



STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

Reviewed: April 2022

To be Reviewed: April 2025

Chair of Board of Governors	Date
Principal	Date

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Record of Review/ Update

Review Date	Next Update Due
April 2019	April 2022
April 2022	April 2025
April 2023	April 2026

Staff Code of Conduct – Child Protection

All actions concerning children must uphold the best interests of the child as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the children in their charge must be above reproach. Positive behaviours and attitudes of staff are promoted through school values and ethos. This Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children gain from positive interaction with staff within the education sector. It is intended to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of child abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct.

1. Private Meetings with Pupils.

- a. 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 a room with visual access, or with the door open.
- b. 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.
- c. Where possible another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview, and the school should take active measures to facilitate this.

2. Physical Contact with Pupils.

- a. As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils.
- b. 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 would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.
- c. Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm.
- d. Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.

- e. In particular circumstances, such as use of certain areas like the swimming pool, we have our own guidelines – Teachers should stay outside changing rooms and verbally encourage children to change quickly. Teachers should only enter changing rooms in the case of an emergency.
- f. 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.
- g. Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.
- h. 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 designated teacher or Principal.
- i. Pupils should be particularly careful when supervising 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.

3. Choice and use of Teaching Materials.

- a. Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.
- b. 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. Parents will be advised, prior to sensitive issues being addressed in Health Education or Relationship and Sexuality Education.
- c. If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the Principal before using it.

4. Relationships and Attitudes.

Staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age, maturity and sex of the pupils, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought.

At all times, members of staff will exercise their professional judgement in matters concerning their conduct in relating to the pupils. At intervals, staff will reappraise their teaching styles, relationships with children and their manner and approach to individual children, to ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions, in the minds of colleagues, of children or of their parents.

5. Reporting and recording Safeguarding issues

Staff have a statutory duty to report and record and safeguarding concerns appropriately. They are made aware of the importance of this and how to report and record appropriately at Safeguarding and Child Protection training each year.

6. Confidentiality

Staff should ensure that information regarding pupils is only shared with the appropriate person.

All staff should be aware of the confidential nature of personal information about a child or young person and maintain that confidentiality.

Child Protection information regarding a pupil must be treated on a 'need to know' basis only and information should only be shared with the relevant personnel.

Staff cannot promise confidentiality regarding information which causes concern that a child had been or may be at risk of harm.

6. I.C.T.

In line with the school's I.C.T. policy, the following Code of Safe Practice has been highlighted and agreed to by all staff.

- a. No social networking site, outside of Learning NI, should ever be used in school without permission from the Principal.
- b. Staff should never accept a 'friend request' from a pupil on any social networking site.
- c. Staff should adhere to appropriate use of social media, both inside and outside of school.
- d. As is normal good practice, staff should not use their mobile phones during teaching time, unless in an emergency and with permission from the Principal.
- e. Pupils accessing the Internet should be supervised by an adult at all times.
- f. Staff should ensure that all pupils are aware of the rules for the safe and effective use of the Internet. These are displayed in classrooms and discussed with pupils.
- g. Staff should ensure that all pupils using the Internet have written permission from their parents.
- h. Recommended websites for each year group are available under Favourites. Any additional websites used by pupils should be checked beforehand by teachers, as far as is possible, to ensure that there is no unsuitable content and that material is age-appropriate.

- i. Deliberate/accidental access to inappropriate materials or any other breaches of the school code of practice should be reported immediately to the Principal/U.I.C.T. Co-ordinator.
- j. In the interests of system security, staff passwords should only be shared with the network manager.
- k. Teachers are aware that the C2K system tracks all Internet use and records the sites visited. The system also logs emails and messages sent and received by individual users.
- l. Teachers should be aware of copyright and intellectual property rights and should be careful not to download or use any materials which are in breach of these.
- m. Photographs of pupils should only be taken with a school camera/ iPad. Camera images can be stored on a centralised area on the school network. An external Hard Drive is used as a 'back up' of all folders. Consequently, staff should never take a photograph of a child with their mobile phone or store any images or data regarding any child on any personal laptop etc.
- n. School systems may not be used for any unauthorised commercial transactions i.e. permission must be sought from the Principal