



# COBHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Caring, Proud, Successful!

## STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

The Code of Conduct aims to give guidance to all employees as they carry out their roles within the school. It is important that the environment which we create is one which is enjoyable, supportive, non-threatening, safe, clean and conducive to working and learning.

We are all expected to conduct ourselves in a responsible and professional manner when undertaking our duties and to comply with lawful and reasonable instructions from the Headteacher.

The Code is designed to give clarification about key issues that we may come across in the course of our work. It cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour. It does highlight behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable.

### PERSONAL CONDUCT:

We should maintain high standards in terms of language and behaviour in order to avoid giving offence to other employees, children or visitors to the school.

#### Appearance/ Dress Code:

Whilst there is no formal Dress Code, we are expected to present ourselves in a professional manner. Please remember that we are working with young children and should dress appropriately for our professional role. We should ensure we are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks we undertake

This means:

- Not wearing clothing that is too revealing; such as strappy or cropped tops; see through fabrics; mini-skirts; shorts;
- Footwear should be comfortable as you may be on your feet much of the day. Open toed sandals in Summer are worn at your own risk.
- Nails should be sufficiently short to ensure safe child contact
- Jewellery/ piercings should be discreet and must not be a health and safety hazard
- If you are timetabled for PE, please ensure that you are wearing suitable clothes and footwear for these sessions. No high heels.
- Tattoos must not be offensive to others
- Hair and beards should not compromise health and safety.
- Dress code will always be flexible and sensitive to cultural wishes/disability/faith & gender.

#### General Conduct at work:

We are expected to conduct ourselves within the overall values of the school; school policies and procedures and our contractual obligations.



Smoking is **NOT PERMITTED** in any area of the school site, including the school grounds.



#### Mobile Telephones:

- ❖ Please ensure that your mobile phones are switched off whilst you are working with children
- ❖ Mobile Phones **MUST NOT** be used during working hours
- ❖ Mobile Phones **MUST NOT** be used to take photographs/ images of children at **ANY TIME**.

#### Language and attitude:

We are expected to be sensitive and considerate in the way we communicate with our colleagues and our children. We should talk to others in the way in which we would like to be spoken to ourselves.

For Example:

- Constructive criticism can be expressed clearly in a way which lets the other person retain their dignity and self-respect.

<p><b><u>Confidentiality and corporate responsibility:</u></b> We should all be aware of our duty to manage a united school approach when dealing with members of the public and children. This means taking responsibility for incidents of dispute or dissatisfaction and not airing these publically. This applies equally to criticising the school publically and using the press to air your concerns or grievances.</p>	<p>Please be aware that there are certain actions that the school would consider as general or gross misconduct. For Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff with concerns should always follow school procedures in the first instance;</li> <li>• It is a disciplinary offense to 'go public' with information that could potentially harm the school's reputation.</li> </ul>
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**OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES:**

<p><b><u>Membership of Societies/Organisations:</u></b> The school encourages membership of societies and professional bodies. However, should you find a conflict of interest arises you should discuss this with the Headteacher.</p>	
<p><b><u>Other Employment:</u></b> You should not engage in other employment if doing so will have an adverse effect on the way in which you perform your duties, or could result in a conflict of interest. If you have any doubts you should speak to the Headteacher.</p>	<p>For Example: Private work or work connected with an outside interest must not be done in school time, nor with the use of school materials, without the consent of the Headteacher. Staff are required to register any business interests on the appropriate form which is available from the office.</p>

**GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY:**

<p><b><u>Staff receiving gifts:</u></b> We all have to take care that we do not accept any gifts that may be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. Invitations to working meals, a social function to which other employees are invited, or some other general celebration are usually acceptable.</p>	<p>This means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are occasions when learners or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff (at Christmas or as a Thank you) and this is acceptable, as are small gifts from companies such as calendars, diaries, pencils etc</li> <li>• Ensure that gifts received or given in situations that may be misconstrued are declared.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Staff giving gifts/ rewards:</u></b> Any reward given to a child should be recognised practice within the establishment, consistent with agreed protocols, and not based on favouritism.</p>	<p>This means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally, only give gifts to an individual child as part of an agreed reward system.</li> </ul>

**USE OF ICT AND SOCIAL NETWORKING:**

<p>The acceptable use of ICT facilities is clearly outlined within the 'Acceptable Use of ICT' policy.</p> <p>The aim of the guidelines are to ensure security of school IT systems and to safeguard the school, our employees and our children.</p>	<p>Staff should recognise the potential for misinterpretation and abuse of images take in school therefore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Photographs and videos of children must only be taken using school devices</li> <li>• Give consideration to how images are organised</li> <li>• Photographs may only be published with parental permission</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Social Networking:</u></b> Whilst Social Networking is a way in which members of the school community can communicate with each other, staff need to be aware of the implications of their comments/postings. Comments which may be understood as humorous or flippant by the people making them can be misinterpreted or cause great offense to a wider audience and bring the school or individual into disrepute. We all work in a professional environment and as such it is beholden upon us to behave in a professional manner on</p>	<p>This means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All conversations/ photographs relating to children or members of their family are prohibited</li> <li>• Any conversations/ photographs related to school policy, procedures or staff members are also prohibited</li> <li>• Cobham Primary School must not be discussed at all over social networking sites.</li> <li>• Some ill-advised comments/ postings may be construed as cyber-bullying and can constitute Gross misconduct.</li> </ul>

<p>social networking sites where there is minimal control over who sees your comments.</p>	
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**CONFIDENTIALITY:**

<p>Within the school communication should be open and accessible to all. However, all information should be considered confidential to outsiders and Academic Records of children should not be divulged unless required by law or expressly authorised to do so.</p> <p>Personal information on anybody is internally confidential unless part of agreed procedures. Any breach of confidence is a serious disciplinary matter.</p> <p>However, there are circumstances in which it is our responsibility to share information (when the safety of a child is at risk) in which case you need to be precise about the information that you give.</p>	<p>This means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That staff are expected to treat information they receive about children in a discreet and confidential manner</li> <li>• That staff in doubt about sharing information they hold or which has been requested of them, should seek advice from a member of the SLT</li> <li>• Information should never be used to the staff's own or other staffs' advantage. Nor should it be used to intimidate, humiliate or embarrass children</li> <li>• <b>REMEMBER</b> you can never tell a child that you will keep a secret if you believe that secret contains information that leads you to believe there are child protection concerns for that child or any others.</li> <li>• It is your duty to notify the DSL with safeguarding concerns.</li> </ul>
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**RELATIONSHIPS:**

<p><b><u>Positions of Trust:</u></b> All adults working with children in an education setting are in positions of trust. A relationship between a member of staff and a pupil cannot be of equals as this increases the possibility of exploitation and harm. Staff have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.</p> <p>We should conduct ourselves at all times in ways that are consistent with school policy and procedures.</p>	<p>This means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That staff should not behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or act as a role model</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Personal relationships:</u></b> Should a personal relationship already exist (relative or child of close family friend) it should be declared to the Headteacher, as it is better if that child is placed within an alternative class.</p>	
<p><b><u>Social Contact:</u></b> We should not establish or seek to establish social contact with children for the purpose of securing a friendship.</p>	<p>This means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Never give your personal E-Mail address, phone number or home address to children</li> <li>• That staff should not compromise their position within the work setting by behaviour outside work.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Sexual Contact:</u></b> Any sexual contact between staff and children is inappropriate and illegal. This includes causing or inciting children to engage in or watch sexual activity; making sexual remarks; discussing your own personal sexual relationships in the presence of children. Staff should also record all inappropriate sexual talk or touch by a child.</p>	<p>There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' where the sole purpose is to gain the trust of the child and manipulate the relationship so that sexual activity can take place. Staff should be aware of conferring special attention on a child as this could be considered as part of the 'grooming' process.</p>

<b>PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH CHILDREN:</b>	
<p>On some occasions it may be appropriate for staff to have physical contact with children. Take care how you touch children, make sure all touching/ hugging is age and situation appropriate.</p> <p>Any such contact must not be secretive or for the gratification of the adult. Where feasible staff should, seek permission from the child before any contact.</p> <p>Any form of physical punishment is unlawful as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour unless it is by way of restraint.</p>	<p>This means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That staff should be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or anyone to whom the action is described</li> <li>• Never touch a child in a way in which may be considered indecent</li> <li>• Always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny</li> <li>• Never indulge in horseplay, tickling or fun fights</li> <li>• Consideration should be made to children for whom touching is particularly unwelcome (ASD; certain cultural backgrounds etc)</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Children in Distress:</u></b></p> <p>There may be occasions when a distressed child needs comfort and reassurance.</p> <p>You should use your discretion in such cases.</p> <p>You should remain self-aware at all times in order that contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.</p>	<p>This means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff should consider the way in which comfort is offered</li> <li>• Make sure that the physical contact is what the child wants</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Care, Control and Physical Intervention:</u></b></p> <p>There may be occasions where it is necessary for staff to restrain a child to prevent them from inflicting injury to others, self-injury, damaging property, or causing disruption. In such cases only the minimum force necessary should be used and any action taken must be to protect the child.</p> <p>Whilst the school does not expect you to physically intervene with children, there may be certain circumstances where there is no option.</p>	<p>This means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff should always seek to defuse situations using strategies other than physical intervention</li> <li>• Always use minimum force for the shortest period - preferably with assistance from a colleague</li> <li>• Staff should understand that the school will support staff if they have had to physically intervene - if they have used minimum reasonable force</li> <li>• Staff should be aware that the school will take action if they have acted unprofessionally, used force to punish a learner or used unnecessary force</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Positive Behaviour Management:</u></b></p> <p>All children have a right to be treated with respect and dignity.</p> <p>You should not use any form of degrading treatment; nor use sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards children.</p>	<p>This means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff should follow the agreed Behaviour Policy</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>One to One Situations:</u></b></p> <p>If you are working in a one to one situation with children you may be more vulnerable to allegations.</p>	<p>This means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to avoid being alone with a child for long periods of time</li> <li>• Avoid meetings with children in remote or secluded areas</li> <li>• Ensure there is a visual access and/or open door</li> <li>• Inform other staff that you are working 1-1 in case they are needed in an emergency</li> <li>• Always report any situation where a child becomes distressed or angry to a member of SLT</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Physical Education (PE):</u></b></p> <p>Some staff may have to initiate contact to support a child (Gymnastics), staff should ensure the child's consent.</p> <p>Changing and showering for swimming - although we respect a child's privacy there should be appropriate supervision whilst changing to safeguard and satisfy health and safety considerations and to prevent bullying.</p>	

<p><b><u>Intimate Care:</u></b>  All children have a right to safety, privacy and dignity. Children should be encouraged to act independently and to undertake as much of their personal care as possible. Children with SEN have a 'Care Plan' signed by their parents.</p>	<p>This means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to avoid changing children and never do the personal things the child is able to do themselves (trouser flies etc)</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Transporting Children:</u></b>  The transporting of children in private vehicles should be planned (except in an emergency) with at least one adult additional to the driver, to act as an escort.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only give children a lift in a car with permission from the Headteacher</li> </ul>

<b><u>WHISTLEBLOWING:</u></b>	
<p>Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of SLT and/or relevant external agencies. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.</p> <p>All staff should be aware of the school's Safeguarding policy and procedures and know where, when and how to use MY CONCERN to record if they have concerns about a child.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please refer to 'Whistleblowing' Policy</li> </ul> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>

<b><u>BULLYING; HARASSMENT AND VICTIMISATION:</u></b>	
<p>At Cobham Primary School we firmly believe that the dignity of all employees must be respected, that staff should behave courteously and that the school environment should be pleasant for all.</p> <p>This school is firmly opposed to any form of discrimination.</p>	

Reviewed September 2022