

Heathcote Primary School



Staff Code of Conduct Policy

Date adopted by Governors:	April 2020
Date for policy review:	April 2022
Person responsible for review:	Head Teacher
Signed by Chair of Governors	April 2020

Executive Summary of Key Principles for Staff and Volunteers

Key Principles

1. The Staff Code of Conduct, sometimes referred to as the Staff Behaviour Policy, is consistent with statutory guidance **Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2018)** and **Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2020)**; and local inter-agency safeguarding procedures issued by Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board - www.warwickshire.gov.uk/wscbresources
2. All staff and volunteers must read the full Code of Conduct before starting work with children. This executive summary serves only as a brief reference point for staff, parents, governors and other stakeholders. The Code of Conduct must also be read in conjunction with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
3. The Code of Conduct applies to all adults, paid and unpaid, whose work brings them into contact with children who attend the school, both on site and off site. Where this summary refers to staff, it includes all such adults.
4. The Code of Conduct sets out what is expected in terms of professional behaviour; it gives clear advice about what constitutes illegal behaviour and what might be considered as misconduct. It also describes safe practice and behaviours that should be avoided.
5. The Code of Conduct provides a clear message that unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated and that, where appropriate, legal or disciplinary action is likely to follow. The school may refer to the Code of Conduct in any disciplinary proceedings.
6. Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and/or intentions. The relationship between an adult working with a child is one in which the adult has a position of power and influence. The potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable children and young people means that adults have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.
7. All staff are expected to treat students, other colleagues, parents and external contacts with dignity and respect and to comply with all relevant school policies. Staff should work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way.
8. All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children and young people. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct, ensuring their behaviour remains professional at all times, in order to maintain the confidence and respect of the general public and all those with whom they work. This includes the way in which staff dress, their use of language (including terms of endearment, please also refer to para 11 below) and online communication which is or could become visible to students, their parents/carers and/or the general public (See Acceptable Use and Social Media Policies).
9. Personal conduct also includes the way in which staff speak to students. A positive, respectful and encouraging tone should be used at all times. Where it is necessary to challenge inappropriate behaviour or to get students' attention, it is reasonable for staff to raise their voices and/or use an authoritative tone. However, it is not appropriate for staff to shout at students habitually or speak to them disrespectfully.

10. Staff should never set out to cause a student to feel frightened, ashamed or humiliated. Admonishments should focus on behaviour rather than the student's personality or character and targets for desired behaviour should be described by the member of staff.
11. Members of staff should refer to students by name. Disrespectful nicknames, words and terms should be avoided. Staff should exercise caution in referring to students by affectionate nicknames and more general terms of endearment or familiarity such as 'Dear, Love, Petal, Mate, Dude' and must avoid terms associated with grooming such as 'Sweetheart, Princess, Angel, Darling'.
12. Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from the Head teacher if they have acted in a way which may give rise to concern.
13. Staff should apply the same professional standards regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and sexual orientation.
14. Staff should not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or any substance, including prescribed medication, which may affect their ability to care for and work with children.
15. Staff must treat information about children and their families discreetly and not disclose confidential matters except in accordance with school policies.
16. Staff are in a position of trust and should never engage in any sexual relationships with students, even those who are Post-16.
17. Only areas of the curriculum approved by the senior leadership team should contain any sexual or other sensitive material. Otherwise, staff should not engage in conversations with students about sexual matters. Senior staff should be consulted if there is any possibility of misinterpretation by students or parents/carers.
18. Physical contact should be minimal, time limited, age appropriate and able to be justified.
19. Physical intervention must only be used if it is necessary to keep a student or member of staff safe, prevent serious damage to property or disruption of school business; must always be reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances and in order to achieve the objective; and only used when all non-physical strategies to manage the situation have been exhausted or will not be successful in time to prevent harm or serious damage/disruption. All incidents of physical intervention must be recorded clearly and reported in accordance with school policy.
20. Intimate care and first aid should only be administered according to relevant procedures and by qualified personnel.
21. Staff should not offer transport to students outside agreed arrangements. Staff must never offer transport to a student if on their own except where doing so is the only way to prevent harm. Any impromptu or emergency arrangements should be recorded by informing the Head teacher – within 24 hours and should be able to be justified.
22. Staff should guard against young people developing an infatuation with them and report any such concerns to the Head teacher.
23. Staff should not accept gifts other than small tokens of appreciation from students or parents/carers.
24. Staff should not give gifts to students other than as part of an agreed reward system.
25. Appropriate social contact between staff, students and their families (e.g. when a staff member and parent are part of the same social circle or extended family) should be easily recognised, openly acknowledged and declared in writing or by email to the Head teacher - Relationships.

26. Unless social relationships have been declared in writing to the Head teacher - Relationships, staff should not engage in any electronic or telephone communication with students or their parents/carers using personally owned ICT or telephone equipment or personal telephone or social media accounts/platforms. This includes texting, messaging, video chat, social networking sites etc. All communication must be open, transparent, through school systems/accounts and using school owned equipment.
27. Any other out of school contact including staff undertaking independent tutoring or sports coaching which may bring them into contact with students and their families should be planned and agreed with the Head teacher and parents/carers.
28. Internet use should be according to school policy and inappropriate content must not be accessed. Staff members must not allow a student access to their personal IT equipment including laptops, mobile phones, iPads or similar devices.
29. With the exception of recordings for examination purposes, photographs and video films of students must only be taken with parental consent, for school purposes. All photographs and video recordings of students will only be taken using school-owned equipment. They will remain the property of the school and must only be stored on school-owned equipment. They can only be published with the express consent of parents/carers.
30. Staff should not work with students on a one to one basis or undertake home visits except by agreement with a senior leader and in accordance with school policies and appropriate risk assessments. Only in exceptional circumstances which have been fully approved in advance by the Head teacher would it ever be appropriate for a member of staff to invite a student into their own home.
31. Staff should be mindful of situations in which a student or parent/carer comes to depend on them for support outside their role; and discuss this promptly with the DSL or Head teacher.
32. Staff accompanying students on offsite and residential visits should remain mindful of and work in accordance with safeguarding and whistleblowing procedures, visit briefings and risk assessments at all times.
33. Staff should acknowledge that deliberately invented/malicious allegations are extremely rare. Staff are expected to report all concerns about possible child abuse by colleagues and/or poor practice including any breach of the Code of Conduct to the Head teacher, recording their concerns using yellow forms.
34. Staff should be fully aware of their responsibilities with regards to COVID-19 and ensure they maintain social distancing, follow the hygiene rules and expectations and participate in NHS Test and Trace.
35. Concerns or complaints about the Head teacher should be reported to the Chair of Governors. Staff can also contact the Designated Officer in the Local Authority (LADO), who is responsible for the co-ordination of responses to allegations against people who work with children. For staff who do not feel able to raise concerns internally, relevant contact details for the LADO and also the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline are displayed in the staff room.
36. Additional support is available from the Education Safeguarding Service at educationsafeguarding@warwickshire.gov.uk or by phoning 01926 742525.