

Lord Deramore's Primary School
Staff Code of Conduct
Version: 2021-22



CODE OF CONDUCT

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to ensure the safety and well-being of staff and students in the school and to uphold high professional standards. All staff within the school are responsible for compliance with the terms of this document.

Section One - Safeguarding Staff and Pupils

Section Two - Acceptable Use of ICT Policy

Section Three - Protocols for Home Visits

Section Four - Use of Reasonable Force

Section Five - Staff Dress

Section Six - Whistleblowing

SECTION ONE – SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding and safer working is achieved through staff demonstrating good professional practice and having clear boundaries concerning what constitutes acceptable professional conduct and appropriate levels of contact with pupils. The following code of conduct is designed to assist in this process, acting as a commonsense guide to working with children. Failure to comply with the code's requirements could put staff members at risk of disciplinary action should a complaint or allegation arise.

CONTEXT

This document provides a guide for all adults working at Lord Deramore's Primary School (including staff, governors, volunteers and visitors) about acceptable and desirable conduct to protect both adults and pupils. It refers to and complements other policies and guidance in the school, including the:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- School Behaviour (Relationships) Policy
- Staff Handbook

This code is based upon the DfE document 'Guidance for Safe Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Settings', where further details relating to good practice can be found. It seeks to ensure that all staff protect the reputation of the school, the confidentiality of information and that all colleagues and members of the school community are treated with professionalism and respect. **This code applies to dealings with pupils across the 5-11 age range.**

As a result of their knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, all adults working with children and young people are in positions of trust in relation to the young people in their care and contribute to the reputation and image of the school. Broadly speaking, a relationship of trust can be described as one in which one party is in a position of power or influence over the other by virtue of their work or the nature of their activity. It is vital for all those in positions of trust to understand the power this can give them over those they care for and the responsibility they must exercise as a consequence of this relationship.

A relationship between an adult and a child or young person **cannot be a relationship between equals**. There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people.

Adults should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. They should report and record any incident with this potential.

Adults may have access to confidential and highly sensitive information about staff, pupils or parents in order to undertake their responsibilities. These details must be kept confidential at all times and only shared with designated individuals when necessary. Individual staff are responsible for the secure use and storage of information they receive and in particular for any mobile devices such as mobile phones or laptops that are used to store or access school information. Personal or sensitive data must not be held and carried on memory sticks unless these are encrypted versions.

Staff seeking to use a personal mobile device to download school e-mails must be password protected and this password must not be shared with any other person. Due care and diligence must be taken to prevent unauthorised access to confidential information.

Advice on ensuring the secure use of technology, especially mobile equipment, through actions such as encryption, locking or use of passwords can be obtained from the school administrator/ICT technician. Any queries relating to the sharing of sensitive or confidential information should be directed to the Headteacher. The storage and processing of personal information is governed by the Data Protection Act 1998.

All adults working and volunteering in the school should know the name of the Designated Child Protection Officer, James Rourke (Headteacher). It is vital that all adults are familiar with the child protection procedures within the school and understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children and young people. All adults in the school can also expect to be protected from false allegations and accusations.

All adults working in school must read *Keeping Children Safe in Education (Part 1)* and signing of this code of conduct will confirm that you have done so.

PROTECTING CHILDREN AND YOURSELF

UNDERPINNING PRINCIPLES

- The pupil's welfare is paramount
- Adults working in school are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct that would lead a **reasonable person** to question their motivation or intentions

- All adults working in school have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to care for young people. It is therefore expected that they will adopt the highest standards of personal and professional conduct to maintain the confidence of the public and their colleagues. Adults working with young people should therefore understand and be aware that safe practice involves judgement and integrity about behaviours in places other than the work setting
- Adults working in the school must work and be seen to work with openness and transparency
- Adults should discuss and/or take advice promptly from the Headteacher or SLT about any incident which could give rise to concern
- Staff should apply the same professional standards regardless of race, gender or sexuality
- Adults should always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate and safe and applied equitably
- Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them
- Staff should notify the headteacher immediately should a member of staff be involved in a criminal investigation or incident

ALL STAFF, VOLUNTEERS, AND REGULAR VISITORS FROM EXTERNAL AGENCIES TO THE SCHOOL (INCLUDING SUPPLY STAFF) MUST:

Be familiar with and work in accordance with the school's policies including in particular:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour/Relationships Policy

All staff must be positive role models to pupils and must behave in a mature, respectful, safe, fair, and considered manner.

STAFF – INCLUDING VISITING STAFF - SHOULD:

- Treat all pupils equally – never imply or build 'special' relationships or confer favour on particular pupils e.g. giving birthday cards or gifts outside the school's official reward systems
- Not give or receive (other than token) gifts unless arranged through school (Christmas/end of academic year gifts are considered 'token' gifts)
- Ensure that relationships with pupils and parents/carers remain on a professional footing
- Only have direct physical contact with pupils for professional reasons and when this is necessary and appropriate for the child's wellbeing or safety and wherever possible within the presence of others

- Exercise caution when it comes to communicating with pupils and former pupils using the internet or mobiles. Only official school email accounts should be used to talk to parents/carers online so that any communication is logged. Communication should be limited to school matters as personal communication could be considered inappropriate and in breach of the professional code of conduct
- No communication with pupils/parents/carers via social networking unless this is an open school based forum. If staff know parents/carers personally outside of work, extreme care should be taken to ensure that matters involve school and its pupils are not discussed – professional boundaries must be maintained at all times.
- Extreme care should be taken in maintaining such contact with ex-pupils/parents/carers especially where they have close contact with pupils currently in school. Ultimately, email or phone communications between staff and a pupil/parent/carer that are deemed to fall outside of agreed school guidelines might lead to disciplinary action or a criminal investigation. Staff should not give personal contact details to pupils such as personal phone numbers and e-mail addresses or details of personal blogs or websites
- Be aware that staff have a responsibility to protect the reputation of the school and to treat staff and pupils with professionalism and respect. On-line activities such as blogging, postings on social networking sites and posting images or comments on sites such as Twitter or You Tube, can have a negative impact and damage the reputation of both individuals and the organisation. Any derogatory, defamatory, rude, threatening or inappropriate comments may well constitute misconduct and trigger disciplinary action. Staff should not use ICT equipment or mobile phones for personal reasons or access social networking sites during working hours unless during official break and lunchtimes or in an emergency.
- Immediately report any circumstances to the SLT where personal contact details fall into the wrong hands and a pupil/parent/carer makes contact resulting from this or where anonymous emails, texts or messages are sent to staff social networking profiles that could be from a pupil/parent/carer
- Not behave or dress in a way that could lead a reasonable observer to question staff conduct, intentions or suitability to care for other people's children
- Not behave in a way that could be perceived as physically intimidating, humiliating or out of control
- Treat children with respect and kindness. Do not shout or ridicule. Ensure that behaviour management strategies are positive and in line with the school's Behaviour and Relationship Policy.

- Not make arrangements to contact, communicate with or meet with pupils outside work unless as an authorised school visit in line with the home/school visits section of this document (this includes use of email, text and other messaging systems) or give personal phones number to pupils. Communication between staff and pupils should always occur within explicit professional boundaries and must be transparent and open to scrutiny. This includes the wider use of technologies such as mobile phones, text messages, e-mail, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites and blogs
- Not give lifts in cars to pupils on a one to one basis unless appropriate insurance, parental permission and line manager agreement has been obtained
- Not make jokes or comments of a sexual or otherwise risqué nature to anyone in school
- Not access, make or store indecent images of children nor should they use equipment belonging to the organisation to access adult pornography nor should personal equipment containing these images be brought into the workplace. Where unsuitable images are found the police and LA will be immediately informed

BEHAVIOUR BY PUPILS THAT GIVES RISE TO CONCERN

IF PUPILS:

- Touch you inappropriately
- Make inappropriate sexual comments

Inform your line manager or a member of the SLT immediately.

BEHAVIOUR BY STAFF THAT GIVES RISE TO CONCERN

DO.....

- Intervene if you see another member of staff acting in a way that could give rise to an allegation of physical or emotional harm e.g. by reporting this to line managers or the SLT
- Report it to SLT and write an account of the incident on CPOMS

DON'T.....

- Ignore the behaviour
- Neglect to report the incident or record an account of it

ENTERING TOILETS

DO.....

- Avoid behaviour that could be interpreted as physically intrusive

DON'T.....

- Assist with any personal care task that a pupil could carry out themselves

PHYSICAL THREATS TO MEMBERS OF STAFF

DO.....

- Aim to defuse the situation e.g. calmly acknowledge that the individual is upset and suggest that they leave the room
- Call for a member of SLT if necessary, making clear the urgency of the situation and report the threat to your line manager as soon as possible

DON'T.....

- Risk an escalation of the situation by shouting back

PHYSICAL CONTACT BETWEEN PUPILS

DO.....

- Aim to defuse any situation that could lead to a pupil being hurt – you have a legal duty to do so
- Seek to defuse the situation by using a verbal intervention in the first instance
- Only intervene physically if a verbal intervention fails and if absolutely necessary, making sure you safeguard yourself
- Send a trustworthy older child for help if there is no other adult available or ring for SLT support where possible
- Separate pupils where you feel the level of contact between them is inappropriate for a school environment

DON'T.....

- Ignore the situation
- Act in a manner likely to escalate the situation

SUSPICIONS OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE

DO.....

- Try to contain the child/adult on school premises without further questioning or investigation
- Call for back-up from senior staff
- Call for a first-aid trained colleague via the office should this be required

DON'T.....

- Ignore the situation or fail to report it to SLT

PUPILS LEAVING CLASSROOM WITHOUT PERMISSION

DO.....

- Make clear to the pupil that they do not have permission to leave the classroom and that they are making a choice from which there will be a consequence
- Report the pupil's absence by contacting the office/head teacher immediately

DON'T

- Attempt to block the pupils exit by standing in doorway or putting your arm out
- Leave the class unattended in order to deal with the incident

PHYSICAL CONTACT BETWEEN STAFF AND PUPILS

DO.....

- Ensure any contact is appropriate to the agreed role and responsibilities and is necessary in relation to a particular activity
- Ensure any contact is in response to a child's needs at the time, is of minimal duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background
- Be careful about any physical contact with pupils, particularly in one to one situations. Whilst limited physical contact may be appropriate on occasions e.g. an arm around the shoulder of a distressed child, you must be very careful about the possibility of misunderstandings. The pupil's reactions and feelings should be noted and respected at all times and any physical contact from you will be open to scrutiny
- Ensure that where physical intervention/restraint is used this is only done in exceptional circumstances and is in line with the school guidance on positive handling outlined in this document- refer to Team Teach training

DON'T.....

- Prod, push or grab pupils to make them behave
- Initiate unnecessary or unwanted physical contact

HOME VISITS

DON'T.....

- Carry out a home visit unless it is a necessary and explicit part of your job (eg Foundation Stage home visits that are pre-arranged) and you have explicit permission from senior management to do so

DO.....

- Ensure the visit is carried out in accordance with the protocols outlined later in this document

PHOTOGRAPHY & FILMING OF STUDENTS

DO

- Make sure that there is a clear educational justification for any photography or filming of pupils
- Be clear about the purpose of the photography or filming, particularly to the pupils
- Only use equipment supplied or authorised by the organisation. Where personal equipment has been used, any images should be deleted straight after use
- Refer to the school Data Protection photographic permission if there are plans to publish any photos. Remember that some children do not have permission for their images to be shared
- Ensure there is SLT agreement on whether the images will be retained or destroyed, where these will be stored and who will have access to them. Be able to justify any images in your possession
- Remain sensitive to any pupils who appear uncomfortable
- Report any concerns about inappropriate or intrusive photographs found

DON'T.....

- Take photographs in one to one situations
- Take photographs of pupils for personal use

RESPONDING TO ALLEGATION MADE AGAINST A SCHOOL EMPLOYEE

DFE statutory guidance states that the following process must be followed if the allegation or concern fits within the scope of the statutory guidance and raises the following concerns:

- Behaviour that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child; *or*
- The possibility of a criminal offence having been committed against or related to a child; *or*
- Behaviour towards a child or children in a way that indicates unsuitability to work with children *or*
- That the allegation is clearly and demonstrably without foundation

When an allegation or concern is made against a member of school staff, relating to the person's conduct towards a child, the following process **must be followed**:

- The allegation or concern must immediately be reported to the Headteacher

- If the allegation or concern relates to the Headteacher or occurs during the Headteacher's absence, the matter must be reported to the Chair of the Governing Body
- If the allegation or concern fits with the scope of the guidance, the Headteacher must report the matter to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within the same working day
- The LADO will discuss the matter with the Headteacher in order to decide which process should be followed. Where it is believed that allegation falls within the scope of the guidance, there are three possible strands to enquiries that may be initiated:
 - Child protection
 - Criminal enquiries
 - Disciplinary
- If the matter is felt to constitute a criminal offence the police will be informed and a strategy meeting will be held
- If the matter is felt to be child protection, Children and Family Services will be informed and a strategy meeting held
- If the matter is felt to amount to an employment or capability issue the matter will be discussed with the City of York Council Human Resources Department
- Rapid resolution of the allegation must be a priority for the benefit of all concerned and all unnecessary delays must be avoided
- Staff suspension should not be the default option in an investigation and an individual should only be suspended if there is no reasonable alternative. Where suspension occurs the reasons should be recorded and the individual concerned should be notified of these actions. Allegations that are malicious should be removed from personnel records and should not be referred to in employer references.

The underlying aim of all the above procedures is to ensure the safety and well-being of both pupils and staff working within the school. Any breaches of this policy will be fully investigated and where a breach is confirmed this may result in action being taken under the Disciplinary Procedure. A breach of this policy will be considered to be a serious disciplinary offence which is also contrary to the school's ethos and principles. The Governing Body will take appropriate action to protect the school's reputation and that of its staff, Governors, pupils and parents/carers.

SECTION TWO – ACCEPTABLE USE OF ICT POLICY

The school has provided computers for use by staff as an important tool for teaching, learning, and administration of the school. Use of school computers, by both members of staff and pupils, is governed at all times by the following code of conduct. Please ensure you understand your responsibilities under this policy, and direct any questions or concerns to the ICT Subject Leader in the first instance. Access to, and use of, the school ICT network and services is governed by this signed agreement to follow this code. All members of staff have a responsibility to use the school's computer system in a professional, lawful, and ethical manner. Deliberate abuse of the school's computer system may result in disciplinary action (including possible termination of your employment), and civil and/or criminal liability.

The school recognises that the distinction between computer use at work and at home is increasingly blurred, with many of us now using our own computers for work. While the school neither wishes nor intends to dictate how you use your own computer, staff should consider that the spirit of this policy applies whenever you are undertaking an activity that stems from your employment with the school.

COMPUTER SECURITY AND DATA PROTECTION

You will be provided with a personal account for accessing the Integris system, with your own username and password. This account will be tailored to the level of access you require, and it is for your use only.

When leaving a computer unattended, you must ensure you have either logged off your account, or locked the computer to prevent anyone using your account in your absence.

At the end of the day you must ensure the computer you are working on is logged off.

You must not store any sensitive or personal information about staff or pupils on any portable storage system (such as a USB memory stick or portable hard disk) **unless that storage system is encrypted. In rare circumstances a need may arise that requires a member of staff to transport confidential data. In these circumstances, staff authorised by the Head teacher to transport this data must use encrypted memory sticks. Failure to do so could result in disciplinary action.**

When publishing or transmitting non-sensitive material outside of the school, you must take steps to protect the identity of any pupils. If you use a personal computer at home for work related purposes, you must not store any school-related sensitive or personal information on the computer. If you are required to hold this information for work related purposes, you must ensure your personal computer is secured to stop non-staff members accessing the data. It is recommend that you make backups of data kept on any storage system other than the network storage drives or your 'Documents' folder. This includes USB memory sticks or a personal computer.

PERSONAL USE OF IT

The school recognises that occasional personal use of the school's computers is beneficial both to the development of your ICT skills and for maintaining a positive work-life balance. Such use is permitted, with the conditions that such use:

- must comply with all other conditions of this policy as they apply to non-personal use, and all other school policies regarding staff conduct
- must not interfere in any way with your other duties or those of any other member of staff
- must not have any undue effect on the performance of the computer system
- must not be for any commercial purpose or gain unless explicitly authorised by the school

Personal use is permitted at the discretion of the school and can be limited or revoked at any time. If you access personal information that you wish to remain confidential you do so at your own risk. Staff are **not** permitted to store non-school related materials on network drives or their 'Documents' area such as music, games, videos, images or photographs. If such material is found, it may be removed without notice.

USE OF PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

You must not connect personal computer equipment to school equipment without prior approval from the Head teacher with the exception of storage devices such as USB memory sticks. You must never directly connect (hardwire) your own device onto the school network. The wireless network is provided for your own convenience and the school does not guarantee its availability or compatibility with your own device but has endeavoured to make as many devices compatible with it as possible. If your device is not compatible with the wireless network the ICT technician will be unable to assist you. Devices brought into school are done so at your own risk. Any damage or loss to your device while on school property will not be covered by the school. When not in use, you are advised to leave your device in a secure location.

ICT USAGE

You must at all times conduct your computer usage professionally, which includes being polite and using the system in a safe, legal and business appropriate manner. Among uses that are considered unacceptable are the following:

- Using, transmitting, or seeking inappropriate, offensive, pornographic, vulgar, suggestive, obscene, abusive, harassing, threatening, racist, sexist, or defamatory language or materials;
- Making ethnic, sexual-preference, or gender-related slurs or jokes.
- Accessing gambling websites.

You must respect, and not attempt to bypass, security or access restrictions in place on the computer system. You must not intentionally damage, disable, or otherwise harm the

operation of computers and you must make efforts not to intentionally waste resources. Examples of resource wastage include:

- Excessive downloading of material from the Internet
- Excessive storage of unnecessary files on the network storage areas;
- Use of computer printers to produce class sets of materials, instead of using photocopiers.

You should avoid eating or drinking around computer equipment. Please note all use of the Internet is governed by City of York Council and is subject to their Acceptable Use Policy.

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Staff must take care when using social networking websites such as Facebook or Twitter, even when such use occurs in their own time using their own computer and must not allow any pupil to access personal information posted on a social networking site. In particular:

- You must not add a pupil to your 'friends list'.
- You must ensure that highly personal information is not accessible via a 'Public' setting, but ensure it is set to a 'Friends only' level of visibility.
- You should take steps to ensure that any person contacting you via a social networking website is who they claim to be, and not an imposter, before allowing them access to your personal information.

Staff should also take care when posting to any public website (including online discussion forums or blogs) that their comments do not harm their professional standing or the reputation of the school – even if their online activities are entirely unrelated to the school.

Unless authorised to do so, you must not post content on websites that may appear as if you are speaking for the school. You should not post any material online that can be clearly linked to the school that may damage the school's reputation and should avoid posting any material clearly identifying yourself, another member of staff, or a pupil, that could potentially be used to embarrass, harass, or defame the subject.

USE OF EMAIL AND MOBILE DEVICES

The following considerations must be made when communicating by email:

- E-mail has the same permanence and legal status as written hardcopy (paper) documents and may be subject to disclosure obligations in exactly the same way. Copies of e-mails may therefore have to be made available to third parties. You must be cautious when sending both internal and external mails. The professional standards that apply to internal memos and external letters must be observed for e-mail.
- E-mail to outside organisations has the same power to create a binding contract as hardcopy documents. Check e-mail as carefully as written contracts, always use a spell checker and, where appropriate, obtain legal advice before sending. You must not purchase goods or services on behalf of the school via e-mail without proper authorisation.
- E-mail is not a secure method of communication, and can be easily copied, forwarded and archived. Unless explicitly authorised to do so, you must not send, transmit, or otherwise distribute proprietary information, copyrighted material, trade secrets, or other confidential information belonging to the school.

Having an external e-mail address may lead to receipt of unsolicited e-mail containing offensive and/or sexually explicit content. The school will take measures to minimise the receipt and impact of such content, but cannot be held responsible for material viewed or received by users from the Internet. You must not send chain letters or unsolicited commercial e-mail (also known as SPAM). The school provides access to email via Outlook Web App. Both of these methods are encrypted and secure connections. Where possible, staff should use these methods when accessing confidential data, such as student records. In order to use our remote services, your home PC must have up to date antivirus software installed and working. As a minimum, staff should install Microsoft Security Essentials if they are running Windows 7 or lower. Windows 8 comes pre-installed with Windows Defender. If a mobile device is used to access work emails, this device must be secured by a passcode.

SUPERVISION OF PUPIL USE

Pupils must be **supervised at all times** when using school computer equipment or mobile devices in lesson and when arranging use of computer facilities for pupils, you must ensure supervision is available. There must be a sound educational purpose behind a decision to allow students to use mobile devices during a lesson. Staff are responsible for ensuring that the pupils use mobile devices appropriately and ensure they have read and understood the separate guidelines on e-safety, which pertains to the child protection issues of computer use by pupils. The use of mobile phones by pupils is not permitted on school premises.

PRIVACY

Use of the school computer system, including your email account and storage areas provided for your use, may be subject to monitoring by the school. The school keeps a complete record of sites visited on the Internet by both pupils and staff; however, usernames and passwords used on those sites are NOT monitored or recorded. Use of the school computer system indicates your consent to the above described monitoring taking place.

Personal information should not be stored on the school computer system that is unrelated to school activities (such as personal passwords, photographs, or financial information).

CONFIDENTIALITY AND COPYRIGHT

You are responsible for complying with copyright law and licenses that may apply to software, files, graphics, documents, messages, and other material you wish to use, download or copy. Even if materials on the school computer system or the Internet are not marked with the copyright symbol (©), you should assume that they are protected under copyright laws unless there is an explicit permission on the materials to use them. You must consult the ICT Subject Leader or ICT technician before placing any order of computer hardware or software, or obtaining and using any software you believe to be free. This is to check that the intended use by the school is permitted under copyright law (as well as to check compatibility and discuss any other implications that the purchase may have). Do not rely on the claims of suppliers, who do not have specific knowledge of the school's systems.

As per the standard staff contract, any invention, improvement, design, process, information, copyright work, trade mark or trade name made, created or discovered by you during the course of your employment in any way affecting or relating to the business of the School or capable of being used or adapted for use within the School shall be immediately disclosed to the School and shall to the extent permitted by law belong to and be the absolute property of the School. By storing or creating any personal documents or files on the school computer system, you grant the school a non-exclusive, universal, perpetual, irrevocable, and royalty-free license to use, copy, and distribute those documents or files in any way the school sees fit.

REPORTING PROBLEMS

You should report any problems that need attention to the ICT Subject Leader/IT technician (Mark Richards/Kat Chandler/Vital) as soon as is feasible. Problems that seriously hinder your job or teaching and require immediate attention should be reported to the school office; any other problem must be reported to the ICT Subject Leader or ICT technician. If you suspect your computer has been affected by a virus or other malware, you must report this to the school office immediately. If you have lost documents or files, you should report this as soon as possible.

The longer a data loss problem goes unreported, the lesser the chances of your data being recoverable (mere minutes can count).

NON-COMPLIANCE

All members of staff have a duty to ensure this code of conduct is followed. You must immediately inform a member of the ICT team, or the Headteacher, of abuse of any part of the computer system. In particular, you should report:

- any websites accessible from within school that you feel are unsuitable for staff or pupil consumption
- any inappropriate content suspected to be stored on the computer system. This may be contained in email, documents, pictures, etc
- any breaches, or attempted breaches, of computer security
- any instance of bullying or harassment suffered by you, another member of staff, or a pupil via the school computer system

Reports should be made either via email or directly to the Headteacher. All reports will be treated confidentially.

NOTES

"Sensitive personal information" is defined as information about an individual that is protected by law under the Data Protection Act 1998. Examples of such data include addresses and contact details of individuals, dates of birth, and pupil SEN data. This list is not exhaustive. Further information can be found in the school's Data Protection Policy.

SECTION THREE - PROTOCOLS FOR HOME VISITS -CONTROLS FOR LONE WORKING/WORKING IN OTHER PEOPLE'S HOMES

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, employers have a duty to safeguard the health and safety of their employees. This duty applies whether the employee is working at the usual workplace or off-site. Experience suggests that implementing overly robust safety mechanisms quickly fall out of use – by the people it is designed to protect – because, on the whole, incidents that cause concern are rare, and, the mechanisms did not enhance every day working. Therefore, this guidance balances the organisation's need to ensure a safe working environment with an acknowledgement of the skills and professionalism of staff to contribute to the process of ongoing risk assessment.

Those undertaking home visits should do so with a clear understanding that they are prepared for and mindful of potential hazards and risks, and have in place their own risk management plan. Visits should be undertaken with clarity of purpose, sharing of intention, good communication, clear time management, preparation and subsequent reporting.

RISK ASSESSMENTS

- Knowledge and experience of the families, children and carers is the most effective tool in keeping safe. Staff will not be required to undertake a piece of work where a risk assessment suggests they would be at high risk.
- Staff must have arranged a prior appointment with the parent whom they are going to meet and should not enter the house if either the child is at home alone or if the parent, with whom the appointment has been made, is not there. In some cases it will be important to stipulate, when arranging an appointment that, if one of the child's parents has caused problems in the past, that parent should not be present during the visit.

SAFE WORKING PRACTICES

Home visits should be kept to a minimum and all the preparatory steps advised here followed in full. Whether home visits take place on a regular or occasional basis, staff need to feel confident that they are not being placed at risk, either of violence or of allegations of abuse from pupils or their families. The health and safety of staff must always take precedence when the need to make home visits is being considered. Every staff member completing a Home Visit must follow the guidance outlined below concerning the conduct of school visits:

- Gather information including known concerns/risks
- Plan visit, contacting parents/carers as appropriate, and arranging mutually agreed time where possible
- Home visits should where possible take place with two staff
- All Home Visits must be approved by the Headteacher/Member of the Leadership Team
- Staff should take a mobile phone on any home visit

- A member of the SLT must be informed of the arrangements for the visit by the person completing the visit and must record the date and time when the member of staff has left and when they are expected back. Office staff must also take a record of the address and family to be visited.
- Make sure mobile phone is available and charged
- Make sure car is roadworthy and has sufficient fuel
- Carry identification although not visible on person: offer this discreetly
- Plan greeting: some parents/carers may not want information shared on the doorstep
- Inside the home, check route of exit, and check for pets such as dogs which might be unpredictable
- Assess the attitude and behaviour of the family members
- Manage own behaviour/responses, remaining calm and professional
- Be aware of time management
- If in doubt, get out: do not prolong the visit if feeling uncomfortable
- Exit strategies could include the words: I don't feel this situation is going to be resolved today so I intend to leave now
- In an extreme situation, don't hesitate to call 999 to summon help
- Confirm safe return to school contact
- Report to Headteacher; log outcome of visit

SECTION FOUR – USE OF REASONABLE FORCE (POSITIVE HANDLING)

The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils. Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a pupil needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.' Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.

As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom. Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.

Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder. In a school, force is used for two main purposes – to control pupils or to restrain them. The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances. The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force can and cannot be used.

SCHOOLS CAN USE REASONABLE FORCE TO:

- remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction
- prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit
- prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others
- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

Any guidance on the use of reasonable force should acknowledge the legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs.

The school has a team of staff who have received training in Team Teach methods that encourage de-escalation of challenging behaviours.

SECTION FIVE - STAFF DRESS CODE

The school leadership and Governing Body take the view that all staff at the school should be dressed appropriately for their particular role. This code has been drawn up to ensure satisfactory standards of professional dress and to avoid direct or indirect discrimination against any employee on the grounds of their sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, or age. Both school leadership and the Governing Body are aware of their responsibility to consider possible health and safety issues in determining an acceptable dress code.

STANDARD OF DRESS

In general the dress of all teaching and support staff must be tidy and smart, reflecting the professional and business-like ethos that the governors wish to foster and maintain in staff and pupils. The governors accept those engaged in caretaking, cleaning, technical support and premises/grounds maintenance, will wear dress appropriate for their work.

Staff are expected to dress in keeping with their professional status and as a good example of a professional to pupils, parents/carers and visitors. In the interests of safeguarding staff may wear ID badges which are supplied by the school office. Staff should be neat, smart and tidy, wearing clothes which are appropriate for their post in the school. Staff dress is expected to be professional rather than casual and thus clothing conventionally deemed to be casual-wear is not acceptable e.g denim, shorts (unless for PE), cargo trousers. This policy is not intended to be prescriptive, however examples of professional dress of business-smart standard could include suits, formal shirts, trousers, dresses or smart separates. In terms of footwear, individuals and / or managers will know where there is a potential safety issue when wearing open toe or high heeled shoes. If there is no perceived safety issue, there should not be an issue. Any visible tattoos must be of a nature which is appropriate to the workplace and work role. They should be in keeping with the professional image of school and must not be offensive or bring discredit. Tattoos on the face, neck, forearms or hands are strongly discouraged, as are facial piercings, except as part of religious / cultural observance. Extreme hair styles are strongly discouraged.

Tattoos are not acceptable if they:

- Undermine the dignity and authority of an individual's role;
- Could cause offence to members of the public or colleagues and / or invite provocation;
- Indicate unacceptable attitudes towards women, minority groups or any other section of the community;
- Indicate alignment with a particular group which could give offence to members of the public or colleagues;

The Headteacher is empowered to determine the standard of smartness that is acceptable.

All staff must wear appropriate clothing for PE lessons.

RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS, ORNAMENTS AND DRESS

Staff are permitted to wear religious symbols and ornaments, but these should be discreet and worn in a safe manner. The Headteacher in consultation with the governors is empowered to determine whether a particular symbol or ornament is sufficiently discreet, and commensurate with health and safety standards.

RELIGIOUS GARMENTS

Garments which are generally considered as having an important religious (or racial) connotation (e.g. the Sikh turban, or headscarves worn by some religious groups) may be worn at all times.

However, note the school policy on head dress below.

HEAD DRESS

No caps or hats may be worn in school, except where necessary on health and safety grounds, or have been permitted by the school on religious or racial grounds.

COMPLAINTS

Any complaints about the operation of this code should be made at first to the Headteacher. If not satisfied, the complainant may take his/her complaint to the governing body via the Clerk to the Governing Body. The Governors' decision will be final.

SECTION SIX –WHISTLEBLOWING CODE

This Whistle-blowing guidance is primarily for concerns where the interests of others or the organisation itself are at risk. If your concerns are about your own employment position then it is more likely that the Grievance or the Prevention of Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination at Work Procedure should be used. If you raise a genuine concern under this policy, you will not be at risk of losing your job or suffering any form of retribution as a result providing you are acting in good faith. Disciplinary action may be taken against those who victimise a person reporting a concern. If you make an allegation, frivolously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against you. While seeking to maintain confidentiality this cannot be guaranteed in all circumstances.

Concerns should be raised with the Headteacher, Chair of Governors or Director of Childrens' Services as appropriate. This may involve an internal inquiry or a more formal investigation. You will be updated on the progress of this and you may be asked how you think the matter might best be resolved. You may invite your trade union, professional association representative or a friend to be present during any meetings or interviews in connection with the concerns you have raised. Please note, however, that you may not be made aware of actions taken due to the need to protect confidentiality.

Concerns may be raised orally or in writing and should cover the following:

- ideally your name and a contact point as anonymous complaints are often difficult to investigate
- the background and history of the concern giving dates, names and details of your concerns

The full version of the Whistleblowing Policy on the LA website gives details of additional contact points that concerns can be raised with and of the monitoring arrangements for this policy.



Approved by FGB

Meeting Date September 2020