

Burton CE Primary School

Staff Code of Conduct

Issue Date:	01 August 2018 (updated February 2019, March 2021; January 2022; Feb 23) March 24; Feb 2025
Date Adopted:	March 2024 Feb 2025
Signed By:	
Approval Committee:	Governing Body

To be read in conjunction with the national guidance: ‘Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings - 2019’.

Our school vision states: *“Our Christian Ethos and most centrally, our Core Christian Values of Compassion, Friendship and Reverence form the foundations of our approach to teaching and Learning and our interactions with pupils, parents and colleagues. We firmly believe that developing strong, positive relationships with the children is the bedrock on which we can support them to engage and excel.”*

It is therefore crucial that all adults in school conduct themselves in a way which not only keeps them safe but which also ensures they provide a role model to the children in our school.

1. Definition

- References made to ‘child’ and ‘children’ refer to children and young people under the age of 18 years. However, the principles of the document apply to professional behaviours towards all pupils, including those over the age of 18 years. ‘Child’ should therefore be read to mean **any pupil** at the education establishment.
- References made to adults and staff refer to all those who work with children in an educational establishment, in either a paid or unpaid capacity.
- The term ‘allegation’ means where it is alleged that a person who works with children 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; or,
 - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

2. Introduction

- Schools have a legal duty to create and maintain a safe learning environment for children. A staff Code of Conduct is a **mandatory** requirement as described in the DfE statutory guidance: ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’.
- The school seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for children in our care. The following code draws

together existing laws, regulations and conditions of service designed to protect the interests of staff and volunteers and the children with whom they work. Staff should be aware that a failure to comply with this code could result in disciplinary action including dismissal as set out in the staff disciplinary procedures.

3. Purpose and Scope

- All staff and volunteers working in a school setting have a legal and moral duty to keep children safe and protect them from harm. Staff should ensure they do not put themselves in situations in which allegations of abuse or inappropriate behaviour could be made.
- This code applies to all adults working in schools whatever their position, role or responsibilities.
- All staff have a responsibility to be aware of systems within our school which support safeguarding, which should be explained as part of staff induction and through regular staff training.
- The code should be read in conjunction with the relevant statutory and other guidance documents issued nationally or by the DfE and Home Office as well as other related school policies (see **Appendix 1** of this policy).
- This code cannot cover every eventuality. Its purpose is to show the standard expected of staff but it does not replace the general requirements of the law. If situations which arise which are not covered by this code, it is expected that staff use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils.
- All staff employed under Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Employment have a statutory obligation to adhere to the 'Teachers' Standards 2012' and in relation to this code, Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct which this code supplements.
- It is recognised that the vast majority of adults who work with children act professionally and aim to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for children in their care. Achieving these aims is not always straightforward, as much relies on child and staff interactions where tensions and misunderstandings can occur. This code aims to reduce the risk of that.

4. Core Principles

- The welfare of the children is paramount.
- Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should seek to avoid any conduct that would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation or intentions.
- Staff are expected to maintain a professional standard of conduct, not only in regards to interactions with children in their educational establishment, but to extend this courtesy to their colleagues, parents and visitors of the establishment.
- Staff should dress appropriately at all times for the tasks they undertake and ensure they promote a positive and professional image.
- Staff should apply the expected professional standards of behaviour and not discriminate against anyone in relation to their age, disability, sex or gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnerships (in particular with adults in contact with the establishment), pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation.
- Staff should not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or substances, including prescribed medication that may affect their ability to care for children whilst at work.

- Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in disciplinary action being taken against them, criminal action and/or other proceedings including barring by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) from working in regulated activity, or for acts of serious misconduct, prohibition from teaching by the National College of Teaching & Leadership (NCTL).
- Staff and managers should continually monitor and review practice to ensure this guidance is followed and should understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children.
- Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from their line manager or another senior member of staff over any incident which may give rise to concern.
- Records should be made of any incident and decision made or where further actions have been agreed, in accordance with school policies and confidentiality.
- All staff should know the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead & deputies (Alison Timmings; Sarah Steel & Sarah Edmunds) and be familiar with local child protection arrangements, arrangements for managing allegations against staff, whistleblowing procedures and their Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures.
- Staff should be aware of and comply with the school's financial and administrative regulations and any other procedure manuals.

5. Conduct and Behaviour

General obligations:

Staff set an example to pupils. They will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
 - Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school
 - Treat pupils and others with dignity and respect
 - 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
 - Not express personal beliefs in a way that exploits pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
 - Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within
 - Adhere to the Teachers' Standards
- All staff who work in a school setting are in a position of trust in relation to individuals in their care and so must adopt high standards of personal integrity and conduct and behave in such a way that does not compromise their position both within and outside of the workplace or the safety and/or welfare of children and young people.
 - All staff are expected to work and behave in a manner that is consistent with the School Christian Character; Christian Values and to reflect the behaviours expected of the children in the 'Burton Code'.
 - Staff should be aware that it is a criminal offence (Sexual Offences Act 2003: abuse of a position of trust) to engage in sexual activity with a pupil under the age of 18.
 - Teachers are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct in accordance with the minimum professional Teaching Standards.

- Staff are expected to declare any offences or involvement with the police to the Headteacher as soon as is reasonably possible.
- Staff should never make (or encourage others to make) comments, either to the children colleagues, parents or visitors of the establishment, that are intended, or can be interpreted to be, unprofessional, demeaning or humiliating.
- Staff should not use physical force as a form of punishment.
- Staff should always adhere to the school's policies on Behaviour Management and Use of Reasonable Force.
- Staff should not use any information obtained in the course of their employment for personal gain or benefit. Nor should they pass it on to others who might use it in such a way.
- Staff are expected to treat all information they see, read or hear at school as confidential and should not share any information about individuals or groups of children without good cause or parental permission unless for purposes of safeguarding.
- All staff should apply these same principles in their online behaviour and in the use of social media

6. Equality Issues

- All staff should adhere to the school's Equal Opportunities Policy, in addition to the requirements of the law.
- All adults and children at the school have a right to be treated at all times with fairness, equality and without discrimination.

7. Employment Matters

- All staff involved in recruitment and selection processes should ensure that appointments are made on the basis of merit, without discrimination and in accordance with the school's recruitment and selection policy and procedure.
- Any staff involved in tendering processes should ensure that these are made on the basis of merit.
- No member of staff should be involved in any appointment or decision 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 Headteacher or the Chair of Governors (if the Headteacher).

8. Public Duty and Private Interest

- Staff should not put themselves in a position where their duty to the school and their private interests conflict.

9. Other Employment/Private Work

- Any external work undertaken must not bring the school into disrepute or conflict with the school's interest.
- Any copyright created by a member of staff during their employment with the school becomes the property of the school.

10. Safeguarding

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils/students from:

- physical abuse
 - sexual abuse
 - emotional abuse
 - neglect
-
- The duty to safeguard children and young people includes the duty to report child welfare concerns to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL),
 - Staff should 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 should be aware of and adopt the recommended procedures and best practice guidance outlined in the national Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (May 2019).
 - Staff should be aware of and follow the statutory responsibilities outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education.
 - Staff should be aware of the risks to children from radicalisation and being drawn into terrorism as outlined in the Prevent Duty guidance.
 - **Guidance for Safer Working Practice**
 - (i) This document will be used to support the Code of Conduct and as such may be referred to in any disciplinary proceedings.
 - (ii) Staff should read this document in conjunction with this code.
 - **Keeping Children Safe in Education**
 - (i) This document sets out the statutory duties schools must follow and includes guidance on mandatory reporting requirements. It is advised that this is read alongside **Working Together to Safeguard Children**.
 - (ii) Staff should ensure they understand and are familiar with their responsibilities and where this includes mandatory reporting expectations they understand their role any locally agreed procedures for reporting, such as informing the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
 - (iii) Staff should be aware of the personal reporting duty with regard to known cases of female genital mutilation (FGM). Supplementary to Keeping Children Safe in Education, staff can obtain further guidance in the

'Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation – procedural information' document.

- (iv) Staff should refer any concerns about another member of staff to the Headteacher, or if the concern is about the Headteacher to the Chair of Governors or equivalent.
- (v) Staff should raise concerns of poor or unsafe practice or potential failures in safeguarding, using the school's whistleblowing policy.

- **Prevent Duty**

- (i) Under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, staff must have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'
- (ii) Staff should refer any concerns regarding radicalisation to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead or a senior member of staff, following the school's normal safeguarding procedures.
- (iii) Relevant staff should understand when it is appropriate to make a referral to the Channel programme, a mechanism for schools to make referrals if they are concerned that an individual might be vulnerable to radicalisation.
- (iv) Staff should ensure they have undertaken some form of Prevent awareness training

10.1. Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

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

10.2. 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

10.3. 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 in to 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.
- 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.
- 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 will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at the school without their consent.
- Staff should be aware of the school's online safety policy and acceptable use agreement.

All staff should be polite and respectful in the way they speak to children – even those who are not behaving as expected, it is important that staff set the example. It should be remembered that tone of voice is as important as the words and volume used. We do not condone shouting at children as an appropriate consequence.

10.4. Sexual Harrassment

Sexual harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature that has a purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. It also includes treating someone less favourably because they've submitted or refused to submit to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature in the past, or harassment related to sex or gender reassignment. When this behaviour is unwanted, it includes (but isn't limited to):

- Unwanted physical conduct or 'horseplay' including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing
- Continued suggestions for sexual activity after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome
- Sending or displaying material that is pornographic, or that some people might find offensive
- Unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless)
- Offensive emails, text messages or social media content
- Comments and jokes of a sexual nature
- Sexually suggestive looks and staring
- Sexual propositions and advances
- Promising things in return for sexual favours
- Physical contact such as massaging, hugging or kissing
- Sexual contact on social media

Staff will help create a positive environment that works to prevent sexual harassment. This includes calling out sexual harassment that they witness. All witnesses will be provided with appropriate support and will be protected from victimisation.

If a staff member is concerned at any point about incidents of sexual harassment (either directed at them or someone else), they should report their concern to the [headteacher/other member of staff]. If the concern is about the [headteacher/other member of staff], 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/board of trustees/other named governor or trustee]. The school will investigate any complaints in a timely, respectful and confidential manner.

10.5. Acceptable use of Technology

- Staff will 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.
- Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school equipment for personal use, in teaching hours (without permission from the headteacher – eg if expecting medical phone call) or in front of pupils. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.
- We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system.
- All school devices will be monitored via Smoothwall

- We accept that the use of AI can make time use more effective and want to support the use of technology to support staff wellbeing. Staff are asked to use AI with caution; check carefully what is produced and declare the use of AI where appropriate.

11. Honesty & Integrity

Financial inducements, gifts, hospitality and sponsorship

- Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities.
- Staff should not seek or receive preferential rates for themselves by virtue of their dealings on behalf of the school.
- Staff are advised not to accept anything that may be construed as an incentive or reward. This does not apply to light refreshments provided when visiting sites, offices or homes
- Staff should ensure that gifts are declared if they are received. Small gifts from pupils are a common arrangement in schools. As a general rule, no employee should accept a gift from anyone which could, or might appear to, place him/her under an obligation or could be construed as an incentive or reward. Goods should only therefore be accepted in exceptional circumstances. The same principle applies if gifts are offered to a relative/partner. Where a gift is accepted it shall be recorded. These rules do not generally apply to leaving presents to an employee.
- Where gifts are made involving anonymity or where a gift is to a group of employees rather than an individual employee or is to an individual employee from a group of people, these are factors that may make acceptance of that exceptional gift more likely to be acceptable. The acceptance of the gift from a group of people valued at more than £50 should be referred to the headteacher.
- Where in those exceptional circumstances a gift is accepted and is valued over £10, it must be recorded in the School's Register of Gifts and Hospitality. Gifts below this value need not be recorded. Where such an (exceptional) gift is from one individual to another and is over the value of £20 this must be referred to the Headteacher. Gift vouchers will be considered a gift but money must not be accepted under any circumstances. The same principles apply if gifts are offered to a relative/partner.
- Advice on the acceptance or rejection of gifts should be sought from the Headteacher.
- Where staff provide gifts they should ensure they are of insignificant value and given to all children equally.

12. Use of School Time and Facilities

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

13. Conduct outside of work

- Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school, or the teaching profession, into disrepute. This covers conduct including but not limited to relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school on social media.

14. Publication of Books/Articles

- Staff must consult with the Headteacher before publishing book, articles, letters, dissertations etc where they are described as holding an appointment at the school.

15. Disciplinary Action

- All staff should be aware that a failure to meet these standards of behaviour and conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.



Code of Conduct

Declaration of receipt ~ March 2025

Please tick

☐ I confirm that I have read the Staff **Code of Conduct** and **Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings, Feb 2022** and understand that any unlawful or unsafe behaviour could lead to appropriate legal or disciplinary action being taken.

☐ I confirm that there are no contextual / personal / police issues that have arisen since my DBS that might impact on my suitability to work with children. I have shared any concerns with my line manager or the headteacher.

Name: *(please print)*:

Signature:Date:

Please return this slip to your Headteacher as soon as possible

APPENDIX 1

POLICIES AND OTHER DOCUMENTS TO BE CONSIDERED AND READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT (Listed in alphabetical order)

Policy/Procedure/Guidance
Allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers
Child Protection Policy**
Data Protection Policy
Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
Drugs and Alcohol Policy
Equal Opportunities Policy
E- Safety/Internet Use/Social Networking/ICT Policies
Guidance for Safer Working Practice* national guidance for those working with children and young people in Education Settings. https://c-cluster-110.uploads.documents.cimpress.io/v1/uploads/d71d6fd8-b99e-4327-b8fd-1ac968b768a4~110/original?tenant=vbu-digital
Health and Safety Policy
Intimate Care
Keeping Children Safe in Education*- DfE statutory guidance Link: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education-2
Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation procedural information* Link: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information
Use of Positive Force
Prevent Duty Guidance* Link: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance
Recruitment and Selection Policy
School Record Keeping Policy
Whistleblowing Policy

*It is expected that staff will adhere to the statutory duties and/or best practice outlined within these documents as applicable to their role and responsibilities.

**The Child Protection Policy is available from the office; staff room or school website.