Binsted CE Primary School Code of Conduct

1. Purpose

This Code of Conduct aims to establish a set of principles which underpin the expected conduct of staff at Binsted CE Primary School with the intention of encouraging staff to achieve the highest standards of conduct at work and of minimising the risk of improper conduct occurring.

The school requires that all staff have read and comply with the Code of Conduct. Where clarification is needed on any aspect of this document, this should be sought from the Headteacher.

Breach or failure to observe the provisions of this document may lead to action being taken under the school disciplinary procedure.

This document is available to all staff from Mr Henry Jennings or in the Staff Handbook in the Staff Room as well as being provided on induction to all new members of staff.

The Code of Conduct is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of conduct and behaviour and in circumstances where guidance does not exist individuals are expected to use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils.

2. Scope

The Code of Conduct applies to:

- all members of staff, including teaching and support staff;
- volunteers, including governors;
- casual workers;
- temporary and supply staff, either from agencies or engaged directly;
- student placements, including those undertaking initial teacher training, and apprentices.

References to ‘staff’ throughout the Code of Conduct refer to all of the above groups.

Any links within this document to other documents are for ease of use and do not form part of this Code of Conduct.

This Code of Conduct exists in addition to Hampshire County Council's Officers Code of Conduct

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Professional standards at work

Staff are expected to demonstrate the highest possible standards of personal and professional conduct and behaviour and consistently act with honesty and integrity. The school expects staff to treat each other, pupils, parents and the wider school community with dignity and respect at all times.

Furthermore, staff must have regard for the ethos and values of the school as well as its policies and procedures and act in accordance with these at all times, including in their dealings with those who come into contact with the school e.g. visitors.

Staff must act in accordance with their duty of care to pupils and ensure that the safety and welfare of the children and young people at the school are accorded the highest priority. In this and other ways staff should always maintain standards of conduct and behaviour which sustain their professional standing and that of the school.

Safeguarding

Teachers are reminded of, and are expected to uphold, their wider responsibilities as set out in the Teachers' Standards, including an understanding of, and acting within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

Binsted CE Primary School recognises its statutory and moral duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and understands that staff play a vital role in meeting these responsibilities. Staff must be aware of their individual safeguarding responsibilities, including to provide a safe environment in which children can learn, to be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect, to identify children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm and to take appropriate action in such cases to prevent concerns from escalating.

All members of staff must be aware of the school's systems for supporting child safeguarding, including the role of the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

In this school the DSL(s) is Mr Henry Jennings and DDSL is Mrs L-J Lucas

Staff have a professional duty to report concerns about the welfare of a child. Any such concerns must be raised without delay to the school's DSL in the first instance or to DDSL, Mrs L-J Lucas if the DSL cannot be located. In the event that none of the above are available contact school office (01420 23200) or Hampshire County

Council's Safeguarding team (01962 876364). There should be no delay in reporting a concern if there is risk of immediate serious harm to a child.

Staff are reminded of their duty to report safeguarding concerns about staff. Any concerns or allegations must be raised without delay to the school's DSL in the first instance or to DDSL, L-J Lucas if the DSL cannot be located.

Staff should be familiar with the school's child protection policy, which is available to all staff in the staff handbook in the school office. All staff will receive appropriate child protection training and will be provided with guidance on child safeguarding as part of their induction to the school.

In accordance with the statutory guidance published by the Department for Education 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', all staff in Binsted CE Primary School who work directly with children are required to read Part One 'Safeguarding information for all staff'. Those staff who do not work directly with children are required, as a minimum, to read Annex A (a condensed version of Part One). Staff will be provided with either Part One or Annex A, as applicable, as part of their induction to the school.

The full document is available via the above link or from www.gov.uk
Further information is found in the guidance document 'The avoidance of unnecessary contact and allegations' in the Staff Handbook and in 'Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings' (May 2019) provided by the Safer Recruitment Consortium.

Appropriate relationships

Pupils

Individuals who work or volunteer in a school environment are in a position of trust. Staff should be mindful of the need to maintain professional boundaries appropriate to their position and must always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably.

Staff should act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to question their actions or intent. Staff should think carefully about their conduct so that misinterpretations are minimised.

Staff must avoid unnecessary physical contact with children. Where physical contact is essential, e.g. for safety reasons, the pupil's permission must be gained for that contact wherever possible. If physical contact is made to remove a pupil from a dangerous situation or an object from a pupil to prevent either harm to themselves or others, then this should be recorded and reported to Henry Jennings. In cases where accidental physical contact was made, it should be reported to Henry Jennings. In all cases staff should act in accordance with the school's restraint policy in the Staff Handbook in the staff room

Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a pupil, child or young person whether inside or outside of work is unacceptable. Staff are reminded that under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is a criminal offence for a person aged 18 or over to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18, where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual. Keeping Children Safe in Education defines a child as everyone under the age of 18.

Special Schools will often work with pupils and vulnerable adults over the age of 18. The principles within the Code of Conduct applies to all under the care of the school.

Parents

Staff are expected to interact with parents in a polite and respectful manner and recognise parents' entitlement to express any concerns they may have about their child's learning, safety or wellbeing. Staff should avoid discussing school matters with parents outside school if approached and should instead refer the parent to the normal school communication channels.

Use of IT including social media

Internal e-mail and internet systems must be used only in accordance with the school's acceptable use of ICT policy in the staff handbook in the Staff Room.

Social networking sites offer the opportunity for communication with children, young people and their parents outside normal professional boundaries. School staff must take care to protect their privacy and protect themselves from risk of allegations in relation to inappropriate relationships and cyberbullying. Staff must not have any unauthorised contact or accept 'friend' requests through social media with any pupil (including former pupils and/or those who attend other schools) unless they are family members. Staff must exercise caution when having contact online through social media with parents so as not to compromise the school's reputation or school information.

Please refer to the school's acceptable use of ICT policy in the Staff Handbook and Social Media policy in the Staff Handbook for further guidance on acceptable and unacceptable use of IT, social media and mobile phones.

Confidentiality and disclosure of information

Staff must ensure that they do not disclose confidential information to anyone who does not have the right to receive it. Where information is disclosed this should be in line with the principles of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2016 and the Data Protection Act 2018. Equally staff should not prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law. If there is doubt about whether or not to share information, advice must be sought from an appropriate senior member of staff.

Information obtained during the course of an individual's work should never be used for personal gain or benefit, nor should it be passed onto others who might use it in such a way.

Dress and appearance

An individual's dress and appearance is a matter of personal choice; however, staff should ensure that they dress appropriately, decently and safely for a school environment and for the role they undertake, as well as setting a good example to both pupils and visitors.

Staff should have particular regard to the health and safety risks involved with certain lessons i.e. physical education/food technology and the need to dress appropriately and safely when undertaking these activities, such as wearing appropriate footwear, removing jewellery etc.

The school recognises the diversity of cultures and religions of its staff and will take a sensitive approach when this affects dress and uniform requirements. However, priority will be given to health and safety, security and other similar considerations of other staff, pupils and the school.

The Governing Body of the school is committed to equality for all in the appointment, development, training and promotion of staff, and in all dealings with pupils and parents of the school. It also recognises that all members of staff have the right to work in a safe environment without fear of discrimination, harassment or abuse.

Equal opportunities

All pupils, colleagues, parents, members of the public and wider school community have the right to be treated with fairness and equality and

must not be discriminated against. The school expects staff to uphold these principles.

Conduct outside work

Care must be taken by staff to avoid any conflict of interest between activities undertaken outside school and responsibilities within school. In no case should actions or activities undertaken outside of work (including but not limited to relationships and social media contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults) bring the school into disrepute**.**

Staff must disclose any misconduct or alleged misconduct made against them, including any incidents arising from alternative or additional employment outside of this school. Disclosure must be made to Henry Jennings without delay, after which consideration will be given to the relevance or otherwise of the misconduct to their role in the school.

Teachers are reminded that the Teachers' Standards, and specifically Part Two: Personal and Professional Conduct, set out their responsibilities in relation to upholding public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school.

Where staff are in doubt as to whether there is a conflict of interest advice must be sought from Henry Jennings.

Low level concerns

The term 'low level concerns' is outlined in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and refers to concerns about an adult working in or on behalf of the school who may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with this code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work. This concern does not necessarily meet the allegations threshold for referral to the LADO, but nevertheless should be shared responsibly, recorded and dealt with appropriately.

The purpose of managing low level concerns is to create and embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency; also to protect staff from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.

Staff can protect themselves by following this code of conduct and 'The avoidance of unnecessary contact and allegations' guidance, including the Do's and Don'ts.

Low level concerns about a staff member, including a volunteer or contractor, should be reported in the same way as allegations as outlined in the school's Child Protection policy.

Declaration of interests

Staff have a responsibility to avoid any conflict between their business and personal interests and the interests of the school.

Relationships

Staff should consider carefully whether they need to declare to the school any relationship with an individual where this might cause a conflict with the school's activities, for example, a relationship with a Governor, another staff member or a contractor who provides services to the school. Where such a declaration is necessary this should be made to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors in the case of a Headteacher.

School governors

Staff acting as governors in their own or other school/education institution must complete the governors register of interests.

Business interests

All staff should complete the school's register of business interests and declare any business interests that could result in any conflict of interest, including but not limited to conflicts:

- in a contract or proposed contract by direct or family connection
- in the appointment, reappointment, suspension or dismissal of a worker or governor at the school
- in the pay or appraisal of someone working at the school

Interest in contracts

You must inform your Headteacher in writing if you have any financial interest in a contract that the school has entered into or is proposing to enter into. For staff in Community schools, It is a criminal offence not to disclose this, and any disclosures should be made as soon as possible. If in doubt, speak to your Headteacher for advice.

You are not required to make a disclosure if the contract or company is in your own name (as the school will know of your interest). Nevertheless, you should still make a disclosure.

Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided it does not conflict with the interests of the school nor be at a level which may contravene the Working Time Regulations or affect an individual's performance at work. You should notify your Headteacher if

at any time during your employment you obtain other employment within or outside school.

Whistleblowing

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (as amended) gives protection to people who disclose reasonable concerns about serious misconduct or malpractice at work. This is sometimes known as Whistleblowing. The Governing Body of the school will treat all matters of malpractice very seriously and allegations about such matters will be dealt with quickly and with appropriate confidentiality.

Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibilities in bringing matters of concern to the attention of senior leadership in the school. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

A clear procedure is provided for staff to raise issues with the purpose of assisting in reducing the risk of serious concerns being mishandled, whether by the individual or by the school. Please refer to the school's Procedure for Protected Disclosures ("Whistleblowing") for further information see the Staff Handbook in the staff room.

Health and safety

Staff must adhere to the school's Health and Safety policy and should ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and others in the school environment safe.

Please refer to the school's Health and Safety policy for further information in the Staff Handbook in the staff room.

Gifts

There may be occasions where children or parents wish to pass small tokens or gifts of appreciation to staff, for example as an end of year 'thank-you', and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value or to suggest to pupils that gifts would be appropriate or desired. Money should never be accepted as a gift.

Staff should not solicit or accept any gifts, hospitality or other reward from external parties which influences the way in which they carry out their duties or leads the giver to expect preferential treatment.

It is not acceptable for staff to give gifts to pupils and any rewards given to children must be given in agreement with the declared reward practice of the school in the Staff Handbook in the Staff Room.

Hospitality

Staff should not solicit or accept any hospitality or other reward from children, parents, contractors, outside suppliers or external parties.

Staff should only accept offers of hospitality if it is to represent the school in the community. Offers to attend purely social or sporting functions should be accepted only when these are part of the life of the community, or where the school should be seen to be represented. They should be properly authorised and recorded.

If you are offered hospitality which you consider appropriate, you must receive written approval from your Headteacher before accepting.

Acceptance by staff of hospitality through attendance at relevant conferences and courses is acceptable where it is clear the hospitality is corporate rather than personal, where the Headteacher gives consent in advance; and where the Headteacher/Governing Body is satisfied that any purchasing decisions are not compromised.

Sponsorship

The basic guidelines around accepting sponsorship from an outside organisation for a school activity are like those for accepting gifts or hospitality. Particular care must be taken when dealing with sponsors who are contractors or potential contractors.

Where the school wishes to sponsor an event or service, neither an employee nor any partner, spouse or relative must benefit from such sponsorship in a direct way, without there being full disclosure to the Headteacher of any such interest.

Similarly, where the school, through sponsorship, grant aid, financial or other means, gives support in the community, employees should ensure there is no conflict of interest involved.

Use of school resources and funds

The use of school resources, property and equipment is for school-related activities only, except where otherwise agreed.

All members of staff must use any public or school funds entrusted or handled by them in a responsible and lawful manner.

Governance

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