



NORTHSIDE Primary School

Staff Code of Conduct

Last review: November 2022

Ratified: November 2022

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Rationale

As an employer, the Governing Body is 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', we should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media. All staff employed under Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Employment have a statutory obligation to adhere to the 'Teachers' Standards' and in relation to this policy, Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct.

Staff should be aware that a failure to comply with the following Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including dismissal.

Key Principles

- We aim to ensure our school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

Northside Values

- RESPECT** to value our needs, beliefs and each other
- PRIDE** to have confidence in our abilities and celebrate success for all
- INCLUSION** to work together in collaboration with families and our diverse community to become life-long learners
- CHALLENGE** to have high expectations of ourselves so we achieve our best
- CREATIVITY** to creatively express our feelings and ideas
- RESILIENCE** to develop life skills to fulfil our potential

In Practice

As staff we will promote and adhere to the Northside Values through:

- Demonstrating the highest standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same.
- Taking the upmost care of the pupils under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.
- Maintaining high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- Using polite and appropriate language at all times
- Treating pupils and others with dignity and respect ensuring that the principles of the Equality Act are followed
- Adhering to the British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Adhering to the Teachers' Standards
- Expressing personal beliefs in a way that will not overly influence pupils and will not exploit pupils' vulnerability
- Avoiding putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

As professionals we will:

- Follow the school's policies and practices.

- Work as part of a team, contributing to as well as learning from others.
- Behave in a positive way despite any personal problems that we may have, especially in front of the pupils
- Share any concerns or issues with an appropriate member of staff so that they can be resolved.
- Maintain confidentiality about anything that we see or hear in the school.

Safeguarding

In accordance with 'Keeping children safe in education 2021' (KCSIE), staff members have a responsibility to safeguard pupils, and protect and promote their welfare. Staff members have a responsibility to ensure that they provide a learning environment in which pupils feel safe, secure and respected.

To effectively safeguard pupils, staff members are required to follow the procedures outlined in this Staff Code of Conduct, the Behaviour Policy and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, ensuring that they do not act in a way that may put pupils at risk of harm, or lead others to question their actions. Staff will familiarise themselves with the Prevent initiative.

Any concern must be reported to the DSL (Liz Longworth) or a deputy DSL (Lucy Mulvihill-Ellis or Sarah Crouchley) **immediately** and then recorded on CPOMs as soon as possible on the day of the incident.

In accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, staff members will be prepared to identify pupils who may be subject to, or at risk of, various types of abuse and neglect, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Peer-on-peer abuse
- Serious violence
- FGM
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Child criminal exploitation (CCE)
- Bullying; this includes cyberbullying, and prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying

Copies of policies and a copy of Part one (or, where appropriate Annex A for staff members not working directly with children) of KCSIE will be provided to staff at induction.

In accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, staff will also be aware of the factors that could increase a pupil's risk of being subject to safeguarding issues, including but not limited to:

- Pupils who need a social worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans).
- Pupils requiring mental health support.
- LAC and previously LAC.
- Pupils with SEND.
- Identify as or are perceived to be LBGTQ+
- Pupils with mental health needs.
- Pupils who have a family member in prison, or who are affected by parental offending.
- Pupils that are frequently absent or permanently excluded from school.

In all cases, if a staff member feels unsure as to whether an incident or pupil would be classed as a safeguarding concern, they will speak directly to the DSL. Staff will not assume a colleague will act and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe.

Staff will understand that even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse in the school, this does not mean it is not happening. Staff will report any concerns regarding any form of abuse to the DSL without undue delay. Staff will understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers that are abusive in nature.

Any staff member that has concerns about another staff member's (including volunteers and supply staff) actions or intent, or believes these actions may lead to a pupil being put at risk of harm, will report this in line with the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy or Whistleblowing Policy immediately so appropriate action can be taken.

If a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with the school, they will use other whistleblowing channels, including contacting the NSPCC's helpline on 0800 028 0285 (between the hours of 8:00am and 8:00pm Monday to Friday) or email address help@nspcc.org.uk. Staff members can also access guidance at www.gov.uk/whistleblowing. Fear about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.

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 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 are not acceptable (unless the same gift to all the whole class). If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, this should be reported to their line manager or the Headteacher.

Physical Contact with Pupils

The school understands that there are circumstances in which it is entirely necessary for staff to have physical contact with pupils, e.g. when applying first aid and assisting with intimate care, but staff will only do so in a professional and appropriate manner in line with relevant school policies.

When physical contact is made with pupils, it is imperative that it is conducted in a way which is responsive to the pupil's needs, is of limited duration and is appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.

Staff will seek the pupil's permission, where possible, before initiating contact. Staff will always use their professional judgement when determining what physical contact is appropriate, as this may differ between pupils. As such, the pupil's feelings and wishes will always be considered. Staff will never touch a pupil in a way which is indecent and will always be prepared to explain their actions. Staff will be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by a pupil, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described and, therefore, will be prepared to justify their actions.

Staff will not engage in rough play, tickling or play fights with pupils.

Extra caution will be taken where it is known that a pupil has previously suffered from abuse or neglect.

Physical contact will never be secretive; if a member of staff believes an action could be misinterpreted, this will be reported to the headteacher, or the chair of governors if the concern is about the headteacher, and appropriate procedures will be followed.

Where it is necessary in P.E. classes for teachers to demonstrate use of equipment, this will be conducted with another member of staff if possible. If a pupil is required to participate, their consent will be given before doing so.

If a child is in distress and in need of comfort as reassurance, staff may use age-appropriate physical contact. Staff will remain self-aware of their actions at all times and ensure that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

Staff may also use reasonable force as a means of physical contact with pupils for restraint purposes, such instances will always be in accordance with the school's Positive Handling Policy.

Showering and changing

Pupils are entitled to respect and privacy whilst they are changing, e.g. before and after swimming; however, a level of supervision is required to ensure that pupils are safe, and that they are not subjected to bullying.

The supervision will be appropriate to the needs and ages of the pupils, and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

Where possible, female staff will supervise girls and male staff will supervise boys.

Staff will announce their intention of entering the changing room to allow pupils to maintain their privacy and will only remain in the changing room for as long as is necessary

Transporting pupils

When it is necessary to transport pupils off-site, staff will ensure that the transport arrangements of the vehicle meet all legal requirements, they have an appropriate licence and the vehicle is roadworthy, has a valid MOT certificate and is insured.

Staff will gain consent from parents before transporting pupils and will be aware that the welfare of all pupils in the vehicle is their responsibility.

Where possible two or more staff will be present in the vehicle to avoid any discrepancy regarding safeguarding concerns

Appearance and dress

The school expects that staff members will:

- Ensure that their appearance is clean and neat when at work or representing the school.
- Dress in a manner that is appropriate to their role – the school will make reasonable adjustments to uniform expectations to suit disabilities, medical conditions, and religious and cultural beliefs.
- Remember that they are role models for pupils, and that their dress and appearance should reflect this.
- Not dress in a way that would cause embarrassment to pupils, parents, colleagues or other stakeholders.
- Cover any tattoos or body art whilst in school; small earrings are acceptable, but all other visible body piercings must be removed

Attendance

The school expects that staff members will:

- Attend work in accordance with their contract of employment and associated terms and conditions in relation to hours, days of work and holidays.
- Make routine medical and dental appointments outside of their working hours or during holidays where possible.
- Refer to the school's Special Leave Policy if they need time off for any reason other than personal illness.

- Follow the school's absence reporting procedure when they are absent from work due to illness or injury.

Professional behaviour and conduct

- Staff members are expected to treat other colleagues, pupils, parents, and external contacts with dignity and respect.
- The use of foul and abusive language will not be tolerated. Discrimination, bullying, harassment or intimidation, including physical, sexual and verbal abuse, will not be tolerated.
- Staff members will not misuse or misrepresent their position, qualifications or experience, or bring the school into disrepute.
- Staff members will inform the headteacher if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution.
- Staff will be aware that professional behaviour and conduct is expected to be extended to extra-curricular trips and visits. Staff attending a trip or visit will act in accordance with this Code of conduct.
- Staff will act appropriately in terms of the views they express (in particular political views) and the use of school resources at all times and will not use school resources for party political purposes

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 any images online that identify children who are pupils at the school without their consent. Staff should be aware of the school's Online Policy.

The school understands that some staff members are also parents of pupils at the school and, therefore, may wish to contact other parents. When doing so, staff will exercise their professional judgement and will not contact family members on social media if this would lead to a conflict of interest.

Staff will remain mindful of their use of social media and their web-based presence including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed directly or indirectly which may bring themselves, the school or the school community into disrepute.

Acceptable use of technology

Staff will not use technology in 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. An exception to this will be to support the medical health of a pupil e.g. to monitor the insulin levels of a diabetic child or to phone an ambulance for an epileptic child. They will only use the school mobile phone or cameras to take pictures of pupils.

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

Data protection and 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 without the relevant authority
- 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 is at risk of harm.

Staff members have the right to request access to data that is held about them. Such requests will be made to the headteacher in writing in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy

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 must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or if they request, agree or accept, or receive a bribe from another person. If you believe that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act, you should refer to the Whistleblowing Policy. Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to the Headteacher, or to the Chair of Governors if the Headteacher is the recipient, with the exception of "one off" token gifts from students or parents.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the school about their qualifications and professional experience is correct.

Financial inducements

Staff members will:

- Familiarise themselves and comply with the school's financial regulations.
- Declare to the governing board, in writing, any gifts received, with the exception of:
- Low cost, functional items suitable for business rather than personal use and displaying the supplier's logo – these items may be accepted.
- Non-excessive gifts offered by parents or pupils to school staff to express their gratitude, but staff members should always refuse monetary gifts.
- Hospitality in the form of meals and drinks where it is part of a normal business meeting.
- Authorised visits to exhibitions, demonstrations, conferences, business meals and social functions in connection with the school's business, which shall be at the school's expense.
- Not accept a personal gift, payment, or other incentive from a business contact – any such gifts should be returned.
- Declare any gift that cannot be returned to the governing board, who will decide how it will be used.
- Only accept offers to specific events after authorisation from the governing board.

Conduct outside of work

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 or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school on social media.

Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school. The nature of the work cannot be seen to bring the school into disrepute, nor be at a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance.

Staff will not engage in outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school, the employee's own reputation, or the reputation of other members of the school community. In particular, criminal offences that involve violence, possession or use of illegal drugs, or sexual misconduct are unacceptable.

Premises, equipment and communication

School equipment and systems are available only for school-related activities and will not be used for the fulfilment of another job or for personal use, unless specifically authorised by the headteacher.

Illegal, inappropriate or unacceptable use of school equipment or communication systems may result in disciplinary action and, in serious cases, could lead to an employee's dismissal. Employees receiving inappropriate communication or material, or who are unsure about whether something they propose to do might breach this policy, should seek advice from the headteacher.

The school reserves the right to monitor emails, phone calls, internet activity or document production on school-owned equipment, principally in order to avoid offensive or nuisance material and to protect systems from viruses, but also to ensure proper and effective use of systems.

Communication systems may be accessed when the school suspects that the employee has been misusing systems or facilities, or for the investigation of suspected fraud or other irregularity. Access will be secured by the systems manager, only with the permission of the governing body. Passwords should not be shared and access to computer systems must be kept confidential except on the express request of the headteacher or systems manager. Breaches of this confidentiality may be subject to disciplinary action.

School equipment that is used outside the premises, e.g. laptops, will be returned to the school when the employee leaves employment or if requested to do so by the headteacher.

Smoking, alcohol and other substances

Staff will not smoke on, or within sight of the entrance to the school premises or whenever in the sight of pupils, parents or visitors. Staff will not smoke whilst working with or supervising pupils off-site, such as when on educational visits and trips.

The taking of illegal drugs or alcohol during working hours is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Staff members must never attend work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. If alcohol or drug usage impacts on a staff member's performance, the school has the right to discuss the matter with the employee and take appropriate action in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedures.

Health and Safety

Staff members will:

- Be familiar with, and adhere to, the school's Health and Safety Policy and ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and everyone in the school environment safe and well.
- Comply with health and safety regulations
- Comply with hygiene requirements.
- Comply with accident reporting requirements.
- Inform the headteacher of any paid work which is undertaken elsewhere, for compliance with The Working Time Regulations 1998.

Declaration of interests

Staff members are required to declare their interests, both personal and financial, where the group or organisation they are affiliated with could be considered to be in conflict with the ethos of the school.

For the purposes of this policy, a financial conflict of interest is one where there is, or appears to be, opportunity for personal financial gain, financial gain for close relatives or friends, or where it may be reasonable for a third party to take the view that financial benefits may affect an individual's actions.

The term 'financial interest' means anything of monetary value, including the following:

- Payments for services
- Equity interests
- Intellectual property rights
- Hospitality or gifts

Examples of financial interests that must be declared include, but are not limited to, equity interests in services considered for use by the school.

Non-financial conflicts of interest can also come into conflict, or be perceived to come into conflict, with an individual's obligations or commitments to the school. These interests may include any benefit or advantage including, but not limited to, direct or indirect enhancement of an individual's career or gain for immediate family or someone with whom the individual has a close relationship.

Examples of situations that could give rise to non-financial conflicts of interest include the following:

- Pressure or temptation to accept gifts, inducements or hospitality
- Participating in the appointment, hiring, promotion, supervision or evaluation of a person with whom the individual has a close personal relationship
- Where a member of staff has or develops a close personal relationship with a colleague

Membership to a trade union or staff representative group does not need to be declared.

Staff members will also carefully consider whether they need to declare their relationship with any individual where this might cause a conflict with school activities.

Failure to make a relevant declaration of interests is a serious breach of trust and, therefore, if employees are in doubt about a declaration, they are advised to contact the school or trade union.

All declarations, including nil returns, will be submitted in writing to the headteacher for inclusion on the Register of Business Interests.

Appendix 1

When we speak to others we will:

- use a positive statement rather than a negative one so that children can learn what we expect of them in any situation.
- use a calm tone of voice at all times, to explain something to or instruct the children, so that they can follow our words without feeling threatened or uncomfortable.
- not use sarcastic words or phrases as these demean children and prevent them from developing high self-esteem.
- speak respectfully to other adults at all times, even if we disagree with them.

As professionals we will:

- avoid workplace gossip and negativity as it breeds resentment and becomes a roadblock to effective communication and collaboration. We all have a duty to take active steps to divert conversations away from this if we come across it.
- maintain confidentiality about anything that we see or hear in the school, so that parents and children can trust us, and as a way of showing respect to our fellow professionals.
- work as part of a team, contributing as well as learning from others and helping to build up a strong workforce so that we can provide the best possible learning opportunities for the children.
- work within the school's policies and practices, so that what we do is consistent with what has been agreed between all members of the staff and the governors.
- treat everyone with respect.
- give constructive criticism that is expressed clearly but in a way which lets the other person retain their dignity and self-respect and supports their development.
- dress appropriately, so that we set a good example for the children and to show that we are here to work.
- behave in a positive way despite any personal problems that we may have, especially in front of the children.

Appendix 2 Teachers' Standards updated June 2013

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.

