



# 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. 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.

Lunsford is a school where children's learning is valued and their knowledge, experience, creativity, self-expression, imagination and understanding can flourish. We provide a foundation for life in a happy, safe, high achieving school, where all individuals have high expectations of themselves, respect each other and strive to excel. We are a school which the whole school community are proud to belong to and be a part of - children, staff, parents and governors.

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 establish procedures for the regulation of staff 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 (among other things) cover low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistle-blowing, as well as acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

## 3. General obligations

Staff set an example to pupils. They will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school
- 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
- Not express personal beliefs in a way that exploits pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law

- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within
- Adhere to the [Teachers' Standards](#)

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.

## 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 child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures, and the Prevent duty, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

Our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures are available from the school office, as well as in the policies section of the school website. New staff will also be given copies on arrival.

### 4.1 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

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.

### 4.2 Low-level concerns about members of staff

A low-level concern is behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harm threshold, but is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt'. For example, this may include:

- Being over-friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on a personal device
- Engaging in 1-to-1 activities where they can't easily be seen
- Humiliating pupils

Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding 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 school 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 from the school office or on the policies section of the website

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

### **4.3 Whistle-blowing**

Whistle-blowing reports wrongdoing that it is “in the public interest”. Examples linked to safeguarding include:

- Pupils’ or staff members’ 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. The school aims to encourage openness and will support whistleblowers who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

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 governing board.

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. The school will investigate any complaints in a timely, respectful and confidential manner.

For our school’s detailed whistle-blowing process, please refer to our whistle-blowing policy.

## **5. Sexual harassment**

Sexual harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature that has a purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. It also includes treating someone less favourably because they’ve submitted or refused to submit to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature in the past, or harassment related to sex or gender reassignment. When this behaviour is unwanted, it includes (but isn’t limited to):

- Unwanted physical conduct or ‘horseplay’ including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing
- Continued suggestions for sexual activity after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome
- Sending or displaying material that is pornographic, or that some people might find offensive
- Unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless)
- Offensive emails, text messages or social media content
- Comments and jokes of a sexual nature
- Sexually suggestive looks and staring
- Sexual propositions and advances
- Promising things in return for sexual favours

- Physical contact such as massaging, hugging or kissing
- Sexual contact on social media

Staff will help create a positive environment that works to prevent sexual harassment. This includes calling out sexual harassment that they witness. All witnesses will be provided with appropriate support and will be protected from victimisation.

If a staff member is concerned at any point about incidents of sexual harassment (either directed at them or someone else), they 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 governors. The school will investigate any complaints in a timely, respectful and confidential manner.

All staff will receive training on recognising and responding to incidents of sexual harassment. The school will monitor the treatment and outcomes of any complaints of sexual harassment or victimisation received to make sure that they are properly investigated and resolved, those who report or act as witnesses are not victimised, repeat offenders are dealt with appropriately, cultural clashes are identified and resolved and workforce training is targeted where needed.

## **6. 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 1-to-1 basis, staff will make sure 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/carers may wish to give gifts to staff, e.g. at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to individual pupils are not acceptable.

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.

## **7. Communication and social media**

School staff's media profiles should not be available to pupils. Staff should consider setting public profiles to private.

Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents/carers 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/carers' 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



## **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)**

## **8. Acceptable use of technology**

Staff will not use technology in school or belonging to the 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 or in front of pupils. Any personal use must be in the employee's own time (before or after working hours or during unpaid lunch breaks). All personal use must comply with the standards and restrictions set out in this Code. 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.

**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)*

## 9. Confidentiality

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/carers.

This information should never be:

- Disclosed to anyone unless required by law or with consent from the relevant party or parties
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

This does not overrule a staff member's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, as detailed further in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

### **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.

## 10. 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 £25.00 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.

## 11. Dress code

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.

## 12. Conduct outside of work

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school, or the teaching profession, into disrepute. This covers conduct including but not limited to relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school on social media, any conduct of this nature could lead to disciplinary action.

## 13. Monitoring arrangements

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

Our governing board will ensure this code of conduct is implemented effectively, and will ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard children and deal with any concerns.

## 14. 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
- Child protection and safeguarding
- Behaviour policy
- Gifts and hospitality
- Online safety
- Whistle-blowing
- Email and home/school communications

## WORKING PRACTICES

### 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.

### **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.

### **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.

### **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)

## **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)*

## **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.

### **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)*

### **10. 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 £25.00 must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register.