Bentley & Copdock Primary Schools
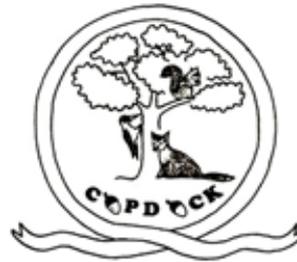
Code of Conduct for School Employees

Approved by:	Joanne Austin / Peter Drew	Date: September 2023

Last reviewed:	August 2022
Next review due by:	September 2024

I have read and agree to abide by the Staff Code of Conduct and will inform the Headteacher if I have any concerns about my capacity to do so.

Signed:

1. Aims, scope and principles

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

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our schools are 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. As a member of a school community, each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside working hours.

Our vision is for all children to be confident individuals, successful learners and responsible citizens who are well equipped for future life, whatever that may hold. To enable this vision to be realised in practice, it is essential that all staff and children feel safe and are provided with a nurturing and supportive environment that enables positive relationships.

Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in our staff 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. A senior member of staff is always available to offer support where required.

2. Legislation and guidance

We are required to set out a staff code of conduct under regulation 7 of The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009.

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, our staff code of conduct, covers 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. Supporting policies are also available on our website.

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 of others
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Express personal beliefs in a way that will not overly influence pupils, and will not exploit 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 from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, or neglect.

Staff are provided with copies of our Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Whistleblowing Procedure and will familiarise themselves with the Prevent initiative, ensuring they are aware of the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child. All staff are required to read at least Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

However, if they do not work directly with children and are not expected to, they may read the condensed version of Part 1 in Annex A.

Concerns about a pupil must be reported to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the Alternate in their absence.

The schools DSL is Mrs Joanne Austin. Alternates are Mrs Alice North (Bentley) and Miss Heidi Cross (Copdock)

It is essential that any concerns about the behaviour of another member of staff are raised immediately with the Headteacher or Chair of Governors as detailed in the above policies.

A copy of our Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and procedures are available in the staff room and from the school office. New staff will also be given copies on arrival at induction.

Regular updates are shared with staff via email and pupils are updated on positive safe practice each term.

4.1 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

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 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

> Having favourites

> Taking photographs of children on a personal device

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

> Humiliating pupils

Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work and online.

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.

Reporting and responding to low-level concerns is covered in more detail in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. This is available on the schools website and in the staff room.

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. Examples linked to safeguarding include:

> Pupils' or staff's health and safety being put in danger

> Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement

> Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing that is in the public interest to report

Staff are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. Their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and their confidentiality will be respected.

Staff should consider the examples above when deciding whether their concern is of a whistle-blowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or school procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

Staff should report their concern to the Headteacher. If the concern is about the Headteacher, or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the Chair of the Governing Board.

Concerns should be made in writing wherever possible. They should include names of those committing wrongdoing, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter.

For our schools' detailed whistle-blowing process, please refer to our Whistleblowing Policy.

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 in to the room

- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

Staff must comply with school policies and procedures that support the well-being and development of pupils.

Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of school hours and events 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 individual pupils are not acceptable.

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 and reported to the Headteacher immediately.

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 consider the fact that pupils may be able to find them if they use their full name. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead, and set public profiles to private.

Staff should not attempt to find pupils' social media profiles or contact pupils via social media, or any other means outside school. Contact with parents must remain within a professional relationship and therefore it is not recommended that personal profiles are accessible to parents.

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at the school without their consent.

Staff should be aware of the schools' Online Safety Policy and have signed an Acceptable Use Policy confirming agreement of expectations.

7. Acceptable use of technology

Staff will not use technology in school or belonging to 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, or school equipment for personal use in front of pupils. If accessing personal mobile phones this should be in the staffroom or out of school hours. Personal mobile phones or cameras will not be used to take pictures of pupils.

We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system.

See Acceptable Use Agreement: staff AUA 2023.pdf

8. Confidentiality

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the school, staff, pupils and their parents.

This information will never be:

- Disclosed to anyone unless required by law or with consent from the relevant party or parties
- 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.

Staff must **never** promise a pupil that they will not act on information that they are told by the pupil.

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. Any gifts from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to the Headteacher, with the exception of "one off" token gifts from students or parents.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the school about background information (including any past or current investigations/cautions related to conduct outside of school), their qualifications and professional experience is current, correct and accurate.

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

10. Dress code

Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner. Trainers will only be used for PE or other outdoor activities.

Outfits will not be overly revealing and clothes will not display any offensive or political slogans.

11. Conduct outside of work, including online

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school, or the teaching profession into disrepute. This covers relevant criminal offences, such as violence, possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school on social media.

Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others.

12. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every year as part of safeguarding updates, but can be revised as needed. It will be ratified by the full Governing Board.

13. Links with other policies

This policy links with our policies on:

- Staff disciplinary procedures, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct. It also sets out examples of what we will deem as misconduct and gross misconduct
- Staff grievance procedures
- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Whistleblowing
- Online Safety and Acceptable Use
- Behaviour

September 2023

- Equality
- SEND