



Staff Code of Conduct

Mugginton Church of England Primary School

Reviewed	<i>September 2023</i>
HT	J Green
CoG	C Stroud
Future Review	<i>Autumn 2024</i>

Code of Conduct for Staff

This policy has been written in accordance with the Christian ethos of our school, our recognition of British values, an awareness of our position in the Global community and taking account of all current Safeguarding and Child Protection guidance.

1. Introduction

We value and respect all members of the community. Colleagues are expected to work in co-operation and collaboration, within an ethos of mutual trust and confidence. All employees and volunteers must be committed to promoting the safety, welfare and interests of children as paramount. Staff are expected to place the wellbeing, development and progress of children at the heart of their professional practice. We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards.

- 1.1. The public is entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all School employees. To serve the School, you should implement its policies and perform your duties, with integrity, honesty, impartiality and objectivity, always asking yourself, 'does this help our children?'.
- 1.2. The purpose of the Code is to assist you in carrying out your job by making clear the standards of behaviour the School requires you to meet. It incorporates the existing laws, regulations and conditions of service you should be most aware of in your work for the School.

2. Scope & Legislation

- 2.1. The Code applies to all employees of the School including contractors, agency staff, volunteers, peripatetic music teachers and those on student/work experience placements working on behalf of the School.
- 2.2. We are required to establish procedures for the regulation of staff conduct under regulation 7 of The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009.
- 2.3. In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, we should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistle-blowing, as well as acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.
- 2.4. You should read the Code in conjunction with professional standards, other school policies, requirements and guidance regarding standards of conduct in particular areas of work. This list is not exhaustive and you should familiarise yourself with any relevant guidance which may be provided in relation to your particular area of work. You should address any further queries you have to the Headteacher.

3. Accountability

- 3.1. As an employee, you must act in accordance with the principles set out in this Code, recognising the duty of all public-sector employees to discharge public functions reasonably and according to the law.
- 3.2. If you fail to comply with the Code's provisions, this may result in action under the School's Disciplinary Procedure.

4. Maintenance of Standards

- 4.1. You should inform your head teacher if you identify any deficiency in the service provided by the School, resulting from breaches of this Code. If you have concerns about raising the deficiency with your line manager, and wish to maintain confidentiality, you can use the School's Confidential Reporting Code. Under this code you should make disclosures about possible malpractice to:

- a) Your line manager
- b) Where (a) is inappropriate, the Headteacher
- c) Where (a) and (b) are inappropriate, you should approach the Chair of Governors
- d) Where the disclosure relates to potential harm/abuse of a child, you should contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), contact details can be found in the Child Protection procedures and on the County Council website
- e) If the concern is regarding financial irregularities or fraud then you should report to the Headteacher/Chair of Governors. Where this is not appropriate you should contact the Audit Service at the Local Authority.

4.2. Honesty and Integrity

You must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in your work. You should treat all pupils, colleagues, parents/carers and visitors with respect and professional courtesy. You should maintain professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which may lead any reasonable adult to question your behaviour, motivations or intentions

In a school the size of Mugginton it is the case that lines can become blurred between parent, community, children and school staff. With this in mind, please be particularly mindful that discussions/communications you may have with parents can easily be misconstrued if care and the utmost professionalism is not applied at all times.

4.3. In order to maintain high standards of working practice with and/or around children, you are expected to comply with 'safe working practice' guidance.

5. Safeguarding Pupils/Students

You have a duty to safeguard pupils/students from:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Specific safeguarding issues as outlined by the DfE guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, which includes responsibilities in relation to Prevent.

You must take reasonable care of pupils under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their welfare and safety. Failure to do so may be regarded as neglect.

You must comply with school policy that supports the wellbeing of pupils and staff and this includes co-operation and collaboration with external agencies that support the welfare of children.

There is a duty to safeguard pupils which includes the duty to report any concerns about a pupil and to have a working knowledge of the procedures in place for this. You have a professional responsibility to inform an appropriate person if it is believed that a colleague is behaving in a way that compromises the wellbeing and safety of any child/young person or group of children or young people. You should know about and have access to the Confidential Reporting Code and the Whistleblowing Procedure (available on the school website) and feel able to use this.

Please see national guidance (Keeping Children Safe in Education) listed at the end of this handbook

5.1 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

Please see 'Allegations that may meet the harm threshold' in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

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.

5.2 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 in the Staff Handbook.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will always be applied with common sense and judgement.

6. 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.

7. Acceptable use of technology

Staff will not use technology in school to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.

Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school equipment for personal use, in school hours or in front of pupils. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.

We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system.

8. Setting an Example

All staff who work in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils.

You must, therefore, demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same and avoid putting yourself at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

You must follow guidance in line with safer working practices.

You must not have any electronic communication, other than via the school's platforms, and/or accept as friends, pupils under the age of 18 including ex pupils, this includes the use of personal mobiles, and or social networking sites or media.

Expectations in relation to staff use of electronic communication, including the internet, are detailed in the school's Code of Conduct listed at the end of Section 4 and available on the school website. Attention is particularly drawn to the section of that policy, which covers the use of social media. You have a responsibility to familiarise yourself with the policy and adhere to the requirements entailed.

9. Dress and Appearance

Your appearance, dress and behaviour is expected to promote appropriate boundaries and working relationships between the pupils and the staff/volunteer body, as role models and responsible adults in a position of trust. You should dress in ways that are appropriate and relevant to your role. You should dress in ways that are not likely to cause offense, embarrassment, distract or give rise to misunderstanding.

1. Conduct Outside Work

You must not behave in a manner which any reasonable adult would question your suitability to work with children or young people. However, we recognise that teaching staff and others who work in a school should not be prevented from living a 'normal life' and must feel free to use social media etc in a manner consistent with those in other professions.

You must not engage in conduct outside work which could easily damage your own reputation and that of the school and this is especially important in and around our immediate local community

2. Disclosure of Information

- (a) The School is committed to open government and to rights of public scrutiny and participation. Legislation, including the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998, requires that certain types of information must be made available to the public and other recognised third parties and to employees. Advice and guidance on the requirements of the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts is available from the Legal Services' Division at County Hall and requests may be made through the Headteacher.
- (b) You have a responsibility to safeguard the security and confidentiality of personal information you hold and you should ensure that only the appropriate amount of information required is provided to those who have a clearly established and legitimate need to use it. Advice and guidance on existing statutory or common law obligations regarding confidentiality is also available to the school from the Legal Services' Division at County Hall.
- (c) You should not use any information obtained in the course of your employment for personal gain or benefit, nor should you pass it on to others who might use it in such a way.

3. Confidentiality

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the school, staff, pupils and their parents.

This information should never be:

- Disclosed to anyone unless required by law or with consent from the relevant party or parties
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, as detailed further in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

4. Relationships

- i) You should always remember your responsibilities to the community you serve and ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery to all users, groups and individuals within that community. These responsibilities apply equally to your conduct with fellow employees, contractors, agency staff, volunteers and those on student/work experience placements. In short, your colleagues are fellow human beings with unique, intrinsic value and deserve to be treated with respect and courtesy.
 - ii) You are expected to work as part of a whole school team.
 - iii) You should take positive steps to understand the roles of other colleagues in the children's workforce. You are expected to cooperate with other professional colleagues who have a role in enabling children to thrive and succeed.
 - iv) You should follow the school's ethos and approach in any communication with parents and carers.
- (b) **Contractors**
- i) If you engage in the provision of work under contract, or supervise contractors or have any other

official relationship with contractors or have previously had or currently have a relationship in a private or domestic capacity with contractors, you should formally declare that relationship to your Headteacher/Chair of Governor and may need to complete a Register of Business Interests form.

- ii) Orders and contracts must always be awarded on merit, in accordance with Financial Regulations and Standing Orders in Relation to Contracts, and no special favour should be shown to businesses run by, for example, friends, partners or relatives in the tendering process. No part of the local community should be discriminated against.
- iii) As a private citizen, you should be aware of possible conflicts of interest when you buy goods or use the services of firms who have dealings with the School and you should follow official procedures relating to the disclosure of any such transactions.

5. Equalities

- (a) You must comply with the School's Equalities Policy and legal requirements relating to equality issues. The School is committed to promoting equality of opportunity, preventing unlawful discrimination in all of its activities and to valuing diversity.

6. Appointment and other Employment Matters

- (a) If you are involved in the appointment of employees, you should be aware that it is unlawful for you to make an appointment based on anything other than the ability of the candidate to undertake the duties of the post. To avoid any possible accusation of bias, you should not be involved in an appointment where you are related to an applicant or have/have had a close association with the applicant.
- (b) You should not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, promotion or pay and conditions adjustments for another employee who is a relative or with whom you have/have had a close association.
- (c) Where you have been provided with a "benefit in kind" or other untaxed income, whether this has been funded from the school's delegated budget, private school fund or parental contributions this must be formally recoded within the school for notification to the County Council. Where you are uncertain about whether you need to declare a "benefit in kind" or untaxed income you should discuss this with your Headteacher, who should consult with the County Council's Shared Service Centre.

7. Taking Other Employment

- (a) You should not undertake additional employment (paid or unpaid), or allow your name to be put forward for consideration for such work, if your proposed additional work either will or has the potential to:
 - Create a conflict of interest
 - Overlap with official duties
 - Make use of material to which you have access by virtue of your position
 - Weaken public confidence in the School

You should, in any case, inform your Headteacher of any proposed secondary employment if you consider that any of the bullet points above apply. In general, there is no reason why someone should not be able to work simultaneously in two or more schools. This would not in itself create a conflict of interest and, therefore, the permission of your current employer is not required in order for you to seek additional employment, provided that none of the specific issues set out in the bullet points above would apply.

(b) For supply staff only.

If you have or are seeking additional employment either paid or unpaid in other establishments, or allow yourself to be considered for such work, the work in question should not;

- Create a conflict of interest
- Overlap with official duties
- Make use of material to which you have access by virtue of your position
- Weaken public confidence in the School or Council

When you consider any proposed other employment which may conflict with these requirements, you should inform your line manager(s) and you may be required to seek the agreement of Headteacher/Governing Board to the proposed additional employment. Supply teachers do not need the permission of a school that they are working with in order to seek additional employment, provided that none of the bullet points above would apply. In normal circumstances there would not be a conflict of interest.

8. Personal Interests

- (a) Personal interests must not conflict with your public duty. An official position or information acquired in the course of your employment must not be used to further personal interests or for the interests of others.
- (b) You must declare to your Headteacher/Chair of Governors any:
 - External financial or non-financial interest in any existing or proposed contract with the school or other organisational decision
 - Membership of any organisation which could conflict with the School's interests
- (c) You should make any such declaration in writing to your Headteacher. Any such declaration by a Headteacher should be made in writing to the Chair of Governors.

9. Stewardship

- (a) You must ensure that you use public funds entrusted to you in a responsible and lawful manner and must not utilise property, vehicles or other facilities of the School for personal use unless authorised in advance to do so. You should strive to ensure value for money to the local community and to avoid legal challenge to the School.
- (b) Personal Use of Internet and Email – any personal use must be in accordance with the School's current Acceptable Use of IT, Internet and Electronic Communication Policy and Guidance.
- (c) Personal Telephone Calls:
 - Personal mobile phones should be used for any outgoing personal telephone calls, other than in exceptional circumstances (e.g. no signal available). In these circumstances the school telephone may be used, following the school's procedure for such use, recording and payment.
 - Such outgoing calls/texts and personal incoming calls should occur infrequently and be kept as short as possible. For those working with children, calls/texts should not be made/taken during lessons, except in emergencies. As stated in the Acceptable Use of IT, Internet & Electronic Communication, 'Staff should not engage in 'recreational' chatting during working time, on email or through instant messaging, that results in lost productivity or distracts other employees from their work.'
 - School mobile phones should not be used for personal use, except in emergency.
 - Accredited professional association/union representatives may utilise the school telephone in accordance with the Facilities Agreement.
- (d) Intellectual Property is property which enjoys legal protection and is a result of intellectual effort, including patents, copyright, trademarks, designs and software. Where developed in the course of your duties, such intellectual property is the property of the School. You should not make use of the School's intellectual property to conduct private work.
- (e) Any copies of material taken for use within the School must only be as allowed under the Copyright Act and under the appropriate licensing agreement.

10. Corruption

- (a) You must be aware that it is a serious criminal offence for you to corruptly receive or give any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage for doing or neglecting to do something or showing favour or disfavour to any person in your official capacity.

11. Hospitality and Gifts

- (a) You should only accept hospitality in the form of refreshments/attendance at events if there is a genuine need to impart information or to represent the School. All other offers of hospitality/gifts should be firmly, but politely refused. You should also ensure that accepting the hospitality does not create a conflict of interest and is not likely to cause embarrassment to the School. This requirement is to be administered using common sense, however. End of term cards and small 'thank you' gifts are not considered under this description.
- (b) You should report the offer of hospitality, whether accepted or not, to your line manager, and should ensure that all such offers are recorded in the appropriate hospitality register.
- (c) If gifts are offered or you suspect that an improper motive exists, you should always decline the offer and report it to your Headteacher/Chair. This includes any preferential rates offered for goods and services. Headteachers should report the offer to the Chair of Governors regardless of whether the offer is accepted or declined.

12. Sponsorship

- (a) Where an outside organisation is seeking to sponsor a School activity, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily, the Code's provisions concerning acceptance of hospitality or gifts and working with contractors apply. No sponsorship deal should be made without the prior agreement of your Governing Board.
- (b) Where the School wishes to sponsor an event or service, you must declare in writing to your Headteacher any possible conflict of interest or any benefit which you or a member of your family, or anybody with whom you have a close association, is likely to receive. Similarly, where the School is providing sponsorship in the community, you should ensure that impartial advice is given and that there is no conflict of interest involved.

13. Contact with the Media

- (a) Any enquiries from the media on work-related matters should be referred to the Headteacher and Chair of Governors who are advised to contact the Local Authority's Public Relations Division. You should seek formal authorisation from the Headteacher, who should consult the Public Relations Division, before you speak, write or give interviews to the media.
- (b) If you wish to publish books, articles or letters you have written in connection with your duties, you must first consult your Headteacher who will consult with the Governing Board and take legal advice.