



# East Sheen Primary School

## Staff Code of Conduct

### 1. Introduction

This Code of Conduct outlines the expected conduct of staff at all times. All communication and interaction between members of staff, children, parents, carers, governors and visitors must reflect our Code of Conduct.

- Staff are expected to be conscientious and mindful of the aims and objectives of East Sheen Primary School.
- In addition, staff are required to develop and maintain the professional character of the school.

All staff employed by East Sheen Primary School are to follow the Code of Conduct. Staff should be aware that a failure to comply with the following Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

Volunteers and governors are also expected to follow the code of conduct.

Throughout this document the term 'staff' should be taken to include any adult in the school (and in particular teachers, teaching assistants, other support staff, governors and volunteers).

### 2. General

It is an expectation that all members of staff (and adult volunteers, governors and visitors) model courteous and respectful behaviour to the children through their appearance and all aspects of their conduct. This includes the way in which adults talk to the children as well as to each other. This includes modelling and creating positive relationships with children and adults, as outlined in the school's 'Behaviour and Discipline' policy.

The Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all staff are expected to observe. Staff may be in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that models the highest possible standards. Each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school whether inside or outside working hours.

### 3. Staff rights

To:

- Work in an atmosphere of mutual respect
- Be treated fairly
- Be listened to and for views to be respected
- Be valued for the efforts and strengths of the work undertaken and to receive support for those areas that need developing
- Work in a clean, safe, secure, unthreatening, stimulating and well organised work place
- Be kept appropriately informed through open channels of communication
- Have a workload that is conducive to work-life balance

## **4. Staff Responsibilities**

To:

- Put children at the centre of all that we do
- Separate personal and professional lives by creating clearly defined boundaries
- Challenge prejudice in the workplace and support colleagues of all social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds
- Treat and listen to pupils and others with dignity and respect
- Support the development of others
- Promote positive relationships with pupils and the local community
- Safeguard the emotional and physical well-being of pupils
- Arrive on time for events/activities appropriately dressed
- Wear the school identity lanyard whilst on school premises
- Switch mobile phones off during teaching time and when on playground duty
- Raise concerns in a non-threatening manner before they become a more serious problem
- Take responsibility for the working environment leaving it as others would wish to find it
- Challenge unprofessional behaviour in an appropriate manner
- Model positive interactions with other adults and children
- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school
- 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
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within
- Adhere to the Teachers' Standards

## **5. School Responsibilities**

To:

- Endeavour to provide high quality CPD for all staff
- Ensure appropriate performance management procedures are in effect
- Value staff achievements and support their further development
- Treat the workforce both fairly and consistently
- Ensure the environment is clean, and that resources are well maintained and accessible
- Listen to the ideas and concerns of all staff
- Raise management concerns with staff appropriately
- Be aware of the requirement to support the work-life balance and wellbeing of staff
- Endeavour to make the school an enjoyable place to work.

## **6. Setting an example**

All staff who work at East Sheen Primary School must set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils. Staff must therefore not use inappropriate or offensive language at any time.

All staff must, therefore, demonstrate the highest standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same.

All staff must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

This Code helps all staff to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable (see also Appendix 1: Aide memoire for staff).

## **7. Safeguarding Pupils**

Staff, governors and volunteers have a duty to safeguard pupils. The duty to safeguard pupils includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for Child Protection.

The school's DSL will follow policy and procedures linked to safeguarding.

Copies of the school's Child Protection Policy and Whistleblowing Procedure are available in the school staffroom or electronically from the shared drive. Staff must be familiar with these documents.

Staff must not demean or undermine pupils, their parents or carers, or colleagues.

Staff must take the utmost care of pupils under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.

Staff must not use their personal mobile phone as a camera in school or on school trips. Any photograph/video must be taken using school equipment. Staff must only save images on school computers/devices.

### **7.1 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.

### **7.2 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 [here](#).

### **7.3 Whistle-blowing**

Whistle-blowing reports wrongdoing that it is "in the public interest" to report. Examples linked to safeguarding include:

- Pupils' or staff's health and safety being put in danger
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement
- Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest

Staff are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. Their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and their confidentiality will be respected.

Staff should consider the examples above when deciding whether their concern is of a whistle-blowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or school procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

Staff should report their concern to the headteacher. If the concern is about the headteacher, 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.

Concerns should be made in writing wherever possible. They should include names of those committing wrongdoing, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter.

For our school's detailed whistle-blowing process, please refer to our whistle-blowing policy.

## **8. Honesty and Integrity**

Staff must maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money.

Staff should not accept gifts from anyone, other than token/modest items. Any items received with value in excess of £25.00 should be reported to the School Business Manager for approval by the Headship Team.

If you believe that a person has failed to comply with these instructions, you should refer to the Whistleblowing procedure.

Staff have a duty to report any concerns they have about any adult or child in the school and the school has a duty to investigate and take appropriate action.

Staff should also be aware that making a false accusation could lead to disciplinary action, clearly the school and governors would wish to differentiate between an honest mistake and wilful misconduct in this matter, making an honest mistake will not lead to disciplinary action.

## **9. Conduct outside Work**

Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school. Any such conduct could lead to dismissal.

In particular, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable and could lead to dismissal.

Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Staff must exercise caution when using social media e.g. Facebook particularly involving parents/ families from the school community. 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. (Please see Online Safety Policy).

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, schools or wider community into disrepute. Staff must only use their school email account for work purposes.

## **10. Confidentiality**

Where staff have access to confidential information about colleagues, pupils or their parents or carers, staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the individual.

All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. It must not be discussed outside of the school, including with the pupil's parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the school except with a senior member of staff with the appropriate role and authority to deal with the matter.

However, staff have an obligation to share with the Headteacher or school's Designated Safeguarding Lead any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a pupil/student. Staff must never promise a pupil/student that they will not act on information that they are told by the pupil.

## **11. Disciplinary Action**

All staff need to recognise that failure to meet these standards of behaviour and conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

## **12. Dress Code**

The Governing Body (GB) takes the view that all staff at the school should be dressed appropriately for their particular role. The GB is also mindful of the need to avoid direct or indirect discrimination against any employee on the grounds of any protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation).

The GB is aware of its responsibility to consider possible health and safety issues in determining an acceptable dress code.

In general the dress of all teaching and support staff must be tidy and smart, appropriate for a role working with children and reflecting the business-like ethos that the governors wish to foster and maintain in staff and pupils (lunchtime supervisors are permitted to wear jeans due to the nature of their responsibilities). Please also see the staff handbook.

Staff working in areas where particular dress is necessary for health and safety reasons must wear appropriate dress. Failing to wear the correct safety dress can amount to gross misconduct which could lead to dismissal.

Staff are permitted to wear religious symbols and ornaments, but the governors expect these to be discreet and worn in a safe manner. The headteacher, in consultation with the governors, is empowered to determine whether a particular symbol or ornament is sufficiently discreet, and commensurate with health and safety standards.

Garments which are generally considered as having an important religious (or racial) connotation (e.g. the Sikh turban, or headscarves worn by some religions) may be worn at all times.

No caps or hats may be worn in school, except where necessary on health and safety grounds, or have been permitted by the GB on religious or racial grounds. Head dress in line with the beliefs and traditions of various religions are allowed, EXCEPT that the governors do not permit any head covering that covers a substantial part of a person's face.

The reasons for this are:

- the governors take the view that in an institution where verbal communication and body language form an important and significant part of the work with children and young persons, it is not appropriate for any member of staff who comes into contact with pupils in teaching and learning situations to have a substantial part of their face covered; and
- the governors are concerned to ensure that the school remains vigilant about the safety and security of staff and pupils, and that no person employed by the school should have their faces covered, and that persons visiting the school wearing clothes that cover the face, should not be allowed to go beyond Reception until the Head Teacher has ascertained their identity.

## **13. Use of mobile phones**

The use of personal mobile phones by staff is only permitted at break times and in areas to which children do not normally have access –staff room, PPA room etc. Mobile phones should never be used by staff while teaching or supervising children. Personal mobile devices should not be used to take pictures of children.

## **14. Complaints**

Any complaints about the operation of this policy should be made at first to the Headteacher. If not satisfied, the complainant may take his/her complaint to the Governing Body. The governors' decision will be final.

## **15. Monitoring and Review**

The Headteacher will report annually on the working of this policy, and any adult working or visiting the school may suggest amendments at any time to be considered by the governors.

**Approved by Governors: Summer 2023**

**To be reviewed: Summer 2024**

## **Appendix 1 – Aide memoire for all staff**

Use your common sense and good judgement at all times – don't take any action (physical or verbal) in the heat of the moment. Always ask yourself "how will this look to others?"

When we speak to others we will:

- use a positive statement rather than a negative one so that children can learn what we expect of them in any situation.
- use a calm tone of voice at all times, to explain something to or instruct the children, so that they can follow our words without feeling threatened or uncomfortable.
- avoid using sarcastic words or phrases as these demean children and prevent them from developing high self-esteem.
- speak respectfully to other adults at all times, even if we disagree with them.

As professionals we will:

- avoid workplace gossip and negativity as it breeds resentment and becomes a roadblock to effective communication and collaboration. We all have a duty to take active steps to divert conversations away from this if we come across it.
- maintain confidentiality about anything that we see or hear in the workplace or in schools, so that colleagues, parents, children and outside agencies can trust us, and as a way of showing respect to our fellow professionals.
- work as part of a team, contributing as well as learning from others and helping to build up a strong workforce.
- work within the policies and practices set out by East Sheen Primary School, so that what we do is consistent with what has been agreed between all members of the staff.
- treat everyone with respect.
- dress appropriately to show that we are here to work.
- behave in a positive way despite any personal problems that we may have, especially in front of children.

## **Appendix 2 - from Teachers' Standards Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2012 (DfE)**

Personal and professional conduct

- A teacher is expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct throughout a teacher's career.
- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by: Treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions.



- Show tolerance of and respect for the rights of others not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities

### **Appendix 3 – other sources of information and guidance at East Sheen Primary School**

- The staff handbook and induction guide
- Special Leave Policy
- ESPS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- ESPS Disciplinary Procedure
- Managing Grievance Procedure for Schools
- Managing Health and Attendance Policy for Schools
- Online Safety Policy