Rushcombe First School

Code of Conduct Policy

Issue Date: October 2018
Reviewed: Reviewed and updated September 2026
Adopted by Governing Body: November 2019
Next review date: September 2027

Staff Code of Conduct

To be read in conjunction with the national guidance: 'Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings'.

1. Definition

1.1. References made to 'child' and 'children' refer to children and young people under the age of 18 years. However, the principles of the document apply to professional behaviours towards all pupils, including those over the age of 18 years. 'Child' should therefore be read to mean **any pupil** at the education establishment.

1.2. References made to adults and staff refer to all those who work with children in an educational establishment, in either a paid or unpaid capacity.

1.3. The term 'allegation' means where it is alleged that a person who works with children 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; or,
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

2. Introduction

2.1. Schools have a legal duty to create and maintain a safe learning environment for children. A staff Code of Conduct is a **mandatory** requirement as described in the DfE statutory guidance: 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025' .

2.2. The school seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for children in our care. The following code draws together existing laws, regulations and conditions of service designed to protect the interests of staff and volunteers and the children with whom they work and this has been agreed following consultation with recognised trade unions and is recommended for adoption.

2.3. Staff should be aware that a failure to comply with this code could result in disciplinary action including dismissal.

3. Purpose and Scope

3.1. All staff and volunteers working in a school setting have a legal and moral duty to keep children safe and protect them from harm. Staff should ensure they do not put themselves in situations in which allegations of abuse or inappropriate behaviour could be made.

3.2. This code applies to all adults working in schools whatever their position, role or responsibilities.

3.3. All staff have a responsibility to be aware of systems within their school which support safeguarding, which should be explained as part of staff induction and through regular staff training.

3.4. The code should be read in conjunction with the relevant statutory and other guidance documents issued nationally or by the DfE and Home Office as well as other related school policies (see **Appendix 1** of this policy).

3.5. This code cannot cover every eventuality. Its purpose is to show the standard expected of staff but it does not replace the general requirements of the law.

3.6. 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 code, Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct which this code supplements.

3.7. It is recognised that the vast majority of adults who work with children act professionally and aim to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for children in their care. Achieving these aims is not always straightforward, as much relies on child and staff interactions where tensions and misunderstandings can occur. This code aims to reduce the risk of that.

4. Core Principles

4.1. The welfare of the children is paramount.

4.2. Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should seek to avoid any conduct that would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation or intentions.

4.3. Staff are expected to maintain a professional standard of conduct, not only in regard to interactions with children in their educational establishment, but to extend this courtesy to their colleagues, parents and visitors of the establishment.

4.4. Staff should dress appropriately at all times for the tasks they undertake and ensure they promote a positive and professional image.

4.5. Staff should apply the expected professional standards of behaviour and not discriminate against anyone in relation to their age, disability, sex or gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnerships (in particular with adults in contact with the establishment), pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation.

4.6. Staff should not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or substances, including prescribed medication that may affect their ability to care for children.

4.7. Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in disciplinary action being taken against them, criminal action and/or other proceedings including barring by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) from working in regulated activity, or for acts of serious misconduct, prohibition from teaching by the National College of Teaching & Leadership (NCTL).

4.8. Staff and managers should continually monitor and review practice to ensure this guidance is followed and should understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children.

4.9. Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from their line manager or another senior member of staff over any incident which may give rise to concern.

4.10. Records should be made of any incident and decision made or where further actions have been agreed, in accordance with school policies and confidentiality.

4.11. All staff should know the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead and be familiar with local child protection arrangements, arrangements for managing allegations against staff, whistleblowing procedures and their Pan Dorset Multi-agency Safeguarding Procedures

4.12. Staff should be aware of and comply with the school's financial and administrative regulations and any other procedure manuals.

5. Conduct and Behaviour

5.1. All staff who work in a school setting are in a position of trust in relation to individuals in their care and so must adopt high standards of personal integrity and conduct and behave in such a way that does not compromise their position both within and outside of the workplace or the safety and/or welfare of children and young people.

5.2. Staff have a duty to advise their employer of any incidents both within and outside the workplace that may affect their suitability to fulfil their role.

5.3. Staff should be aware that it is a criminal offence (Sexual Offences Act 2003: abuse of a position of trust) to engage in sexual activity with a pupil under the age of 18.

5.4. Teachers are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct in accordance with the minimum professional Teaching Standards.

5.5. Staff should never make (or encourage others to make) comments, either to the children colleagues, parents or visitors of the establishment, that are intended, or can be interpreted to be, unprofessional, demeaning or humiliating.

5.6. Staff should not use physical force as a form of punishment.

5.7. Staff should always adhere to the school's policies on Behaviour Management and Use of Reasonable Force.

5.8. Staff should not use any information obtained in the course of their employment for personal gain or benefit. Nor should they pass it on to others who might use it in such a way.

6. Equality Issues

6.1. All staff should adhere to the school's Equal Opportunities Policy, in addition to the requirements of the law.

6.2. All adults and children at the school have a right to be treated at all times with fairness, equality and without discrimination.

7. Employment Matters

7.1. All staff involved in recruitment and selection processes should ensure that appointments are made on the basis of merit, without discrimination and in accordance with the school's recruitment and selection policy and procedure.

7.2. Any staff involved in tendering processes should ensure that these are made on the basis of merit.

7.3. No member of staff should be involved in any appointment or decision relating to discipline, promotion, or pay adjustments for any individual who is a relative or with whom they are in a close personal relationship.

7.4. All relationships of a business or private nature with external contractors, or potential contractors, should be made known to the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors (if the Headteacher).

8. Public Duty and Private Interest

8.1. Staff should not put themselves in a position where their duty to the school and their private interests' conflict.

9. Other Employment/Private Work

9.1. Any external work undertaken must not bring the school into disrepute or conflict with the school's interest.

9.2 Any copyright created by a member of staff during their employment with the school becomes the property of the school.

10. Safeguarding

10.1 Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils/students from:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- neglect

10.2. The duty to safeguard children and young people includes the duty to report child welfare concerns to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL),

10.3. Staff should be aware of and adopt the recommended procedures and best practice guidance outlined in the national Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings.

10.4. Staff should be aware of and follow the statutory responsibilities outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

10.5. Staff should be aware of the risks to children from radicalisation and being drawn into terrorism as outlined in the Prevent Duty guidance.

- **Guidance for Safer Working Practice**

  (i) This document will be used to support the Code of Conduct and as such may be referred to in any disciplinary proceedings.

  (ii) Staff should read this document in conjunction with this code.

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education**

  (i) This document sets out the statutory duties schools must follow and includes guidance on mandatory reporting requirements. It is advised that this is read alongside **Working Together to Safeguard Children**.

  (ii) Staff should ensure they understand and are familiar with their responsibilities and where this includes mandatory reporting expectations they understand their role any locally agreed procedures for reporting, such as informing the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

  (iii) Staff should be aware of the personal reporting duty with regard to known cases of female genital mutilation (FGM). Supplementary to Keeping Children Safe in Education, staff can obtain further guidance in the '**Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation – procedural information**' document.

  (iv) Staff should refer any concerns about another member of staff to the Headteacher, or if the concern is about the Headteacher to the Chair of Governors or equivalent.

  (v) Staff should raise concerns of poor or unsafe practice or potential failures in safeguarding, using the school's whistleblowing policy.

- **Prevent Duty**

  (i) Under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, staff must have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'

  (ii) Staff should refer any concerns regarding radicalisation to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead or a senior member of staff, following the school's normal safeguarding procedures.

  (iii) Relevant staff should understand when it is appropriate to make a referral to the Channel programme, a mechanism for schools to make referrals if they are concerned that an individual might be vulnerable to radicalisation.

  (iv) Staff should ensure they have undertaken some form of Prevent awareness training

11. Financial inducements, gifts, hospitality and sponsorship

11.1. Staff should not seek or receive preferential rates for themselves by virtue of their dealings on behalf of the school

11.2. Staff should ensure that gifts are declared if they are received.

11.3. Where staff provide gifts they should ensure they are of insignificant value and given to all children equally.

12. Use of School Time and Facilities

12.1. The school's property and facilities (e.g. stationary, computers, photocopiers, mobile phones) may only be used for school business unless permission for their private use has been granted.

13. Publication of Books/Articles

13.1. Staff must consult with the Headteacher before publishing book, articles, letters, dissertations etc where they are described as holding an appointment at the school.

14. Disciplinary Action

14.1. All staff should be aware that a failure to meet these standards of behaviour and conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

APPENDIX 1

POLICIES AND OTHER DOCUMENTS TO BE CONSIDERED AND READ IN CONJUCTION WITH THE STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT (Listed in alphabetical order)

Policy/Procedure/Guidance
Allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers
Child Protection Policy**
Data Protection Policy
Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
Drugs and Alcohol Policy
Equal Opportunities Policy
E- Safety/Internet Use/Social Networking/ICT Policies
Guidance for Safer Working Practice* national guidance for those working with children and young people in Education Settings.
Health and Safety Policy
Intimate Care
Keeping Children Safe in Education*- DfE statutory guidance Link: Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation procedural information* Link:https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information
Use of Reasonable Force Link:https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444051/Use_of_reasonable_force_advice_Reviewed_July_2015.pdf
Prevent Duty Guidance* Link: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance
Recruitment and Selection Policy
School Record Keeping Policy
Whistleblowing Policy

*It is expected that staff will adhere to the statutory duties and/or best practice outlined within these documents as applicable to their role and responsibilities.

**The Child Protection Policy is available from the Safeguarding and Standards Team. Please contact sasteam@dorsetcc.gcsx.gov.uk for further details.