

Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct) – executive summary of key principles for staff and volunteers

Date of publication: August 2020

Review date: August 2021

Key principles

1. The Staff Behaviour policy (SBP), sometimes referred to as the Code of Conduct, 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 - www.safeguardingwarwickshire.co.uk/. **The policy remains in force during COVID-19.**
2. All staff and volunteers must read the full SBP before starting work with children. This executive summary serves only as a brief reference point for staff, parents, governors and other stakeholders. The SBP must also be read in conjunction with the school's safeguarding and child protection policy.
3. The SBP 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 SBP sets out what is expected in terms of professional behaviour **when working with children both face to face and virtually/online**; 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 SBP 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 SBP 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 pupils/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 **(face to face and online)** 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 their online communication both in and out of school which is or could become visible to pupils/students, their parents/carers and/or the general public.

9. Personal conduct also includes the way in which staff speak to pupils/students. A positive, respectful and encouraging tone should be used at all times. Where it is necessary to challenge inappropriate behaviour or to get pupils/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 pupils/students habitually or speak to them disrespectfully.
10. Staff should never set out to cause a pupil/student to feel frightened, ashamed or humiliated. Admonishments should focus on behaviour rather than the pupil/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 pupils/students by name. Disrespectful nicknames, words and terms should be avoided. Staff should exercise caution in referring to pupils/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 headteacher if they have acted in a way which may give rise to concern. Staff should inform the headteacher about any relationships, associations or matters in and out of school which might have implications for safeguarding children.
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.
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 pupils/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 pupil/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 pupil/student if on their own except where doing so is the only way to prevent harm. Any impromptu or emergency arrangements should be recorded 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 Headteacher.

23. Staff should not accept gifts other than small tokens of appreciation from pupils/students or parents/carers.
24. Staff should not give gifts to pupils/students other than as part of an agreed reward system.
25. Appropriate social contact between staff, pupils/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 recognized, openly acknowledged and declared in writing to the headteacher.
26. Unless social relationships have been declared in writing to the headteacher, staff should not engage in any electronic or telephone communication with pupils/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 pupils/students and their families should be planned and agreed with the headteacher and parents/carers.
28. Internet use **including virtual/online teaching and video conversations with children** should be according to school policy and inappropriate content must not be accessed.
29. Photographs and video films of pupils/students must only be taken with parental consent, for school purposes and 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 pupils/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 headteacher would it ever be appropriate for a member of staff to invite a pupil/student into their own home.
31. Staff should be mindful of situations in which a pupil/student or parent/carer comes to depend on them for support outside their role; and discuss this promptly with the DSL or headteacher.
32. Staff accompanying pupils/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 SBP to the headteacher, *recording their concerns using yellow forms* (DELETE if yellow forms are not used in school).
34. Concerns or complaints about the headteacher 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 0800 028 0285 are displayed in the staff room.
35. Additional support is available from the new contact details:
MASH Education Lead on **01926 418608** or MASHeducationlead@warwickshire.gov.uk.