



*Together Everyone
Achieves More*

Staff/Volunteers Code of Conduct

St Patrick's Primary School Portlough

Policy No:	10		
Date Ratified:	Sept 2018		
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Who is Code of Conduct for?

1. This Code of Conduct is primarily for the School Staff, Volunteers and Management. It may also be of interest to parents/carers and relevant authorities such as the Education Authority, Department for Education and the Catholic Council for Maintained Schools.

What is the Code of Conduct for?

2. This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school staff and volunteers are expected to observe. School staff and volunteers are role models and are in a unique position of influence and trust and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the pupils/students within the school. As a member of a school community, each person has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside working hours.
3. This Code of Conduct incorporates guidance and procedures from:
 - a. Department of Education: Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools
 - b. Education Authority Joint Negotiating Council Circular 245: Dignity at Work Policy and Code of Practice
4. This Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with advice and guidance from the employing authorities. Every care has been taken to ensure this Code of Conduct fully reflects that advice; however if there is disagreement, the employing authorities guidance and procedures will take precedence.
5. This Code of Conduct applies to all staff and volunteers of the school. For the purposes of this document the term 'staff' is taken to mean all staff and volunteers.

6. This Code of Conduct does not form part of any employees' contract of employment.

School Policies

7. All staff are expected to be aware and follow school policies. Action, or a lack of action, that contravenes the school policies may result in disciplinary action.

Safeguarding Children

8. All staff have a duty to safeguard pupils/students from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and exploitation.
9. The duty to safeguard pupils/students includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil/student or colleague to a member of the school's Safeguarding team (Designated Teacher (DT)/Deputy Designated Teacher (DDT) for Child Protection or the Principal).

Private meetings with pupils

10. Staff should be aware of the dangers, which may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place. As far as possible, staff should conduct such interviews in the Principals Office with the door open or in another room in the main building with the door open. When privacy is needed for the conversation the school office should be used which provides good visual access.
11. Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. It may be necessary to use a sign indicating that the room is in use, but it is not advisable to use signs prohibiting entry to the room.

Physical Contact with Pupils

12. As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils.

13. It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent/carer would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.
14. Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated either verbally or physically that he/she is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm.
15. Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
16. Staff should lead any child by the hand only, never the arm, in order to guide them.
17. Staff who have to administer first aid to a pupil should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. However, no member of staff should hesitate to provide first aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.
18. Any physical contact, which would be likely to be misinterpreted, by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.
19. Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the school Principal.
20. Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting, or in approved out of school activities, where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school/work environment.
21. Occasionally younger children may require adult assistance if they have soiled themselves. The class teacher should be called and, will, with the aid of a second adult, proceed to assist the child in the disabled staff toilet. Where possible the child should carry out any cleaning of the intimate areas. If this is impractical the class teacher/classroom assistant can provide assistance, as long as the child is comfortable with this. Once the child is changed and comfortable, a full explanation of the procedure should be given to the principal and parents/carers will be informed by phone.

22. Where children have known difficulties with toileting the individuals' needs will be discussed with parents/carers and permission sought from them on an individual case basis.
23. While at the swimming pool staff should, wherever possible, stand outside the **private** changing facilities and encourage the children to change quickly. However, no member of staff should hesitate to enter in an emergency, or to maintain orderly behaviour. When using **public** changing rooms staff must remain with the pupils at all times.
24. Toilets – occasionally an adult may have to enter the toilets. Adults will knock loudly and give warning in advance of entry. However, no member of staff should hesitate to enter in an emergency, or to maintain orderly behaviour.

Acting with Respect

25. All staff should treat children and other staff and members of the school community with respect and dignity.
26. All staff should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of others, embarrassing or humiliating others, discriminating against or favouring others.
27. Staff should set an example with good manners.
28. Behaviour that is rude, impolite, contemptuous or lacking appropriate professional demeanour is unacceptable.

Health and Safety

29. All staff and volunteers must take reasonable care of pupils/students under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare. All staff must comply with the requirements of the School Health and Safety policy and relevant legislation and regulations.

Choice and Use of Teaching Materials

30. Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.

31. When using teaching materials of a sensitive nature a teacher should be aware of the danger that their application, either by pupils or by the teacher, might after the event be criticised.
32. If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the Principal before using it.

Relationships with Children

33. All staff must declare any relationships that they may have with pupils/students outside of school; this may include mutual membership of social groups, tutoring, or family connections. Staff and volunteers should not assume that the school are aware of any such connections. A declaration form may be found in Appendix 1 of this document.

Pupil/School Development

34. All staff must co-operate and collaborate, in line with the practices and procedures agreed with the employing authorities, with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of pupils/students and the school.
35. Staff are expected to comply with reasonable work related requirements, in line with the practices and procedures agreed with the employing authorities, and to take care in fulfilling their duties.

Honesty and Integrity

36. All staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.
37. Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to the Principal with the exception of "one off" token gifts from students or parents. Personal gifts from individual members of staff or volunteers to students are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted and may lead to disciplinary action. A record will be kept of all gifts received.

Conduct Outside of Work

38. All staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the staff/ volunteers own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.
39. In particular, criminal offences that involve violence, possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are to be regarded as unacceptable.
40. Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school. It should not contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance in the school. Staff should seek advice from the Principal when considering work outside the school.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

41. It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure the School's compliance with Data Protection legislation. Personal data must only be used to assist you to carry out your work; it must not be given to people who have no right to see it. All staff should maintain the security of all computerised databases of information on individuals, whether they are staff, pupils or members of the general public. Staff should refer any queries to the Principal.
42. Staff must follow the procedures and guidelines of the Safeguarding Children Policy and the Data Protection Policy.

Dress and Appearance and Language

43. All staff must dress in a manner that is appropriate to their (professional) role within the school and a school environment in general. Offensive, revealing or sexually provocative clothing is unacceptable.
44. Staff should dress in a manner that is absent from political or other contentious slogans.
45. Humour with colleagues is often a positive aspect of the work environment. Appropriate humour is not discouraged; however all staff must be aware of their surroundings. Some staff, rightfully, may find some humour inappropriate.

Humour that is inappropriate in the work/school environment is unacceptable.

Disrespectful behaviour disguised in humour or sarcasm is unacceptable.

46. Offensive language or conversation is not acceptable.

47. Conversation on contentious political or other issues may rightfully cause offence to other staff and may be unacceptable.

Time Keeping

48. All staff must dress in a manner that is appropriate to their (professional) role within the school and a school environment in general. Offensive, revealing or sexually provocative.

E-Safety and Internet Use

49. Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Regard should be given to the schools' Internet Safety Policy at all times both inside and outside of work.

50. Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute. Staff should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have.

51. Staff should exercise caution in their use of all social media or any other web based presence that they may have, including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts established by others.

52. Contact with students must be via school authorised mechanisms. At no time should personal telephone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with students.

53. If contacted by a student by an inappropriate route, staff should report the contact to the Principal immediately.

54. Photographs/stills or video footage of students should only be taken using school equipment for purposes authorised by the school. Any such use should always be transparent and only occur where parental consent has been given. The

resultant files from such recording or taking of photographs must be retained and destroyed in accordance with the schools Records Management Policy and Disposal Schedules.

55. Staff should use social media groups responsibly. Actions such as inappropriate conversations about other staff, offensive messages or the exclusion of staff from these groups may be unacceptable.

Bullying

56. All staff, paid and voluntary must implement the schools Positive Behaviour Policy.
57. It is important to realise that unacceptable behaviour can arise on grounds other than those addressed by equal opportunities legislation.
58. For example, workplace bullying is a form of harassment which can take place for many reasons and can take many forms, both obvious and more subtle, on grounds which are not specifically covered by legislation.
59. Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving the misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined or threatened. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority, but can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation.
60. Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct. Bullying may include, by way of example:
- a. physical or psychological threats;
 - b. overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision;
 - c. inappropriate derogatory remarks about someone's performance;
61. Bullying is similar to harassment in the sense that it too is offensive, hostile or oppressive behaviour which may not be related to equality grounds, but may be done for other reasons, such as jealousy or personal dislike or revenge or insecurity. Allegations of bullying will also be investigated under this Code.
62. Legitimate, reasonable and constructive commentary on a worker's performance or behaviour, or reasonable instructions given to workers in the course of their employment, will not amount to bullying on their own. An isolated incident of

unreasonable behaviour such as abruptness, sharpness or rudeness, whilst totally unacceptable, should not be described as bullying. Wherever possible, this should be dealt with in the first instance by letting the person know how their behaviour has made you feel. Only offensive behaviour which is persistent should be regarded as bullying.

Harassment

63. Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A single incident can amount to harassment.
64. It also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to such behaviour in the past.
65. Unlawful harassment may involve conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment), or it may be related to age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories.

Victimisation

66. Victimisation occurs when a person making a dignity at work complaint or assisting a person making the complaint is treated less favourably as a consequence of doing so. A person can also be victimised if treated less favourably for pursuing a complaint when exercising their statutory rights.
67. Forms of unacceptable behaviour on grounds other than those addressed by equality legislation is no less distressing for individuals and no less detrimental to working relationships within the workplace. This Policy and Code of Practice aim to provide employees with protection from unacceptable behaviour on any basis.

Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour

68. Unacceptable behaviour can take many forms and may include (but is not limited to):

- a. inappropriate or unwanted physical contact ranging from unnecessary touching to physical assault or the threat of physical assault;
- b. continued suggestions for social activities after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome;
- c. bullying, overt abuse of power;
- d. inappropriate and baseless use of disciplinary or grievance procedures against another employee;
- e. coercion, including pressure for sexual favours, pressure to participate in political or religious groups;
- f. verbal or written harassment through jokes, ageist, racist, sexist, sectarian or homophobic remarks, comments about a person's disability, offensive language, gossip and slander, sectarian songs, mobile telephone ring tones, threats, letters, emails, etc or which contain innuendo or mockery;
- g. visual display of pornographic, sexually explicit or suggestive pictures, objects or written material (including the use of email and text messaging to send such material), political posters, graffiti, obscene gestures, flags, bunting, emblems and the wearing of distinctive clothing or sportswear which may be deemed as offensive by others;
- h. isolation or non co-operation at work, exclusion from social activities;
- i. intrusion by pestering, spying, stalking etc.;
- j. unwanted questioning of a person about their sexual interests or orientation, religious beliefs, political opinion, race or ethnic origin;
- k. unreasonable persistent criticism; and
- l. blatantly unreasonable demands and impossible targets.

Disciplinary Action

69. Staff and volunteers should be aware that a failure to comply with this Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including but not limited to dismissal.

Roles and Responsibilities

Boards of Governors

70. The Board of Governors has the overall responsibility for overseeing the implementation of this policy in consultation with the Employing Authority.

The Principal / Senior Management

71. The Principal and senior leadership team are responsible for the daily operational implementation of the school's policy on dignity at work.
72. The Principal is responsible for communicating the policy to employees and taking steps to promote awareness of the policy and the procedures for dealing with complaints.
73. The Principal has a responsibility to ensure that unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation does not occur amongst employees and have responsibility for dealing appropriately with any incidents of unacceptable behaviour or bullying which they are aware of, or ought to be aware of. If discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation does occur, they must deal with the situation effectively and in a timely manner.
74. The Principal and senior leadership team should set a good example by treating all employees with dignity and respect.
75. The Principal must take all reasonable action practicable to ensure that potentially offensive material is not displayed or circulated.
76. The Principal must ensure that any dignity at work complaint is treated seriously, sensitively and in confidence. It is strongly recommended that schools should seek advice, assistance and support on the handling of complaints from the relevant HR office at the earliest opportunity.

Staff

77. All staff of the school have a responsibility to help ensure a working environment in which the dignity of all employees is respected. All employees must comply with this code of practice and procedure and should ensure that their behaviour to colleagues does not cause offence and could not in any way be considered to be unacceptable.

78. Staff should discourage all forms of unacceptable behaviour by making it clear that they find such behaviour unacceptable and by supporting colleagues who suffer such treatment and are considering making a complaint. Any employee who is aware of any incident of unacceptable behaviour should alert the Principal, a member of the senior leadership team or a Governor to enable the Board of Governors to deal with it.
79. Staff should not make frivolous, spurious or vexatious allegations for complaints against others, nor divert attention from or action in the application of other procedures.

Monitoring and Evaluation

80. The Board of Governors the Curriculum Committee receive regular reports on the delivery of the curriculum and any progress against the School Development Plan. This is recorded in the Board of Governors meeting minutes.
81. This policy will be reviewed bi-annually.

Adoption Record and Review Date

Staff Consultation	28 August 2018
Policy Adopted by Board of Governors	Sept 2018
Policy Review Date	2021