

North Baddesley Infant School & Nursery

Policy for Dignity and Conduct at Work (Code of Conduct)

This policy was agreed and formally adopted on 17 January 2019 and replaces the policy previously adopted on 26.6.15

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Last review: November 2022



Our policy for dignity and conduct at work relates to other school policies and should be read in conjunction with these. Any reference to "parents" throughout the policy refers to parents, carers or anyone else with primary care responsibility for a child.

General Principles

Our policy for dignity and conduct at work supports this by:

- Establishing a set of principles which underpin the expected conduct of staff with the intention of encouraging staff to achieve the highest standards of conduct at work and of minimising the risk of improper conduct occurring.
- Recognising that everyone has the right to be treated and treat others with dignity, courtesy and respect at work.
- Recognising the school's statutory and moral duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and understanding that staff play a vital role in meeting these responsibilities.
- Ensuring North Baddesley Infant School & Nursery is a safe and positive place to work.
- Not tolerating any form of bullying or harassment.
- Expecting staff to be punctual and appropriately dressed.
- Approach problems constructively, recognising a shared responsibility for finding a solution.
- Ensuring staff:
 - Realise their responsibility to treat pupils, parents/carers and their colleagues with unconditional positive regard and not demean or undermine them or act in a manner which is discriminatory.
 - Take reasonable care of pupils under their supervision.
 - Observe and maintain confidentiality at all times.
 - Maintain appropriate standards of honesty and integrity - this includes the use of school property and finance.
 - Do not misuse or misrepresent their professional position, qualifications or experience.
 - Do not otherwise bring the reputation and standing of the school or the profession into serious disrepute.
 - Do not act in breach of the school's policies.
 - Have high expectations of pupils.
 - Support their colleagues in achieving the highest professional standards.
 - Respect the skills, expertise and contributions of colleagues and build productive working relationships with them in the interests of pupils.
 - Promote the vision, ethos and values of the school.
 - Take professional responsibility for themselves.

This Code of Conduct is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of conduct and behaviour and cannot cover every eventuality. It does not replace the general requirements of the law, common sense and good conduct. 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. 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 **sharedresources/teachingstaff/schoolsystems/policies** as well as being provided on induction to all new members of staff.

Scope

The Code of Conduct applies to:

- all members of staff, including teaching and support staff;
- all members of 'Treetops' staff
- volunteers,
- all governors (see also Appendix 2)
- 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' or 'employees' throughout the Code of Conduct refer to all of the above groups.

The Code of Conduct exists in addition to Hampshire County Council's [Local Government Code of Conduct](#).

Procedures:

All leaders are required to ensure employees are:

- Spoken to with courtesy on all occasions
- Spoken and written about with respect
- Given due credit for their achievements
- Able to enjoy a working environment free from exposure to offensive written or graphic material

It is the responsibility of all employees to demonstrate the highest possible standards of personal and professional conduct and behaviour and consistently act with honesty and integrity.

Teachers 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.

Professional standards:

Employees are required to:

- Treat colleagues and those with whom they come into professional contact with (including pupils, parents and the wider school community) with dignity and respect at all times.
- 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.
- Provide a safe environment in which pupils can learn, to be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect, to identify pupils who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm and to take appropriate action in such cases to prevent concerns from escalating.
- Be aware of the school's systems for supporting child safeguarding, including the role of the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Be aware of the effect that their own behaviour and appearance can have on others.
- Not discriminate favourably or unfavourably towards any student and ensure they treat all pupils equally.
- Ensure that relationships with pupils and parents and carers remain on a professional footing and maintain professional boundaries, considering whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably.
- Support colleagues if they experience incidents which affront their dignity, including bullying, harassment and victimization.
- Act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to question their actions or intent.
- Inform their managers if they are aware of any incident and acknowledge their individual responsibilities in bringing matters of concern to the attention of senior leadership in the school.
- Be a good role model and set a positive example to colleagues, pupils, parents and all members of the wider school community.

- 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. A copy of this available via **sharedresources/teachingstaff/schoolsystems/policies**
- Consider their language and refrain from making hurtful personal comments to or about others.
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour on the part of others where appropriate and report any incident to their line manager or to an appropriate senior manager, school adviser, Human Resources Officer or via their trades union.
- Find appropriate times and settings to discuss issues and concerns and ask questions.
- Respect the work life balance of other staff and as such do not contact them out of their working hours unless in the event of an emergency or by prior mutual agreement.
- Follow the school's policies and procedures and ensure their own personal or political opinions do not interfere with the provisions of balanced professional advice or their duty to carry out those policies.
- Carefully consider whether they need to declare to the school any relationship with an individual where this might cause a conflict with the school's activities, e.g, 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.
- Not set up or accept employment with a business engaged in work that is in direct competition with North Baddesley Infant School & Nursery.
- Ensure that activities undertaken outside school (including paid or voluntary work taken outside school) does not conflict with the school's interest or bring the school into disrepute. Working commitments to another employer must not interfere with work or affect an individual's performance at North Baddesley Infant School & Nursery. Staff must be able to work for the school at the contracted/arranged times and work outside of school should not be at a level which may contravene the Working Time Regulations or affect an individual's performance at work.
- 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 the Headteacher without delay, after which consideration will be given to the relevance or otherwise of the misconduct to their role in the school.

Safeguarding:

- Staff have a professional duty to report concerns about the welfare of a child.
- Concerns about the welfare of a child must be raised without delay to the school's DSL in the first instance or to a Designated Safeguarding Officer, (DSO) if the DSL cannot be located. In this school the DSL is Carla Lashmar. In the event that none of the above are available **contact Hampshire County Council's Safeguarding team on 0300 555 1373**. 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 a DSO if the DSL cannot be located.
- Staff should be familiar with the school's child protection policy, which is available to all staff **via sharedresources/teachingstaff/schoolsystems/policies**. 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](#)' (September 2020) all staff are required to read Part One '[Safeguarding information for all staff](#)' and Annex A and will be provided with a copy as part of their induction to the school. The full document is available via the above link or from www.gov.uk. A copy is also available via **sharedresources/teachingstaff/schoolsystems/policies**.
- Further information is found in the guidance document '[The avoidance of unnecessary contact and allegations](#)'. A copy is also available via **sharedresources/teachingstaff/schoolsystems/policies**.

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 pupils. 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 the Headteacher. In cases where accidental physical contact was made, it should be reported to the Headteacher. In all cases staff should act in accordance with the school's restraint policy, a copy of which is available via **teacherpool/school systems/policies**.
- Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a pupil 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.

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.

Confidentiality and disclosure of information:

- Staff must not disclose personal or financial information about any other member of staff to any unauthorised person, external organisation or agency without the express consent of the individual concerned or that of the Headteacher.
- Staff must also not disclose confidential information to any person who is not authorised to receive it. Where information is disclosed this should be in line with the principles of 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 the Headteacher.

Dress code:

Staff are the most important role models in the school. The Governors recognise the rights of staff to choose what they wear and how they appear. However, as role models they need to set an example to the pupils. The governors of the school do not expect the staff to wear a uniform but do expect the staff to be smartly and appropriately dressed and well presented in school.

- Staff are required to dress in a smart and professional manner. Appropriate clothing for PE should also be worn. For this reason, jeans (of any colour) are not an acceptable form of dress with the exception of school trips, closure training days or charity fundraising days (e.g. jeans for genes day and dress as you like day). Underwear (e.g. bra straps, thongs and the tops of tights should not be visible and overly short skirts, shorts and low cut tops or vests with spaghetti straps are inappropriate).
- 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.
- Only sandals with straps around the heel are to be worn.
- Non-teaching roles – such as site manager and wraparound care (Treetops) – may dress appropriate for their roles including smart tracksuit bottoms and black (only) jeans.

Bullying and harassment:

- Whilst individuals may have a differing view of what constitutes bullying and harassment, it is the recipient's perception that is paramount.
- The senior leadership team is responsible for preventing harassment and dealing with complaints.
- All claims of harassment or bullying will be dealt with quickly, fairly, seriously and in confidence. Specific grievance and disciplinary policies exist to deal with this.
- Whilst malicious claims are rare, employees who falsely accuse others of bullying or harassment must be aware that they themselves may be subject to disciplinary action.
- Staff must not swear at pupils or any other members of the school community, call them by offensive names or make offensive remarks of a sexual, racist or other discriminatory nature.

Use of IT, mobile phones and social media:

- Internal e-mail and internet systems must be used only in accordance with the school's acceptable use of IT policy. A copy is available via **[sharedresources/teachingstaff/schoolsystems/policies](#)**
- 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 parent or pupil (including former pupils and/or those who attend other schools) unless they are family members.
- Please refer to the school's acceptable use of IT policy, Use of IT Resources Do's and Don'ts: advice for school staff' and Social Media policy for further guidance on acceptable and unacceptable use of IT, social media and mobile phones. A copy of each of these is available via **[sharedresources/teachingstaff/schoolsystems/policies](#)**

Conduct outside of 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 the headteacher 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 the headteacher.

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.

Gifts and hospitality:

- There may be occasions where pupils or parents wish to pass small tokens 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.

- It is not acceptable for staff to give gifts to individual pupils, outside of the school's systems for whole class end of year, Christmas and Easter gifts and any rewards given to pupils must be given in agreement with the declared reward practice of the school.
- Staff should not solicit or accept any gift, 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.

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.

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 pupils 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. A copy is available via **teacherpool/school systems/policies**

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The school will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

Appendix 1

Examples of unacceptable behaviour:
(Please note, this is not an exhaustive list)

- Intimidating others
- Acting to the detriment of newly qualified or junior teacher
- Deliberately undermining the authority of the headteacher and staff colleagues
- Misrepresenting a confidential discussion between two members of staff, e.g. a teacher and the headteacher
- Inviting the involvement of parents or other members of the school community in defence of a refusal to undertake contractual obligations
- Theft of school property
- Submission of false mileage expenses
- Using school administrative staff and facilities for private interests
- Using the school equipment to view pornography
- Falsifying references or qualifications
- Leaving a class unattended or teachers regularly “nipping out” of their classroom and leaving only the TA in the room when they are meant to be teaching
- Taking personal phone calls and texting whilst in the presence of pupils (e.g. in the classroom or playground)
- Using social media/networking sites during the school day

Appendix 2

Code of conduct – responsibilities specific to the Governing Body.

The Governing Body will carry out their responsibilities in accordance with the principles and procedures detailed in this policy. To reflect their specific responsibilities members also approved the following clarifications in respect of Confidentiality and Conflicts of interest. (Source NGA Code of Conduct 2018)

Confidentiality

All members of the Governing Body will:-

- observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside or outside school.
- exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school/trust business arise outside a governing board meeting.
- not reveal the details of any governing board vote.
- ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.

Ceasing to be a governor

- All members of the Governing Body understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor leaves office

Conflicts of interest

All members of the Governing Body will :-

- record any pecuniary or other business interest (including those related to people they are connected with) that have in connection with the governing board's business in the Register of Business Interests, and if any such conflicted matter arises in a meeting the member will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.
- accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school's website.
- declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
- act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the governing board.