



# Staff Code of Conduct 2023

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## 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 school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

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

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

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

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

As a Christian school we expect all staff, governors and volunteers to uphold the Christian values of the school and ensure that it is a place where children 'Love to Learn and Learn to Love'.

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.

## 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](#)', 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.

## 3. General obligations

Staff set an example to pupils. They will:

- Have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school.
- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality.
- Take care of themselves and others affected by their activity at school.
- Cooperate with school leaders in meeting their duties under the relevant regulations.
- Treat pupils, parents, colleagues and external contacts with dignity and respect.
- Observe proper boundaries appropriate to their professional position, showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others.
- Inform the headteacher if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution.
- Be aware that professional behaviour and conduct is expected to be extended to extracurricular trips and visits.
- Act appropriately in terms of the views they express – in particular, political views – and the use of school resources at all times.

Staff will not:

- Use foul or abusive language.
- Perpetrate discrimination, bullying, harassment, or intimidation, including physical, sexual and verbal abuse.
- Misuse or misrepresent their position, qualifications, or experience.
- Seek to bring the school into disrepute.
- Use school resources for political purposes.
- 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

## 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, and neglect.

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

Our safeguarding policy and procedures are available on the school website

<https://www.longsuttonprimaryschool.co.uk/safeguarding/>, in the staff room and from the school office. New staff will also be sent copies on arrival. Staff will be expected to read this annually and signed that they have understood it on myconcern.

### 4.1 Low-level concerns about members of staff (see policy)

A low-level concern is defined as any concern had about an adult's behaviour towards, or concerning, a child that does not meet the harms threshold (see below), is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt'. or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral at the time of its reporting.

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant – a low-level concern is any concern that suggests an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work.
- Does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Low-level concerns are differentiated from concerns that can cause harm. The harms threshold is the point at which a concern is no longer low-level and constitutes a threat of harm to a child. This threshold is defined as allegations that an adult has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child.
- Behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.
- Behaved in a way or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

While low-level concerns are less serious than concerns which meet the harms threshold, the school understands that many serious safeguarding concerns often begin with low-level concerns, e.g. being overly friendly with children, having favourites, taking photographs of children on a personal device, engaging in one-to-one activities where they can't easily be seen, using inappropriate language

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in our Low Level Concerns 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 school website and public drive.

## **4.2 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold**

This section is based on 'Section 1: Allegations that may meet the harm threshold' in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

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.

This is covered in more detail in our child protection and safeguarding policy. This is available on the school website and public drive.

## **4.3 Whistle-blowing (see policy)**

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 in the public interest

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 governors.

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 school's detailed whistle-blowing process, please refer to our whistle-blowing 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 spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

- This takes place in a public place that others can access
- Others can see into the room
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

If staff are involved in intimate care for a child, they should ensure they follow the school policy and procedures.

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 for the whole class. For those who work closely with one pupil and wish to give a gift for a special occasion, this must be cleared with the Head Teacher prior to giving it.

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

## **6. Communication and social media**

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

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

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

Staff should be aware of the school's online safety policy and acceptable use policy.

<https://www.longsuttonprimaryschool.co.uk/safeguarding/>

## **7. 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 school hours in front of pupils. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.

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

Staff should be aware of the school's Acceptable Use Policy and adhere to this.

## **8. Data Protection and Confidentiality**

All staff will be aware of their responsibilities as laid out in the schools Data Protection Policy and in line with the core principles of the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

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 to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

Staff will ensure that:

- Confidential paper records are kept in a locked filing cabinet, cupboard, or drawer, where possible, with restricted access, and will not be left unattended or in clear view anywhere with general access.
- Implement a 'clear desk policy' to avoid unauthorised access to physical records containing sensitive or personal information.
- Memory sticks are not used to hold personal information
- When sending confidential information staff will always check that the recipient is correct before sending

Where personal information that could be considered private or confidential is taken off the premises, either in electronic or paper format, staff will take extra care to follow the same procedures for security, e.g. keeping devices under lock and key. The person taking the information from the school premises accepts full responsibility for the security of the data.



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, as detailed further in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

## **9. Honesty and integrity**

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

Staff will not accept bribes. Gifts that are worth more than £50 must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register.

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

- Background information (including any past or current investigations/cautions related to conduct outside of school)
- Qualifications
- Professional experience

Where there are any updates to the information provided to the school, the member of staff will advise the school as 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.

Outfits will not be overly revealing.

Clothes will not display any offensive or political slogans.

Ensure that, if visible, tattoos do not cause offence to others; if tattoos are likely to cause offence, they must be covered up whilst in work.

## **11. Conduct outside of work**

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school, or the teaching profession into disrepute. This covers relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school on social media. Staff will not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute.

## **12. Attendance**

The school expects that staff will:

- Attend work in accordance with their contract of employment and associated terms and conditions in relation to hours, days of work and holidays.
- Comply with the school's notification of sickness absence procedures.
- Make routine medical and dental appointments outside of their working hours or during holidays where possible.



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

## **12. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually but can be revised as needed. It will be approved by the full governing body.

## **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
- Safeguarding
- online-safety
- Acceptable Use Policy