial connections or friendships between the employee's children and the pupil) then a senior manager/Headteacher and the pupil's parent/carer must be made aware and the employee should avoid being alone with the pupil at home.

## **26. Pupils in distress**

26.1 There may be occasions when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance. Employees should remain self-aware at all times, ensuring that their contact is non-threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

26.2 Where a situation gives rise to concern, employees should always inform the Headteacher when and how they offered comfort to a distressed pupil and make a record of the incident. If an employee is unsure about how to offer comfort to a distressed pupil then they should seek advice from a senior staff member.

## **27. Sharing concerns and recording incidents**

27.1 All employees should be aware of the school's child protection procedures and procedures for dealing with allegations and concerns about members of staff.

Employees who are subject to allegations are advised to contact their professional association.

27.2 The notification and prompt handling of all concerns about adults is fundamental to safeguarding pupils. Those raising concerns or reporting allegations in good faith will always be supported.

27.3 In the event of any allegation being made, information should be clearly and promptly recorded and reported to a senior manager without delay.

27.4 In cases where a pupil develops an infatuation, there is a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against employees. Employees should report to a senior manager any concerns that a pupil may be infatuated with them.

## Appendix 1 – extract from Teachers’ Standards

### Part Two: Personal and professional conduct

A teacher is expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct throughout a teacher’s career.

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:
  - treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher’s professional position
  - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils’ well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
  - showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
  - not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
  - ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils’ vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities

## Appendix 2 – supplementary policies and guidance

- [Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People](#)
- School policies - whistleblowing, behaviour management, physical intervention, intimate care, health and safety, IT usage, social media, guidance on the administration of medicines and child protection policy and procedures.
- [Managing allegations of abuse made against adults who work with children and young people](#)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education  
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>)
- Use of Reasonable Force in Schools  
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools>)