

The Federation of Golden Flatts and Lynnfield Primary Schools  
Staff Code of Conduct: 2021 - 22

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## 1. Introduction

As employees of Hartlepool Council, all staff are obliged to follow the Hartlepool Borough Council's Code of Conduct which is available on the HBC website. It is based on well-established principles of the conduct that should be displayed by those involved in public service and equally the high expectations that are placed on public servants in the delivery of services.

Employees have responsibilities to ensure that they are courteous, efficient and impartial in the delivery of services to our community. Fairness and impartiality should also be reflected in your dealings with contractors, sub-contractors and suppliers.

The Federation of Golden Flatts and Lynnfield Primary School's code of conduct mirrors many aspects of the council's code, but with particular reference to elements specifically relevant to working in an educational establishment.

We expect all pupils to receive high-quality teaching and learning in a positive and respectful environment.

Employees at both schools should understand that their own behaviour, and the manner in which they conduct themselves with their colleagues, pupils, parents and other stakeholders, sets an example.

We recognise that the majority of staff members act appropriately and treat each other with dignity and respect; however, we consider it important to clarify the expected standards.

This policy forms part of a staff member's contract of employment and failure to comply with it, and with the associated school policies, may result in disciplinary action being taken, including legal action where this is warranted.

This document applies to all staff members who are:

- Employed by the school, including the Executive Headteacher and volunteers.
- Employed in units or bases that are attached to the school.

This document does not apply to:

- Peripatetic staff members who are centrally employed by the LA.
- Employees of external contractors.

These employees are governed by their employment contracts and any relevant laws pertaining to their activities within the school, for example, the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

## 2. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- The Education Act 2002
- The Children Act 1989
- The Working Time Regulations 1998 (as amended)
- Sexual Offences Act 2003

This policy also has due regard to statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2018) 'Staffing and employment advice for schools'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies and documents:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies
- Health and Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Staff Leave of Absence Policies
- Whistle Blowing Policy and Procedure
- Mental Health and Behaviour Policy (including physical intervention)
- E-safety Policy
- Digital Images Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy

## 3. Purpose, scope and principles

The following Code has been drawn up with a view to reducing the risk of staff being accused of improper or unprofessional conduct in all aspects of their work. It aims to help staff work safely and professionally and clarify what behaviour constitutes safe practice and what is unacceptable and/or illegal.

The Code cannot cover every eventuality, its purpose being to show the standard expected of employees, but it does not replace the general requirements of the law.

The Code refers closely to the DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2021 and applies to **all** adults working in schools whatever their position, roles or responsibilities including volunteers.

The Code is predominantly geared towards safe working practices for the protection of children and in this connection should be read in conjunction with each school's suite of Safeguarding Policies including the Reporting Low Level Safeguarding Concerns Policy which is considered to be an addendum to the Staff Code of Conduct. However, the Code

also encompasses other general aspects of conduct expected within each school in our federation.

The Teachers Standards are specific to teachers - Part 2 of the Teacher's standards reference the requirements of personal and professional conduct for teachers. The Professional Standards for Teaching Assistants references the requirements of personal and professional conduct as its first of four key themes while theme 4 'Working with others' highlights the importance of information sharing and collaborative practices.

#### **4. General obligations**

Staff should understand the responsibilities that are an intrinsic part of their employment or role. They should make a professional judgement about their actions and behaviour and seek to avoid conduct, which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation or intentions. If there is an incident where staff feel there may be a concern, they should discuss the circumstances that informed their action, or their proposed action with a senior colleague, to help ensure that the safest practices are employed and the risk of actions being misinterpreted reduced. Records should be made of any incidents and decisions made or further actions agreed, with their justifications, in accordance with school policy.

All staff should know the designated person for child protection, be familiar with local child protection arrangements and understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children and young people.

Staff should understand their responsibility to voice any general concerns that they might have about practice within the school, in accordance with the Whistle Blowing Policy and Procedure.

Staff should also be aware of and comply with the school's financial and administrative regulations and policy.

Unlawful, unsafe or inappropriate behaviour may result in disciplinary action being taken.

The following Code and guidelines set out specific areas of conduct and behaviour that constitute expected and safe practice. If staff are in any doubt about any aspect of this guidance or need to seek further clarification about a particular situation in the absence of specific guidance, they are advised to speak to a member of the Federation Strategic Team.

### Features of our safer culture:



Staff who work in our schools can expect -

- An open, honest with no secrets approach
- All staff to believe that 'it could happen here' and therefore are vigilant
- Clear staff behaviour and safe working practice guidelines
- Clear procedures for reporting low level concerns
- A whistleblowing procedure that staff understand and are confident in using
- Support in raising concerns and a commitment to take action
- Commitment to safeguarding and ongoing culture of vigilance
- Policies and procedures that are put into practice
- Good use of induction and probationary periods

We have robust procedures in place to deal with allegation against staff. Key information on the way in which we would support and deal with Allegations against staff and Low level concerns, is shown below full details can be found within the Allegation against staff policy and the Reporting low level safeguarding concerns policy.

#### **Allegations against staff**

- 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 risk of harm to children.
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

**Harm threshold met – refer to LADO**

#### **Low level concerns**

Concerns that are inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including

- Inappropriate conduct outside of work; and/or
- Does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

**Harm threshold not met – follow in-house low level concerns procedure**

## 5. Safeguarding

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 (KCSIE), staff members have a responsibility to safeguard pupils, and protect and promote their welfare.

Staff members have a responsibility to ensure that they provide a learning environment in which pupils feel safe, secure and respected.

To effectively safeguard pupils, staff members are required to follow the procedures outlined in this Staff Code of Conduct, the Behavioural Policy and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, ensuring that they do not act in a way that may put pupils at risk of harm, or lead others to question their actions.

In accordance with the school's Mental Health and Behaviour Policy, Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Policy, staff members will be prepared to identify pupils who may be subject to, or at risk of, various types of abuse and neglect, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Peer-on-peer abuse
- Serious violence
- FGM
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Child criminal exploitation (CCE)
- Bullying; this includes cyberbullying, and prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying

Copies of policies and a copy of Part one (or Annex A for staff members not working directly with children) of KCSIE will be provided to staff at induction. Staff will have a clear understanding of the school's policies and procedures with regards to safeguarding issues, e.g. abuse, and the important role they play in preventing harm against pupils.

In accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies, staff will also be aware of the factors that could increase a pupil's risk of being subject to safeguarding issues, including but not limited to:

- Pupils who need a social worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans)
- Pupils with a family support worker (families accessing Early Help)
- Pupils requiring mental health support
- LAC and previously LAC
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who identify as LGBTQ+
- Pupils perceived to be LGBTQ+
- Pupils struggling with mental health needs
- Pupils who have a family member in prison, or who are affected by parental offending

- Pupils that are frequently absent or permanently excluded from school

If a staff member identifies a pupil who is subject to, or at risk of, abuse and neglect, they will follow the necessary reporting and referral procedures outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies. Staff will be aware of the procedures to follow if a pupil tells them they are experiencing abuse, exploitation or neglect.

In all cases, if a staff member feels unsure as to whether an incident or pupil would be classed as a safeguarding concern, they will speak directly to the DSL. Staff will not assume a colleague will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe.

Staff will understand that even if there are no reports of peer-on-peer abuse in the school, this does not mean it is not happening. Staff will report any concerns regarding any form of abuse to the DSL without undue delay. Staff will understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers that are abusive in nature.

Any staff member that has concerns about another staff member's (including volunteers and supply staff) actions or intent, or believes these actions may lead to a pupil being put at risk of harm, will report this in line with the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy, Reporting Low Level Safeguarding Concerns Policy or the Whistleblowing Policy immediately so appropriate action can be taken.

Upskirting is not tolerated by the school and any incidents of upskirting must be reported to the DSL who will decide on the next steps to take, which may include involving the police.

If a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with the school, they will use other whistleblowing channels, including contacting the NSPCC's helpline on 0800 028 0285 (between the hours of 8:00am and 8:00pm Monday to Friday) or email address [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk). Staff members can also access guidance at [www.gov.uk/whistleblowing](http://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing). Fear about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.

If the concern is regarding the Executive Headteacher, staff will report this to the Chair of the Governing Body.

Staff will partake in the appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, which will include online safety; additionally, staff will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates at least annually.

Staff will recognise that, when teaching pupils about safeguarding and online safety, a one-size-fits-all approach may not be appropriate for every pupil, and a more personalised or contextualised approach may be needed for pupils who are vulnerable, victims of abuse and/or have SEND.

Staff will be aware of their local early help process and understand their role in it. Staff will also be aware of the process for making referrals to children's social care service (CSCS) and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, along with the role they may be expected to play in such assessments.

Staff will reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe by the school. Staff will never give the impression that pupils are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment, nor should a pupil ever be made to feel ashamed for reporting an incident.

Staff will be aware that confidentiality must never be promised to a pupil – staff will understand the procedure for if a pupil discloses a potential safeguarding issue, in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies.

Staff will be aware of the school's legal duty to refer anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm to, a child or vulnerable adult to the DBS – this includes where:

- The harm test is satisfied in respect of that individual.
- The individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence, or if there is reason to believe that the individual has committed a listed relevant offence.
- The individual has been removed from working in regulated activity or would have been removed if they had not left their post.

## **6. Safeguarding**

The Governors of The Federation of Golden Flatts and Lynnfield Primary Schools have a legal duty under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by creating and maintaining a safe learning environment.

In this regard, all school staff have a duty to keep children and young people safe and protect them from harm. Staff should ensure that they do not put themselves in situations in which allegations of abuse or inappropriate behaviour could be made.

### **i. Infatuations**

In cases where a young person develops an infatuation, there is a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against staff. Staff should report to a member of the SLT, any clear/apparent indications (whether they are verbal, written or physical), that suggest a pupil may be infatuated with them and respond sensitively to such situations in order to maintain the dignity of all parties.

### **ii. Social contact**

Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils to secure or strengthen a friendship. This includes giving any personal details to a pupil such as a home/mobile phone number, home or email address. Only in exceptional circumstances can this be with the prior approval of a senior member of staff. Staff should always approve any planned social contact with pupils with a senior member of staff, for example, when it is part of a reward scheme or pastoral care programme. Staff should advise senior leaders of any

regular social contact they have with a pupil, where it is apparent that it may give rise to a concern.

iii. Physical contact

It is unrealistic to suggest that teachers should never touch pupils. There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, such as when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance or as an integral part of some lessons such as PE and music (see also behaviour management, section).

However, innocent actions and appropriate physical contact can be misconstrued and it is therefore crucial that staff only initiate physical contact for the minimum time necessary and in ways appropriate to their own role and the needs of the child.

Staff should use their professional judgement at all times. Where feasible, staff should seek the child's permission before initiating contact. Where a member of staff thinks that an incident could have been misinterpreted it should be reported to the Executive Headteacher.

Any formally agreed plan for children with SEN or physical disabilities should be understood and agreed by all concerned and staff should be provided with relevant information about vulnerable pupils in their care, for staff to be able to undertake tasks appropriately.

Extra caution may also be required where it is known that a child has suffered previous abuse or neglect. Many such children are often needy and seek out inappropriate contact, thereby leading staff to be vulnerable to allegations of abuse.

In this regard, staff should:

- be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described;
- never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent;
- always explain to a pupil the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take;
- look at alternatives, where it is anticipated that a pupil might misinterpret contact and consider involving another member of staff, or a less vulnerable pupil in a demonstration;
- never indulge in horseplay, tickling or fun fights;
- always tell a colleague when and how they offered comfort to a distressed child and record any situations, where they think they may give rise to concern;
- adhere to the school's Mental Health and Behaviour Policy and be acquainted with DfES Guidance in respect of physical contact with pupils and meeting the medical needs of children and young people in school.

iv. Showers and Changing

Children are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes or taking a shower. However, there does need to be an appropriate level of supervision to safeguard young people and satisfy health and safety considerations. Any supervision must therefore be appropriate to the needs and age of the young people concerned.

Staff should:-

- avoid any physical contact when children are in a state of undress or any visually intrusive behaviour where there are changing rooms
- should announce their intention of entering a changing room and avoid remaining in the room unless pupil needs require it
- not change in the same place as or shower with children

v. Behaviour Management and Physical Intervention

Corporal punishment is unlawful in all schools and physical force should never be used as a form of punishment; to do so is likely to constitute a criminal offence. However, in some circumstances, staff in schools have the right to use physical intervention/reasonable force for the shortest period necessary to control or restrain pupils. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 provides the legal power for school staff to use reasonable force to prevent pupils from committing a crime or causing injury, damage or disruption.

Staff should:-

- try to defuse situations before they escalate
- keep parents informed
- adhere to the Mental Health and Behaviour Policy (including the use of reasonable force)
- In the event of the use of physical intervention staff are too ensure that the appropriate records are completed in a timely manner.

Where it is identified that staff may be called on to use physical intervention they will have received appropriate training.

vi. Sexual Contact with Children and Curriculum Issues

It is a criminal offence for any adult in a position of trust to engage in any form of sexual activity with a young person under 18, even with their consent (Sexual Offences Act 2003). This also includes non-contact activities such as causing children to engage in or watch sexual activity.

There may be occasions when, as part of the curriculum, a teacher has to raise subject matter that is sexually explicit. In such situations, any lesson plan should highlight the areas of risk and sensitivity. Staff should respond to questions with careful judgement and avoid entering into inappropriate or offensive discussions about sexual activity.

In this regard, staff should not:-

- use their status and standing to form or promote relationships with children, which are of a sexual nature
- pursue sexual relationships with children and young people either in or out of school

- enter into or encourage inappropriate or offensive discussion about sexual activity
- make sexual remarks to a pupil (including email, text messages, phone or letter), or use any communication which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative
- discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of pupils
- confer special attention and favour upon a child which might be misconstrued as being part of a 'grooming' process.

vii. One to One Situations and Overnight Supervision

When staff work regularly on an individual basis with children, they are generally more vulnerable to allegations. To avoid such situations arising, meetings should, wherever possible, be arranged so that staff are visible and/or audible and not in secluded areas of the school.

Staff should not arrange to meet a pupil away from the school premises without good reason, but if this is necessary, only with the expressed approval of parents and a senior member of staff.

Staff should: -

- ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in one to one situations;
- inform other staff of the meeting beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by;
- avoid the use of 'engaged' or equivalent signs wherever possible, as they may create an opportunity for secrecy or the interpretation of secrecy;
- always report to a senior colleague any situation which gives rise to complaint, disagreement or misunderstanding or where a child becomes distressed or angry.

viii. Transporting Children

In such cases where children need to be transported between different locations, a designated member of staff should be appointed to plan and provide oversight of all arrangements. Wherever practicable, an adult additional to the driver should act as an escort and all arrangements agreed with relevant parties in advance.

All staff: -

- should avoid using private vehicles wherever possible;
- must ensure that they have the appropriate insurance (for business use) where they do have to use their private vehicle;
- should ensure that they are alone with a child for the minimum time possible;
- should be aware that the safety and welfare of the child is their responsibility until this is safely passed over to a parent/carer;
- should report the nature of the journey, the route and expected time of arrival in accordance with agreed procedures;

- should ensure that their behaviour and all arrangements ensure vehicle, passenger and driver safety, taking into account any specific needs that the child may have.
- ix. Educational Visits and After School Clubs  
Staff should always take care to have another adult present during out of school activities, unless otherwise agreed with senior staff. Health and safety requirements should be strictly adhered to.  
Staff should ensure that they display professional behaviour during activities that take place off the school site and ensure that their behaviour cannot be interpreted as seeking to establish an inappropriate relationship or friendship. Staff should therefore maintain a professional relationship with pupils at all times.
- x. Out of School Activities Include Overnight Stays  
Particular consideration should be given to sleeping arrangements, if applicable and pupils, staff and parents informed of the arrangements in advance. In this regard, staff should therefore:-
- undertake risk assessments
  - have parental consent to the activity
  - ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times.
- xi. First Aid and Administration of Medication  
In cases where first aid or medication needs to be administered, all staff should adhere to the school's Administration of Medication Policy. A health care plan should be drawn up in circumstances where the child needs to take regular medication and any such agreement between the child, parents/ carers and the school must be negotiated, agreed and recorded. Where possible, children should be encouraged to administer the medication themselves, with the permission of parents.  
Staff should: -
- make other staff aware of the task being undertaken
  - explain to the child what is happening.
- xii. Supporting Children with Medical Conditions  
A care plan should be drawn up and agreed with parents for all children, including those with special needs, who require care on a regular basis. In this regard staff should:-
- Adhere to the school's Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy and guidelines
  - make other staff aware of the task being undertaken
  - explain to the child what is happening
  - consult with colleagues where any variation from the agreed procedure or care plan is necessary and record the justification, sharing the information with parents.
- xiii. Photography, Videos and Other Creative Arts

Many school activities involve recording images, but the use of such images needs careful consideration and handling. In particular, children who may have been abused in this way may feel threatened by the use of photography and filming.

The use of any images of children for publicity purposes will also require the appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their legal guardians.

Staff should therefore:-

- be clear about the purpose of the activity and about what will happen to the photographs when the lesson or activity is concluded;
- ensure consent is gained from the pupil and their legal guardians where being used for publicity purposes;
- ensure that a senior member of staff is aware that the photography/image equipment is being used and for what purpose;
- ensure that all images are available for scrutiny in order to screen for acceptability;
- be able to justify images of children in their possession;
- never use mobile phones to take images;
- ensure that the school's GDPR policy and guidelines are adhered to regarding the purpose and storage of photographic and video images;
- avoid making images in one to one situations.

xiv. Internet Use

Accessing child pornography or indecent images of children on the computer is illegal. Under no circumstances should adults in schools access inappropriate images on the internet. The same rule applies to the use of the school's equipment by members of staff at home, e.g. use of laptops. Staff should follow the school's Information Governance Policy and the Acceptable Use Policy.

## 7. Health and safety

Staff members will:

- Be familiar with and adhere to the school's Health and Safety Policy and ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and everyone in the school environment safe and well.
- Comply with health and safety regulations and use any safety equipment and protective clothing which is supplied to them.
- Comply with hygiene requirements.
- Comply with accident reporting requirements.
- Inform the Executive Headteacher of any paid work which is undertaken elsewhere, for compliance with The Working Time Regulations 1998 (as amended).

## 8. Honesty, propriety and integrity

The Public are entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from school staff, governors and volunteers and to have trust and confidence in their integrity.

All adults working with children and young people are in a position of trust in relation to the individuals in their care. Staff are expected to adopt high standards of personal integrity and conduct and behave in such a way that does not compromise their position both within or outside of school. All adults working at either Golden Flatts Primary School or Lynnfield Primary School must also act with the utmost good faith with regard to their duties and responsibilities of the school and not do anything which may adversely affect its reputation.

The Teacher's Standards also sets out the minimum professional standards for the regulation of the teaching profession and recognises that 'professionalism involves using judgement over appropriate standards of personal behaviour'.

Staff should not:-

- behave in a manner, which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or act as a role model;
- use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine pupils
- make (or encourage others to make) unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate other individuals or might be interpreted as such

#### **9. Professional behaviour and conduct**

Staff members are expected to treat other colleagues, pupils, parents, and external contacts with dignity and respect.

The use of foul and abusive language will not be tolerated.

Discrimination, bullying, harassment or intimidation, including physical, sexual and verbal abuse, will not be tolerated.

Staff members will not misuse or misrepresent their position, qualifications or experience, or bring the school into disrepute.

Staff members will inform the Executive Headteacher if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution.

Staff will be aware that professional behaviour and conduct is expected to be extended to extra-curricular trips and visits too. All staff attending a trip or visits will act in accordance with this policy.

Staff will act appropriately in terms of the views they express (in particular political views) and the use of school resources at all times and will not use school resources for party political purposes.

#### **10. Public duty and private interest**

It is important that staff do not put themselves in a position where their duty to school and their private interests conflict.

Staff should not:-

- allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work and the provision of a balanced and professional service, ensuring that they work to the professional standard required.
- be involved in an appointment or decisions relating to discipline, promotion or pay adjustments for any individual who is a relative or with whom they are in a close personal relationship. All relationships of a business or private nature with external contractors, or potential contractors should be made known to the Executive Headteacher.

### **11. Other employment**

Any external work that staff undertake must not bring The Federation of Golden Flatts and Lynnfield Primary Schools into disrepute or conflict with the school's interest.

Any copyright created by a member of staff during their employment at Golden Flatts Primary School or Lynnfield Primary School becomes the property of the school.

Staff should not set up a business or accept employment with a business that is engaged in work, which is in direct competition with either Golden Flatts Primary School or Lynnfield Primary School.

Private work should not be undertaken in the school's time, or using the schools premises or equipment, without prior approval of the Executive Headteacher.

All staff involved in appointments and/or tendering process should ensure that these are made on the basis of merit alone.

### **12. Confidentiality and information disclosure**

Each school in our federation has a publication scheme which outlines the category of information to which the public have access under the Freedom of Information Act, 2000. However, you should not allow either Golden Flatts or Lynnfield access to information given to you in confidence or which you believe is of a confidential nature, unless you have authorisation for disclosure. You also need to be aware of personal data which is subject to the Data Protection Act, 1998.

Staff :-

- should not use any information obtained in the course of their duties to the detriment of either Golden Flatts Primary School or Lynnfield Primary School for personal gain or benefit or pass this information on to others who might use it in such a way.
- should not use their position to gain access to information for their own advantage or to intimidate, humiliate or embarrass a child
- are expected to treat any information they receive about children and young people in a discreet and confidential manner
- need to be cautious when passing on information to others about a child/young person and if in any doubt about sharing information, seek the advice of a senior member of staff, or those with designated child protection responsibilities.

- must also take all reasonable steps to ensure that the loss, destruction, inaccuracy or disclosure of information does not occur as a result of their actions, including information relating to school business and pupil data

There are some circumstances in which staff may be expected to share information about a child, for example, when child protection issues arise. In such cases staff have a duty to pass information on without delay in line with local procedures. If staff are in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential they should seek guidance from a senior manager or person with designated child protection responsibilities.

### **13. Data protection and confidentiality**

Regarding personal and sensitive data, staff members are required, under the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, to:

- Consider the legal basis for collecting the data, ensuring that this is documented.
- Ensure that the data is stored on a GDPR-compliant server, and that the data is not held for any longer than necessary.
- Securely dispose of the data when the relevant retention period ends.

Staff members will not disclose sensitive information about the school, its employees or the LA to other parties.

The only exception whereby it is acceptable for a staff member to disclose information that would otherwise be considered confidential is when the confidential information gives rise to concerns about the safety or welfare of a pupil.

Staff members have the right to request access to data that is held about them. Such requests will be made to the headteacher in writing in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy.

### **14. Probity of records**

The deliberate falsification of documents, such as references, academic qualifications or legal documents, is unacceptable. Where a staff member falsifies records or other documents, including those held electronically, this will be regarded as a serious disciplinary matter and potentially a criminal offence.

### **15. Sharing information including the use of Social Networking Sites**

Staff shall:

- Behave responsibly and professionally at all times in connection with the use of social networking sites;
- Co-operate with management in ensuring the implementation of this policy.
- Be responsible for all contents/ comments on their own site
- Ensure all security settings are set at an appropriate level
- Be familiar with the School's Information Governance Policy, GDPR Policy and GDPR guidance

For employees' own security all communication via social networking sites should be made with the awareness that anything said, shown or received could be made available,

intentionally or otherwise, to an audience wider than that originally intended. It is therefore advised that staff follow the following procedures:

- Staff must adhere to the Information Governance Policy and Social Networking Policy in relation to accessing social networking sites for personal use via school information systems or using school equipment;
- Staff must not accept pupils as friends – personal communication could be considered inappropriate and unprofessional and makes staff vulnerable to allegations;
- Friendship with parents although not disallowed, can make themselves and other staff members vulnerable to comments and gossip which can be detrimental to their wellbeing;
- Staff are advised not to be friends with recent pupils. The potential for staff to be compromised in terms of wall content and open to accusations makes the risk not worth taking;
- Staff should not place inappropriate photographs on any social network space;
- Staff should not post indecent remarks
- If a member of staff receives messages on his/her social networking profile that they think could be from a pupil, or becomes exposed to any information that relates to the School or another member of staff, they must report it to their Line Manager/Executive Headteacher and contact the internet service or social networking provider so that they can investigate and take the appropriate action;
- Staff should not write about their place of work/ colleagues and pupils. Should a member of staff do so he/she will be in breach of this policy
- Staff must not disclose information or work such as lesson plans, presentations, project work etc. that could be considered to be the intellectual property of the School;
- Staff must not disclose any information that is confidential to the school or disclose personal data or information about any individual/colleague/pupil, which could be in breach of the Data Protection Act;
- Staff must not disclose any information about the school/Local Authority that is not yet in the public arena;
- Under no circumstances should staff post photographs of pupils
- Staff should not make defamatory remarks about the school/colleagues/pupils or the Local Authority or post anything that could potentially bring the school/Local Authority into disrepute
- Staff should not disclose confidential information relating to his/her employment at the school or indicate any political allegiances;
- Care should be taken to avoid using language which could be deemed as offensive, derogatory or inappropriate to others;
- Staff should not post information or comments or engage in any discussions that could be interpreted as bullying, harassment or discrimination of any description;
- Staff should not join any online groups that could be considered to condone or promote inappropriate behaviours or post inappropriate content.

## **16. Equality**

All staff should:-

- adhere to the schools Equal Opportunities Policy, in addition to the requirements of the law;
- not discriminate in recruitment and employment practices, or in the delivery of services;
- ensure that in their dealings with parents and other members of the public, there is the provision of an efficient and impartial delivery to all individuals.

## **17. Staff dress code**

The school expects that staff members will be smartly dressed and with minimal piercings on show. This will include:

- Ensuring that their appearance is clean and neat when at work or representing the school.
- Dressing in a manner that is appropriate to their role.
- Ensure that footwear is suitable for their role, flip flops are not to be worn.
- Staff are permitted to wear denim jeans on PD days, however, denim jeans are not appropriate day to day school wear.
- Staff should remember that they are role models for pupils, and that their dress and appearance should reflect this.
- Cover any tattoos or body art that are not on extremities such as hands, feet or wrists.

## **18. Financial inducements, gifts, hospitality and sponsorship**

Staff should:-

- ensure that they use public funds entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner and that they do not give or receive any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage, which might be misinterpreted;
- Staff should not seek or receive preferential rates for themselves by virtue of their dealings on behalf of the school;
- Staff should ensure that gifts are declared if they are received;
- Staff should generally only give gifts to an individual young person as part of an agreed reward system.
- Although staff should not give or receive gifts from pupils or parents on a regular basis or of any significant value, it is acceptable however for staff to receive small tokens of appreciation, such as at Christmas time or the end of the academic year. Where staff do give gifts, they should ensure that they are of insignificant value and given to all children equally.

## **19. Use of School Time and Facilities**

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

## **20. Publication of Books/Articles**

If staff want to publish books, articles, letters, dissertations etc. that they have written in connection with their duties and in which they describe themselves as holding an appointment within either Golden Flatts or Lynnfield Primary School, they must first consult with the Executive Headteacher.

## **21. Acceptable use of technology**

Staff will adhere to the procedures outlined in the school's Online Safety Policy and Acceptable Use Policy at all times.

Staff will be aware of how the use of technology can impact safeguarding and wellbeing issues, e.g. online abuse. Staff will be vigilant to ensure their own behaviour is respectful and that pupils are using technology appropriately while under their care.

Staff are required to employ the highest security settings on any personal profiles they may have.

Staff will not engage in inappropriate use of social networking sites including contacting pupils or their family members, accepting or inviting friend requests from pupils or their family members, or following pupils or their family members on social media.

The school understands that some staff members are also parents of pupils at the school and, therefore, may wish to contact other parents. When doing so, staff will exercise their professional judgement and will not contact family members on social media if this would lead to a conflict of interest.

Staff will remain mindful of their use of social media and their web-based presence including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed directly or indirectly which may bring themselves, the school or the school community into disrepute.

Staff should not make or receive personal calls during the working day when children are present. All personal mobile devices should be stored securely with the member of staff's personal belongings. Staff are permitted to use their phones in their designated staff room areas at lunch or breaktime when children are not present. In certain exceptional circumstances there may be times when staff members are required to take personal calls. Where possible this should take place at a prearranged time and a Leave of Absence form should be completed so the SLT can make appropriate cover arrangements. In these circumstances the member of the SLT who arranges the cover will also identify an appropriate place where the call can be taken. During the working day any other personal calls to members of staff should be made via the school office. In these exceptional circumstances the office staff will either: pass on a message to the member of staff or arrange for the member of staff to be covered so they can take the call.

If a member of staff is involved in social media groups such as WhatsApp they do not make comments or share posts that are inflammatory, derogatory or personal in nature that could be viewed as bringing the name of the school or individuals into disrepute. Staff should be mindful that their social media activity could form part of a disciplinary or legal investigation and result in action being taken.

## **22. Attendance**

The school expects that staff members will:

- Attend work in accordance with their contract of employment and associated terms and conditions in relation to hours, days of work and holidays.
- Make routine medical and dental appointments outside of their working hours or during holidays where possible.
- Refer to the school's Staff Attendance Procedures if they need time off for any reason other than personal illness.
- Follow the school's absence reporting procedure when they are absent from work due to illness or injury.

**23. Document review and monitoring**

This document will be reviewed annually by the Executive Headteacher.

**Review Date: August 2021**

**Reviewed by: S. Sharpe**

**Approved by Governors:**

**Next Review Date: August 2022**

**Declaration of receipt**

I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct and Guidelines for Safe Working Practice and understand that any unlawful or unsafe behaviour could lead to appropriate legal or disciplinary action being taken.

Name: .....

Signature: .....

Date: .....

Please return this slip to Mrs S. Sharpe as soon as possible.

**School policies Referenced in the Staff Code of Conduct**

- Safer recruitment in schools Policy and Procedure
- Social Networking Policy and Procedure
- Data Protection Policies and Guidance
- Mental Health and Behaviour Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Peer on Peer Abuse Policy
- Reporting Low Level Safeguarding Concerns Policy
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy and Information
- Administration of Medication Policy
- Support for Children with Medical Conditions Policy
- Complaints Procedure - Aims to ensure that any allegations are dealt with fairly, consistently and quickly and in a way that provides protection for the child, whilst supporting the person who is the subject of the allegation.
- Whistleblowing Policy - This policy provides the framework by which staff can voice their concerns in good faith about practice within the school, without fear of repercussion and in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

### Further reference documents

- DfE document *Keeping Children Safe in Education* September 2021
- DfE document *'Working Together to Safeguard Children'* 2018
- *Education and Inspections Act 2006* - Forbids corporal punishment, but allows all teachers to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others, damaging property, acting in a way that is counter to maintaining good order and discipline at the school. Also provides legal right to confiscate items such as mobile phones and music players.
- *Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006* - Allows Headteachers (or other school staff who have been authorised by the Executive Headteacher) to undertake searches of pupils where they suspect they are carrying a knife or other offensive weapon).
- *Teachers standards*
- Teaching Assistants Standards
- DfE *What to Do if you are Worried that a Child is Being Abused* 2015
- *Education Act 2002 (section 175)* - Schools should exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- *Children Act 1989* Recognises that the identification and investigation of child abuse together with the protection and support of victims requires multi-agency collaboration
- *Children Act 2004* Duty on all agencies to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- *Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998* Gives legislative protection for 'whistle blowers' where there is a qualifying disclosure.
- *Sexual Offences Act 2003* A criminal offence for any adult in a position of trust to engage in any form of sexual activity with a young person under 18, even with their consent.