



Staff Code of Conduct Policy

LUNSFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL (TO BE READ ALONGSIDE
SAFEGUARDING POLICY, ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY, WHISTLE BLOWING
POLICY, HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY)

1. INTRODUCTION

The governors' expectations are that all pupils receive the highest possible quality of teaching and learning within a positive and respectful environment.

It is important, therefore, that staff understand that their own behaviour and the manner in which they conduct themselves with their colleagues, pupils, parents and other stakeholders sets an example and affects the school environment.

The governors recognise that the majority of staff always act in an appropriate manner and treat others with dignity and respect. However, we consider it important to make clear the standards we expect from staff so that misunderstandings and/or misinterpretation of rules are kept to a minimum.

This Code is intended to set out our expected standards of conduct, our rules and values. It applies to all staff, regardless of status. It is not an exhaustive compilation of what staff can and cannot do but it is hoped that it will ensure everyone is clear about what is acceptable and what is not.

The Code is binding on all school staff. It is expected also that those staff deployed within the school who are employed by external Agencies or the Council will adhere to its principles. Breaches of the Code and the standards expressed in it could result in disciplinary action, including dismissal for serious offences.

2. GENERAL STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS

As a member of the School's staff it is important that you:

- provide a high standard of service in your dealings with colleagues, pupils, parents and other stakeholders whether this is in person, by telephone, letter or e-mail. Always be polite, responsive and treat people with respect and consideration. Be as clear as possible about any decisions and actions you take and the reasons for them.
- always use appropriate language and never demean, distress or offend the decency of others. This may happen, for example, by displaying material or pictures that could be seen as offensive, or by making degrading, suggestive or insensitive comments or remarks.
- respect the rights of others and treat them with dignity. Never threaten, bully, fight with or assault anyone.
- never steal, damage or take items that belong to others (see 3 (d) below in relation to confiscation of items from pupils). Hand lost property in to the office.
- do not discriminate against, harass or victimise anyone you meet in the course of your work, on any grounds, including:
 - race
 - ethnic or national origin
 - gender
 - sexuality
 - marital status
 - religious or other beliefs
 - disability
 - age
 - Trade Union involvement
 - having responsibility for dependants
 - working on a temporary or part time basis
- raise any concerns about inappropriate behaviour by pupils, parents or colleagues, or about the internal workings of the School, by following the appropriate procedure, such as the Whistleblowing Policy.

- promote the School's vision, ethos and values
- comply with School policies and any other rules, regulations or codes that apply to your work and the workplace
- do not make public statements about the school without first obtaining authorisation from the Headteacher
- keep within the law, both at work and outside of work
- avoid actions that may discredit the school or bring it into disrepute
- ensure that you are not under the influence of alcohol during working hours. (The Headteacher will decide if it is appropriate for alcohol to be made available at staff parties/social events)
- do not abuse drugs
- do not disclose or misuse confidential information
- do not engage in, or encourage, gossip, rumour or innuendo.

3. WORKING PRACTICES

(a) Management and Staff Relations

An atmosphere of mutual confidence, trust and respect between managers and staff is essential to achieving the school's aims and targets and providing a high quality of teaching and learning. As a **member of staff** you should:

- promote the School in a positive manner
- work reliably and in accordance with the school's policies and practices as well as any other rules and regulations that apply to your work and/or the workplace
- carry out any reasonable instructions given to you by your manager and/or Headteacher
- recognise that you are part of a team and that everyone should be working together to achieve similar aims for the overall benefit of the pupils.
- As a **leader** you should, in addition:
 - support and assist staff to carry out their work properly
 - in your dealings with your staff, act in accordance with their relevant local and national conditions of employment/service - in consultation with staff, set standards of work and objectives, as appropriate to their role
 - give feedback and advice on areas for further development to assist staff in meeting objectives
 - aim to continually develop staff to meet current and future needs of the school
 - ensure compliance with the Working Time Regulations 1998, as amended, recognise the need for staff to pursue interests outside work and, therefore, be able to enjoy a reasonable work/life balance
 - consider constructive suggestions for improvements to working practices and standards
 - treat all staff fairly, consistently and with dignity
 - provide a working environment free from discrimination and harassment
 - provide a safe and healthy working environment.

(b) Reporting Malpractice and Improper Conduct ('Whistleblowing')

Most problems and concerns within the workplace can be fairly easily resolved, often informally. Sometimes it is necessary to use a more formal route, such as the school's Complaints Procedure. Very occasionally, however, more serious issues may arise involving, for example, unlawful

conduct, financial malpractice, corruption, health and safety issues or other actions, which are not in the best interests of the pupils or the school.

You may be worried about raising serious issues, perhaps concerned that you may be mistaken, it's only a suspicion, that you may lose your job or otherwise suffer some form of retribution as a result. However, there is a 'Whistleblowing Policy' available to enable you to raise concerns about malpractice at an early stage, in the right way.

The Policy sets out how you should raise such a concern. Provided that you are acting in good faith, it will protect you from victimisation or other detriment, even if you are mistaken about the matter. However, you must never raise unfounded allegations maliciously. This would be viewed as a disciplinary matter.

(See Whistleblowing Policy for further details)

(c) School Policies and Procedures

All members of staff must comply with the School's policies and procedures. Files of Policies are kept on line and in the school office.

In addition, **teachers** are expected to uphold the Teacher Standards 2021 DfE. The **Preamble** summarises the values and behaviour that all teachers must demonstrate throughout their careers. **Part 1** comprises the Standards for Teaching; **Part 2** comprises the standards for Professional and Personal Conduct.

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.

(d) Dealings with Pupils

As a member of staff you are expected to:

- work towards and encourage the highest possible level of achievement for all pupils
- value and respect all pupils equally, treating them in a polite, positive, responsive and considerate manner

- apply the School's Behaviour Policy as situations demand in order to encourage and develop appropriate behaviours
- ensure that items confiscated from pupils are left in a safe place, ideally labelled and locked away. Parents/guardians should be informed about when items will be returned.
- act in accordance with the School's Child Protection Policy
- ensure that you do not breach professional boundaries and do not act in a way that could be misinterpreted or otherwise leave you vulnerable to allegations of inappropriate behaviour.

This is in accordance with the school Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying policy as well as DfE Guidelines on 'Behaviour and discipline in schools - Advice for headteachers and school staff' (July 2022)

(e) Health and Safety

The Governors aim is to promote good health and ensure safe working practices for staff, pupils, parents, other stakeholders and visitors. Staff of the school also have a legal responsibility to contribute to a safe working environment. Failure to accept this responsibility may put themselves and/or others at risk. You should ensure that you:

- familiarise yourself with the school's Health and Safety Policy
- comply with Health and Safety Regulations and use any safety equipment and protective clothing which is supplied to you by the Council or by the Governors
- comply with any hygiene requirements
- comply with any accident reporting requirements
- never act in a way which might cause risk or damage to any other members of the school community, or visitors.
- inform your line manager of any paid work you undertake elsewhere. This is to comply with the Working Time Regulations, which are a Health and Safety initiative. In addition, if you are a member of the Support Staff on scale 6 or above you are required, as part of your conditions of service, to seek written agreement from your Headteacher to undertake work elsewhere. Any member of staff asked to undertake private tutoring of pupils within the school must first discuss the situation with the Headteacher.

(See Health & Safety Policy for further details)

(f) Appearance and Dress

It is expected that adults should wear clothing which:

- Promotes a positive and professional image
- Is appropriate to their role - you remember that you are a role model for pupils and your appearance and dress should reflect this important and unique position
- Is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative
- Does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding
- Is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans
- Is not considered to be discriminatory
- when at work, or representing the school, you ensure that your appearance is neat and clean

- you do not dress in a way that may cause embarrassment to pupils, parents, colleagues, other stakeholders or visitors. (for example: consider appropriateness of T-Shirts with slogans).
- For Health and Safety reasons appropriate footwear must be worn – no flip flops and all footwear must have a back.

Ultimately, it will be for the Headteacher to decide whether a member of staff's appearance and/or dress is appropriate or not. The Governors and the Headteacher must ensure that the rights of employees to dress as they please, and in accordance with their principles and beliefs, is balanced with the need for the school to promote a suitable image to its stakeholders.

(g) Hours of Work and Attendance

It is important that all staff are in school at their agreed starting time and do not leave before their agreed finishing time. Bad timekeeping and poor attendance increases costs, causes disruption for others and has an adverse effect on pupils' education.

The Governors recognise that the majority of staff are punctual and do not take time off without good cause or obtaining prior permission.

Our expectations are that:

- you attend work in accordance with your contract of employment and associated terms and conditions in relation to hours, days of work and holidays
- wherever possible, you make routine medical and dental appointments outside of your working hours or during holidays. The only exceptions to this requirement will be in the event of an emergency or particular difficulty, in relation to hospital appointments (which are rarely negotiable) or to attend for ante-natal care if you are pregnant. In any circumstances, however, you should agree time off with your manager at the earliest opportunity to ensure that adequate cover arrangements can be made
- prior to making any request, you refer to the School's policy on Staff Absence if you need time off for any reason other than personal illness. Any member of staff taking such leave without permission will be subject to disciplinary action.

(h) Sickness Absence

All staff are expected to follow the School's absence reporting procedure when they are absent from work due to illness or injury. This procedure includes notification as early as possible on the first day of absence, keeping the school informed where absence continues, requirements for the provision of medical certificates and procedures on return to work. *(See Staff Absence Policy for further details)*

(i) Sensitive Information and Confidentiality

It is expected that staff will use sensitive information properly and have due respect for confidentiality. If you have access to such information, you should ensure that you:

- know what information the school treats as confidential
- know who is entitled to have access to what information
- are responsible and professional in using and allowing access to personal information on pupils, parents, staff, governors and any others
- use personal information in line with the principles of the Data Protection Acts and GDPR guidelines.

Such data must:

- be obtained lawfully and fairly

- be held only for specified and lawful purposes
- be relevant and just sufficient for those purposes
- be used or disclosed for no other purpose
- be accurate, up to date, and kept only as long as is necessary
- be held securely to prevent unauthorised access or tampering
- be available for inspection and correction by the person it is about
- not be transferred to countries outside the European Economic Area without adequate protection.

(j) Use of School Resources School communications systems and equipment, including electronic mail and Internet systems, along with their associated hardware and software, are for official and authorised purposes only. Managers may authorise personal use which:

- does not interfere with the performance of professional duties
- is of reasonable duration and frequency
- serves a legitimate school interest, such as enhancing professional interests or education
- does not overburden the system or create any additional expense to the school.

Managers should consider carefully discretionary use for any other purpose.

Staff are expected to conduct themselves honestly and appropriately on the **Internet**, and respect the copyrights, software licensing rules, property rights, privacy and prerogatives of others.

Internet users are prohibited from transmitting or downloading material that is obscene, pornographic, threatening, racially or sexually harassing, or in any way contravenes the Equal Opportunities Policy. Chat rooms may not be visited, nor sites known to contain offensive material.

The keeping of a personal diary on the Internet (whether at school or at home) where reference is made to the school without authorisation is not acceptable as such usage could cause harm to the reputation of the school and may undermine the confidence of parents.

Staff should not post photos of staff events on social media without getting consent from those featured in pictures.

(See Acceptable Use Policy for further details)

(k) Keeping Within the Law

Staff are expected to operate within the law. Unlawful or criminal behaviour, at work, or outside work, may lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal, being taken against you.

You must ensure that you:

- uphold the law at work
- never commit a crime away from work which could damage public confidence in you or the School, or which makes you unsuitable for the work you do.
- This includes, for example:
 - submitting false or fraudulent claims to the Council or other public bodies (for example, income support, housing or other benefit claims)
 - breaching copyright on computer software or published documents
 - sexual offences which will render you unfit to work with children or vulnerable adults
 - crimes of dishonesty which render you unfit to hold a position of trust.

- write and tell the Headteacher (Chair of Governors if you are the Headteacher) immediately if you are charged with, or convicted of, any crime whilst you are employed at the school. (This includes outside of your working hours).

The Headteacher and/or governors would then need to consider whether this charge or conviction damages public confidence in the school or makes you unsuitable to carry out your duties.

(I) Social Networking

- Managing personal information effectively makes it far less likely that information will be misused.
- In their own interests, adults within school settings need to be aware of the dangers of putting personal information onto social networking sites, such as addresses, home and mobile phone numbers. This will avoid the potential for pupils or their families or friends having access to staff outside of the school environment. It also reduces the potential for identity theft by third parties.
- All adults, particularly those new to the school setting, should review their social networking sites when they join the school to ensure that information available publicly about them is accurate and appropriate. This includes any photographs that may cause embarrassment to themselves and the school if they are published outside of the site.
- Adults should never make a 'friend' of a pupil at the school where they are working on their social networking page, and should be cautious about becoming 'friends' with ex-students where younger siblings continue to attend the school.
- Staff should never use or access social networking pages of pupils and should never accept an invitation to invite a pupil to become a 'friend'.
- Confidentiality needs to be considered at all times. Social networking sites have the potential to discuss inappropriate information and employees need to ensure that they do not put any confidential information on their site about themselves, their employer, their colleagues, pupils or members of the public.
- Employees need to ensure that when they are communicating about others, even outside of work, that they give due regard to the potential for defamation of character. Making allegations on social networking sites (even in their own time and in their own homes) about other employees, pupils or other individuals connected with the school, or another school, Kent County Council could result in formal action being taken against them.
- Adults are also reminded that they must comply with the requirements of equalities legislation in their on-line communications.
- Adults within the school setting must never post derogatory remarks or offensive comments online or engage in on-line activities which may bring the school or Kent County Council into disrepute or could reflect negatively on their professionalism.
- Some social networking sites and other web-based sites have fields in the user profile for job title etc. If you are an employee of a school and particularly if you are a teacher/teaching assistant, you should not put any information onto the site that could identify either your profession or the school where you work. In some circumstances this could damage the reputation of the school, the profession or the Local Authority.

(Please also refer to the schools Acceptable Use Policy)

(m) Protection of personal information

Adults working in schools **should**:

- Never share their work log-ins or passwords with other people.
- Keep their personal phone numbers private
- Not give their personal e-mail addresses to pupils or parents. Where there is a need for homework to be sent electronically the school e-mail address should be used.
- Keep a record of their phone's unique international mobile equipment identity (IMEI) number and keep their phone secure whilst on school premises.
- Understand who is allowed to view the content on their pages of the sites they use and how to restrict access to certain groups of people.

Adults working in schools should **not**:

- Use school ICT equipment for inappropriate personal use,
- Use their own mobile phones to contact **pupils** and only **parents** in exceptional circumstances.
- Communication between pupils / adults working in school
- Communication between pupils and adults by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries.
- This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites and blogs.
- The school normally provides a work mobile and e-mail address for communication between staff and pupils where this is necessary for particular trips/assignments. Adults should not give their personal mobile numbers or personal e-mail addresses to pupils or parents for these purposes.
- Adults should not request, or respond to, any personal information from a pupil, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role.
- Adults should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny. They should also be circumspect in their communications with pupils so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as 'grooming' in the context of sexual offending.
- Adults should not give their personal contact details to pupils including e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers, unless the need to do so is agreed with senior management and parents/carers.
- E-mail or text communications between an adult and a pupil outside agreed protocols may lead to disciplinary and/or criminal investigations. This also includes communications through internet based web sites.

(Please refer to Staff Acceptable Use Policy)

(n) Social contact

- Adults should not establish or seek to establish social contact via social media / other communication technologies with pupils.
- There will be occasions when there are social contacts between pupils and staff, where for example the parent and teacher are part of the same social circle. These contacts however, will be easily recognised and should be openly acknowledged with the Head Teacher where there may be implications for the adult and their position within the school setting.

- There must be awareness on the part of those working with or in contact with pupils that some social networking contacts, especially where these are not common knowledge, can be misconstrued as being part of a grooming process. This can also apply to social networking contacts made through outside interests or through the adult's own family.

(o) Access to inappropriate images and internet usage

- There are no circumstances that will justify adults possessing indecent images of children. Staff who access and possess links to such websites will be viewed as a significant and potential threat to children. Accessing, making and storing indecent images of children is illegal. This will lead to criminal investigation and the disciplinary action being taken.
- Adults should not use equipment belonging to their school/service to access any adult pornography; neither should personal equipment containing these images or links to them be brought into the workplace. This will raise serious concerns about the suitability of the adult to continue to work with children.
- Adults should ensure that pupils are not exposed to any inappropriate images or web links. Schools need to ensure that internet equipment used by pupils have the appropriate controls with regards to access. e.g. personal passwords should be kept confidential.
- Where indecent images of children are found, the police and local authority designated officer (LADO) should be immediately informed. Schools should refer to the dealing with allegations of abuse against adults policy and should not attempt to investigate the matter or evaluate the material themselves, as this may lead to evidence being contaminated which in itself can lead to a criminal prosecution.
- Where other unsuitable material is found, which may not be illegal but which raises concerns about that member of staff, either HR or the LADO should be informed and advice sought. Schools should refer to the dealing with allegations of abuse against adults policy and should not attempt to investigate or evaluate the material themselves until such advice is received. *(See Child Protection Policy for further details)*

(p) Cyberbullying

- Cyberbullying can be defined as 'the use of modern communication technologies to embarrass, humiliate, threaten or intimidate an individual in the attempt to gain power and control over them.'
- Prevention activities are key to ensuring that adults are protected from the potential threat of cyberbullying. All adults are reminded of the need to protect themselves from the potential threat of cyberbullying. Following the advice contained in this guidance should reduce the risk of personal information falling into the wrong hands.
- If cyberbullying does take place, employees should keep records of the abuse, text, e-mails, website or instant message and should not delete texts or e-mails. Employees are advised to take screen prints of messages or web pages and be careful to record the time, date and place of the site.
- Adults may wish to seek the support of their trade union or professional association representatives or another colleague to support them through the process.
- Adults are encouraged to report all incidents of cyberbullying to their line manager or the headteacher. All such incidents will be taken seriously and will be dealt with in consideration of the wishes of the person who has reported the incident. It is for the individual who is being bullied to decide whether they wish to report the actions to the police.