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**Headteacher: Mrs N Gosling**

## **STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT**

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. It gives clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school staff are expected to observe, and the school should notify staff of this code and the expectations therein.

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 all support staff, governors and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards.

We strive to demonstrate the school values of love, respect, kindness, forgiveness, resilience and honesty as we live out the School's Christian vision – Aspire and grow together.

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.

### **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 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.

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

This code refers to and complements other policies and guidance including those on:

- child protection
- whistle blowing
- e-safety

## General obligations

Staff set an example to pupils 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. All communication and interaction between members staff, children, parents, carers and visitors must reflect our school values.

All staff must:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within
- provide a good example and a positive role model to pupils, colleagues and the wider school community
- speak with courtesy and treat pupils, parents and carers and colleagues with due professional trust, dignity and respect
- be aware of the effect their own behaviour can have on others.
- support anyone in the school community if they experience bullying<sup>1</sup>, harassment<sup>2</sup> or singling out
- challenge inappropriate behaviour
- act in a fair and transparent way
- maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- 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
- express personal beliefs in a way that will not overly influence pupils, and will not exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- not make sarcastic remarks or 'jokes' that are personal, sexual, racist, discriminatory, intimidating or otherwise offensive
- not demean, embarrass, humiliate or undermine pupils, their parents or carers, or colleagues
- not discriminate favourably or unfavourably towards any child or young person
- never build 'special' relationships or conferring favour on a particular child or young person
- avoid using inappropriate or offensive language.

## Safeguarding pupils

All adults working in Charlton-on-Otmoor CofE Primary School should know the name of the Designated Safeguarding Leads, be familiar with local child protection arrangements and understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children and young people.

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 initiative, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

Staff are provided with personal copies of the school's Child Protection Policy and Whistleblowing Procedure and staff must be familiar with these documents. These are also available in the staff room and from the school office, as well as in the policies section of our school website.

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpts from the Department for Education guidance on Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

<sup>2</sup> Department for Education guidance on the Equality Act 2010 gives the following example of harassment: A teacher must not shout at a pupil when a disability means that the pupil is constantly struggling with class-work or unable to concentrate.

Staff behaviour should:

- reflect the child's welfare is paramount (Children Act 1989)
- include all reasonable steps to protect children from physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect
- demonstrate awareness of the Prevent initiative
- avoid of any conduct which would lead a reasonable person to question their motivation or intentions
- ensure that relationships with children or young people remain on a professional footing
- when concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves or another member of staff and a pupil may be misinterpreted, report this to the headteacher
- ensure time spent one-to-one with a pupil takes place in a public place that others can access, others can see into the room and a colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

## **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,
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child,
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
- 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.

## **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 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 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 in the staff room and from the school office, 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.

## Whistle-blowing

Whistle-blowing reports wrongdoing that it is “in the public interest” to report. 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.

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.

## 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 child protection and safeguarding policy.

## 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 must also not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the

school, school community or employer into disrepute. Staff should be also aware of the school's online safety policy.

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

### Acceptable use of technology

Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others.

Staff must:

- only use their school email account or school learning platform account when communicating electronically with pupils, parents and colleagues.
- 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. We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system.
- take any photograph/video must be using school equipment.
- only save images on school computers.
- not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils unless agreed in advance.
- not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school equipment for personal use, in school hours or in front of pupils.

Staff should be aware of the school's e-safety policy. We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system.

### Honesty and integrity

Staff must maintain the highest 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 staff must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to the Headteacher, or to the Chair of Governors if the Headteacher is the recipient, with the exception of "one off" token gifts from students or parents. Personal gifts from individual members of staff to students are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted.

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
- Health

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.

### Dress code

Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner. Clothes will not display any offensive or political slogans and will not be overly revealing.

## Conduct outside 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. In particular, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable and could lead to dismissal. Staff must not make negative comments about the school on social media.

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. All members of staff must declare any business interests outside of school that may be connected either to the supply of goods / services to the school or be rewarded through association with the school.

## 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 with the appropriate role and authority to deal with the matter. This information will never be:

- disclosed to anyone without the relevant authority
- discussed outside the school except when involving agencies in line with the child protection policy
- discussed with colleagues in the school except with those with responsibility for the matter.
- 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 is at risk of harm. Staff must never promise a pupil that they will not act on information that they are told by the pupil.

## Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every two years, but can be revised as needed. It will be ratified by the full governing board. Our governing board will ensure this code of conduct is implemented effectively and staff will be required to sign the Statutory School Policies and Procedures each September to confirm they have read, understood and had the opportunity to ask questions about the Staff Code of Conduct.

The governing body will also ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard children and deal with any concerns.

<b>Approved by:</b>	Nadia Gosling	<b>Date:</b> September 2023
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<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	September 2023
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<b>Next review due by:</b>	September 2025
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