

Code of Conduct for Lacewood Primary School



Approved by: Kelly Webster
(Chair of Governors)

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“Always try your best to be your best”.

Code of Conduct for Employees

1. Aims, scope and principles

As an employer, the Governing Body is required to set out a Code of Conduct for all school employees. This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all staff at Lacewood Primary School are expected to observe. 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.

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

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that the guidance provided is as detailed as possible, situations may arise which are not specifically covered in the code. Where this happens, employees are expected to use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils.

Failure to comply with the code of conduct and with the associated school policies and required reading, may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in our staff disciplinary procedures. Where clarification is needed on any aspect of this document, this should be sought from the Head teacher.

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

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 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

4. Safeguarding

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect.

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

Our safeguarding policy and procedures are available [on the staffroom board, as well as in the policies section of our school website]. All staff will be given a copy each year when the policy is updated.

4.1 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

This section is based on 'Section 1: Allegations that may meet the harm threshold' in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education. This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that anyone working in the school, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place inside or outside of school

We will deal with any such allegation quickly and in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be the headteacher, or the chair of governors where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation.

4.2 Low-level concerns about members of staff

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harm threshold, 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 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 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 safeguarding policy. This is available [in the staff room, as well as in the policies section of our school 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" to report. Examples linked to safeguarding include:

- Pupils' or staff's health and safety being put in danger
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement
- Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest

Staff are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. Their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and their confidentiality will be respected.

Staff should consider the examples above when deciding whether their concern is of a whistle-blowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or school procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

Staff should report their concern to the headteacher. If the concern is about the headteacher, or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the chair of the 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.

For our school's detailed whistle-blowing process, please refer to our whistle-blowing policy as provided by the local authority.

5. Staff-pupil relationships

Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so.

If staff members and pupils 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, 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 safeguarding policy.

6. Communication and social media

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

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

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

Staff should be aware of the school's online safety policy

7. Acceptable use of technology

Staff will not use technology in school to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.

Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school equipment for personal use, in school hours or in front of pupils. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils. Outside of these times, mobile phones should only be used in areas of the school where pupils are not present.

We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system.
(Refer to our ICT and internet acceptable use policy.)

Staff, Governors and Visitors should read and sign the 'Acceptable Use Agreement' annually. See eSafety and Data Security Policy.

8. 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.

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 staff'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 safeguarding policy.

9. Honesty and integrity

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

All school employees must comply with the schools/local authority's Financial Regulations.

Financial expenditure, on behalf of the school, should be agreed in advance and is subject to monitoring. Misuse of school finances will be considered as a matter for disciplinary/criminal action.

Declaration of gifts - Any gifts that are received, other than the exceptions, should be declared in writing to the Governing Body.

Exceptions would be

- a gift offered by parents/children to express their thanks and gratitude
- a low cost gift given to the school for the purpose of advertising a service or company, e.g. pens/diaries, do not have to be declared.

Staff will not accept bribes.

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 soon as reasonably practicable. Consideration will then be given to the nature and circumstances of the matter and whether this may have an impact on the member of staff's employment.

10. Treating other people with dignity and respect

All employees are expected to treat other colleagues, pupils and external contacts, such as parents, with dignity, fairness, equality and respect.

Unacceptable behaviour such as discrimination, bullying, harassment or intimidation will not be tolerated in school. This includes physical and verbal abuse and use of inappropriate language or unprofessional behaviour with colleagues, pupils and parents.

There are occasions, however, when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. When physical contact is made with pupils this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate given their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.

Physical contact should never be secretive or casual, or for the gratification of the adult, or for the purposes of punishment.

11. Professional behaviour and appearance

Employees must not misuse or misrepresent their position, qualifications or experience or bring the reputation of the school into disrepute. Such behaviour may lead to disciplinary action.

All employees are expected to be open and honest at all times.

All adults working with children will adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of the public and to provide a role model.

Employees should not behave in a manner which would lead others to question their suitability to work with children.

Make, or encourage others to make, unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate others.

Criminal actions - School employees must inform the Head teacher (Governing Body if the employee is the Head teacher) immediately if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution.

Dress - What is worn for work is a matter of choice for individual staff members but the choice of clothes should ensure that staff appearance is professional at all times. (Staff leading sports sessions will change in to sports-wear; again there is an expectation that professional appearance is maintained.). When choosing what is worn staff should ensure that clothing:

- 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.
- Jeans will not be worn

12. Conduct outside of 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 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 must not use social media e.g. Facebook with pupils.

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

Staff must only use their school email account or school learning platform account when communicating electronically with pupils, parents and colleagues.

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.

13. Pupil Development

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

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

13.3 Staff must follow reasonable instructions that support the development of pupils.

14. Health & Safety

Employees must adhere to the school's Health and Safety policy, procedure and guidance – each employee must ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and everyone in the school environment safe and well.

Personal health. It is wise and prudent, that if a member of staff has a health issue, i.e. asthma, then a health care plan should be drawn up so that at the very least the head teacher is aware of the problem and with permission the school first aiders are aware to ensure the well-being of all staff. Personal medication should be stored safely and securely.

- Required reading:
- School's Health and Safety Policy
- Risk assessments, held in Head teacher files

Use of alcohol and illegal drugs

- The use of illegal drugs or alcohol during working hours is unacceptable.
- All employees are expected to attend school in a fit state to work.

15. 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

All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a pupil is bullied by another pupil (or by a member of staff), 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.

However, staff have an obligation to share with their manager and the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead on 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.

All employees at the school and the Governing Body come into contact with a significant volume of data and information in relation to pupils, staff, school activities and many other matters. There is an obligation to observe the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Under the Data Protection Act, staff are required to collect, maintain and dispose of sensitive or personal data in a responsible manner. Use must be made of the schools shredder.

Staff should not disclose sensitive information about the school, its employees, children, parents or the local authority to third parties.

- Exceptions would be the necessary disclosure of suspected/alleged abuse of a pupil to Designated Safeguarding Lead; discussion with a person accompanying or representing an employee in a formal meeting or disclosure under the Whistleblowing Procedure.
- Where employees are asked for school information outside the school environment, this request should be referred back to the school and/or a meeting arranged in school to discuss the matter.
- All media communication must be directed to the Head teacher.
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Staff must provide data to parents seeking information about pupil progress or other colleagues in the school/transfer destinations.

16. Disciplinary Action

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

17. Declaration of interests

An employee is required to declare any associations with a group or an organisation which could be considered to conflict with the ethos of the school.

Employees should also consider carefully whether they need to declare to the school any relationship with any individual(s) which might cause a conflict with school activities. (e.g. a relationship with a Governor, another staff member or a contractor who provides services to the school)

Failure to make a relevant declaration of interests is a breach of trust – if in doubt seek advice!

All declarations should be submitted on a school Register of Business Interests form.

18. Probity of records

Staff are expected to maintain pupil tracking and progress records which are accurate
The deliberate falsification of documents is not acceptable.

19. Monitoring arrangements

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

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.

20. Links with other policies

This policy links with our policies on:

- Staff disciplinary procedures, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct. It also sets out examples of what we will deem as misconduct and gross misconduct
- Staff grievance procedures
- Safeguarding Policy
- Online safety
- Whistle-blowing

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.
- dress 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.

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

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.

Copyright

- Employees are required to adhere to the guidance on copyright. This is referred to in the ICT computing policy and adheres to copyright of published materials and Music.