



Code of Conduct for all School Staff

2022/23

Introduction

As an employer, the Governing Body is required to set out a Code of Conduct for all school employees. The school expects all employees to promote and maintain high standards of personal conduct to sustain the good reputation of the school, the London Diocese Board for Schools and the local authority.

School staff are in a unique position of trust and influence as role models for pupils. Therefore, staff must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all pupils within the school. Staff also have an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, both inside and outside working hours and work setting.

This code of conduct is not an exhaustive list of acceptable and unacceptable standards of behaviour. In situations where guidance does not exist in this policy staff are expected to exercise their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the pupils and the school.

This Code of Conduct applies to:

- All members of staff
- Volunteers, including governors
- Casual workers
- Temporary and supply staff, either from agencies or engaged directly
- Student placements, including those undertaking initial teacher training and apprentices.

Our Vision and Values

We are a caring Christian community where everyone adopts an “I can” attitude; everyone feels valued, safe and loved by God. We celebrate our God-given individuality, achievements and talents and we aspire, with God’s help, to become the best that we can be. We believe that each one of us has the ability to achieve our highest potential, living and learning in the fullness of God.

I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.

Philippians 4v13

Our school rules are for the whole school community and embrace our values

1. We respect each other.
2. We always try our hardest.
3. We have high aspirations.

At the heart of our school are a set of core Christian Values. These underpin our whole ethos, curriculum and school life and aim to ensure our pupils leave Ashford CE Primary School as happy, secure, caring and responsible citizens. The values we promote are important within the school community and are values which will be important throughout life. In all that we do we strive to share, encourage and demonstrate positive values with our children; in order that they understand them and strive to live by them. Adults in school are expected to actively follow and live out our rules and values. All communication and interaction between members of the school community- staff, children, parents, carers and visitors must reflect our values.

Staff are to have regard to the Christian character of the School and not do anything in any way detrimental or prejudicial to the interests of the same at any time, at work or at home.

All staff employed under Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Employment have a statutory obligation to adhere to the 'Teachers' Standards 2012' and in relation to this policy, Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct. We expect all support staff, governors and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

Staff must act in accordance with their duty of care to pupils and ensure that the safety and welfare of pupils are accorded the highest priority.

Staff set an example to pupils. They will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school or in communications or official school messaging platforms
- 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

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

Purpose, scope and principles

A Code of Conduct is designed to sit alongside the staff handbook giving clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school staff are expected to observe, and the school should notify staff of this code and the expectations therein.

School staff are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that models the highest possible standards for all the pupils within the school. 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.

Staff must comply with any lawful written and oral instructions that support the development of the school unless the instruction would result in a health and safety risk.

Being a Role Model

All staff who work in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils. Staff must therefore avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times. Staff should give particular attention to how they dress and present themselves and must ensure compliance with all school policies.

All staff must, therefore, demonstrate the highest standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same.

All staff must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct. Particular attention should be paid to Safeguarding Children Policy and the staff dress code.

This Code helps all staff to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable.

Safeguarding pupils

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils. The following list is not exhaustive but highlights key areas of school safeguarding and pupils should be safeguarded from:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- neglect
- child sexual exploitation
- peer on peer / child on child abuse
- forced marriage
- female genital mutilation
- extremist behaviour or radicalisation

The duty to safeguard pupils includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead or a member of the DSL team in his absence. This must be done as soon as possible and within 24 hours of any disclosure of information made by a child. It is your duty to report any and all things that cause you concern, regardless of how insignificant you may feel they are. Staff should also have regard for the Low Level Concerns Policy.

Staff must maintain professional boundaries with pupils appropriate to their position and must always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably. Staff should act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to question their actions or intent. Staff should think carefully about their conduct so that misinterpretations are minimised.

Staff are provided with personal copies of the school's Safeguarding Children Policy, Whistleblowing Procedure and Low Level Concerns Policy. Staff must be familiar with these documents. Copies of these are also available in the staffroom. Staff should make themselves aware of the appropriate contacts for Whistleblowing. The contacts are contained in the policies and on the safeguarding notice board in the staffroom. Staff should also be aware of the following confidential helplines:

Expolink

Freephone 0800 374199

Expolink is an external and independent organisation which provides a confidential hotline service for whistle blowing about all matters. Expolink can be contacted any time, night or day, in complete confidence with any relevant concerns. The call will not be traced or monitored.

NSPCC – Whistleblowing Helpline for safeguarding

Freephone 0800 02080285

Staff must not demean or undermine pupils, their parents or carers, or colleagues.

Staff must take the upmost care of pupils under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.

Staff must adhere to the Acceptable Use ICT Policy/Agreement. The use of mobile phones as a camera in school is prohibited. Any photograph/video must be taken using school equipment. Staff must only save images on school computers.

Staff who are in contact with pupils should not use their mobile phones in school during their directed hours / paid hours of employment. Outside of these times, mobile phones should only be used in areas of the school where pupils are not present.

What is a Low Level Concern?

At Ashford CE we are committed to creating a culture in which all concerns about adults (including allegations that do not meet the harm threshold) are shared responsibly and with the right person and are recorded and dealt with appropriately. This will encourage an open and transparent culture; enable us to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour early. In turn this will minimise the risk of abuse; and ensure that adults working at our school are clear about professional boundaries and act within them, in accordance with the ethos and values of the school.

A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a ‘nagging doubt’ – that an adult may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with this staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work,
- does not meet the allegation threshold or is otherwise not serious enough for a referral to the LADO.

Our Low-Level Concern policy is circulated to all staff as part of our staff handbook. Staff should raise any concerns with the Executive Headteacher or Head of School. A form is available in the staffroom, but staff can speak to any of the SLT if they have a concern. You may be asked to complete a form but, where appropriate, the information will remain confidential. Everyone has a duty to ensure our school is a safe environment with a strong culture of safeguarding our 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 into 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.

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 Head of School.

Infatuations

It is not unusual for pupils or, sometimes, their parents to develop infatuations towards members of staff. All such situations must be responded to sensitively to maintain the dignity of those concerned.

Staff should also be aware that such circumstances carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against staff. Any indications of an infatuation towards yourself or another member of staff must be reported to your line manager.

Pupil development

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

Staff must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of pupils.

Staff must comply with any lawful written and oral instructions that support the development of pupils unless the instruction would result in a health and safety risk.

Honesty and integrity

Staff must maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.

Staff should not make personal use of any school property, facilities, materials, or resources unless properly authorised to do so. School property and resources should be used solely in respect of its work. No improper use should be made of any facility such as vehicles, equipment, stationery or secretarial services which the school provides for its own business.

All 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 procedure for schools.

Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to the Head of School/Executive Head or to the Chair of Governors if the Executive Headteacher is the recipient, with the exception of "one off" token gifts from students or parents. Gifts that are worth more than £25 from one source must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register held by the School Business Manager. This declaration is to protect staff as it ensures that the acceptance of the gift is open and transparent and agreed by SLT and should never lead anyone to question your interests or lead anyone to think that you have been influenced by gifts and hospitality. Personal gifts from individual members of staff to students are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted.

Close personal relationships at work

The school is committed to promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct and integrity amongst all staff. As part of this it is necessary to distinguish between personal relationships and professional ones and to have arrangements in place that safeguard all parties in circumstances where these have the potential to overlap.

A staff member/governor must declare to the school any close personal relationship that could involve a potential conflict of interest for the staff member or otherwise conflict with the staff member's responsibilities at work.

The school will act upon such a declaration to ensure that any potential conflict of interest is avoided and/or to ensure that the staff member is not compromised in their work with the school. A staff member who does not declare a close personal relationship at work in accordance with the requirements of the code of conduct may be subject to appropriate action in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedure.

Examples of close personal relationships that could involve a potential conflict of interest or otherwise conflict with responsibilities at work include but are not limited to:

- Family relationships
- Sexual or other intimate relationships
- Business, financial and commercial relationships

The circumstances in which personal relationships at work must be declared, include, but are not limited to:

- Any close personal relationship between an interview panel member and an applicant for employment with the school
- Any close personal relationship between a manager or a senior manager and an employee responsible to that manager or to a senior manager on the same management line
- Any close personal relationship between a Governor and a staff member of the school
- Any close personal relationship between a staff member and an existing or potential (i.e. through the operation of the school tendering processes) supplier of goods or services to the school.

In addition to the particular cases set out above, it is the responsibility of the staff member/governor to assess any other circumstances in which there could be a requirement in accordance with this code to declare a personal relationship at work.

A staff member/governor who needs to declare a personal relationship at work should set out the relevant circumstances in writing to the Head of School. In respect of the Executive Headteacher or Governor the declaration should be provided to the Chair of Governors.

Upon receipt of a declaration the Head of School (Chair of Governors or other senior leader as appropriate) will meet with the staff member/governor. In accordance with the code the purpose of the meeting will be to agree the actions that are necessary to avoid any potential conflict of interest and or to ensure that the staff member/governor is not compromised in their work with the school. The agreed actions will be recorded and placed on the staff member's personnel file and a copy will be given to the staff member/governor. If it is considered unavoidable to inform other members of staff about the relationship in order to explain a change in management arrangements, this will be discussed with the individuals concerned, before it is disclosed. If the circumstances of the personal relationship change the employee must so advise the Head of School. The previously agreed actions will be reviewed in discussion between the staff member/governor and Head of School and an updated note will be produced and attached to the original.

Staff members should not be involved in an appointment, or be involved in any decision relating to discipline, promotion or any pay adjustments or conditions of another staff member, or prospective staff member to whom they are related or have a close personal relationship.

Conduct outside work

Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community. Any such conduct could lead to dismissal.

In particular, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable and could lead to dismissal.

Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Staff may use only an encrypted USB device to take saved data off the school site. Staff must set the highest level of security on their social media and not use it to contact pupils e.g. Facebook, Instagram or snap chat with pupils or former pupils.

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of their mobile phone, any mobile device or social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute.

Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school and is not to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance. The Head of School should be notified of this work.

All members of staff must declare any business interests outside of school that may be connected either to the supply of goods / services to the school or be rewarded through association with the school. They must also declare membership of any organisation that is not open to the public without formal membership and commitment of allegiance and which has secrecy about rules, membership, or conduct (including Freemasonry) and membership of other groups, clubs and societies, e.g. The Round Table and The Rotary, that an employee believes could be relevant to declare in particular circumstances.

Declarations must extend to acknowledging the involvement of a relative or partner of an employee in an organisation in which the school does or seeks to do business, particularly if they are directors, partners or hold senior managerial positions in those organisations

E-Safety

Staff should follow Ashford CE School's E-Safety policy and the Acceptable Use Policy at all times and have regard for Ashford CE School's E-Safety policy for pupils.

Social Media and online activity

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school or the school community into disrepute. Staff should adopt the highest security settings on any personal profiles they have.

Staff should remain mindful of their digital footprint and exercise caution in all their use of social media or any other web-based presence they have. This includes written content, videos or photographs and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts or following certain individuals or groups. Staff should exercise care when using dating websites where staff could encounter parents or former pupils.

Staff must not make contact with pupils, must not accept or initiate friend requests nor follow pupils accounts on any social media platform. Staff must not communicate with pupils via social media, websites, instant messenger accounts or text message. The only acceptable method of contact is via parents and through the use of school email accounts or telephone equipment.

Staff should not make contact with pupils' family members, accept or initiate friend requests or follow pupils' family member's account on any social media platform.

Do not upload a photo to your email profile. The email profile should show the school logo only.

Mobile phones and personally-owned devices may not be used during lessons or formal school time. They should be switched off (or silent) at all times. The Bluetooth functionality of a mobile phone should be switched off at all times and may not be used to send images or files to other mobile phones. Mobile phones and personal devices are not permitted to be used in certain areas within the school site such as changing rooms and toilets.

Mobile phones and personally-owned mobile devices brought in to school are the responsibility of the device owner. Ashford CE School accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of personally-owned mobile phones or mobile devices.

Staff who are also parents

We acknowledge that staff who are also parents may wish to make contact with other parents, who are friends, over social media or in person. Staff must exercise caution and professional judgement in these circumstances and should not have any contact with pupils' family members via social media if that contact is likely to constitute a conflict of interest or call into question their objectivity.

No mention of work or anything that happens at work should be made on social media or to other parents. Do not post photos of staff without their permission. Check the privacy status of your social media accounts regular and remember if you post or respond to a "friends" post you have no control over who else can see your comment.

Staff are recommended to set clear boundaries within friendships with parents outside of work. If approached by a parent about an issue you should direct them to the appropriate class teacher or senior Leader. It is recommended that you have a planned script for such incidents so that you are not at a disadvantage should you be unexpectedly asked a question or for advice.

Staff should not engage with parents about school matters outside of their school hours as this could blur the relationship and parents would not be sure if you are speaking on behalf of the school or not. If you are unsure about any of these points, please seek advice from the SBM or SLT.

Political neutrality

All staff should ensure that their own personal or political opinions do not interfere with any policy of the school or authority. Staff must comply with the school's equalities statement and other employment policies in relation to equality issues.

Confidentiality

Where staff have access to confidential information about pupils or their parents or carers, staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil.

Staff should follow all data protection requirements by ensuring that data is stored securely. This applies to both electronic and physical data. Care should be taken over the contact autofill feature for emails. Where personal data is being transferred the document should be pin protected. Use bcc when copying others who need to know the information in an email to avoid sharing email addresses. Please note that you must report any breach of data protection to the Head of School/School Business Manager as a matter of urgency.

All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, incidents of bullying or extreme behaviour, this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate school procedure. It must not be discussed outside the school, including with the pupil's parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the school except with a senior member of staff with the appropriate role and authority to deal with the matter.

Staff should not use any information gained in the course of their employment for personal gain, or pass it on to others who might use it in such a way. Information concerning a fellow employee or governor's personal affairs should not be divulged without prior approval, except where that disclosure is required or sanctioned by law.

However, staff have an obligation to share with one of the school's Designated Safeguarding Leads any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a pupil.

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

Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the senior leadership team and only approved staff and Governors should communicate to the media about the school.

Disciplinary action

All staff need to recognise that failure to meet these standards of behaviour and conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

Appendix 1 – aide memoire for all staff

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.
- avoid using 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, fairness and dignity at all times.
- Dress and present yourself 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.
- behave in a way that encourages equality and raises aspirations never behaving in a discriminatory manner or make racist, sexist, or other types of discriminatory remarks directed towards or about individuals, sections of society or ethnic minority groups or members thereof.

Appendix 2- Teachers' Standards Effective from 1 September 2012 (DfE)

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.

Whilst these standards apply to teachers the bullet point principles are relevant and apply to all staff, volunteers and governors in school.