



Copnor Primary School

Staff Behaviour Policy

Rationale

It is paramount that children feel safe and valued; therefore, staff need to treat children, parents/carers and colleagues with a high level of care and courtesy. It is every staff member's duty to follow all safeguarding policies and procedures, which are in line with "Keeping Children Safe in Education", 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and the "Prevent Strategy". This policy is also to be read in conjunction with the ***Portsmouth City Council Schools Code of Conduct for Employees*** document.

This Staff Behaviour Policy is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school staff are expected to observe. School staff are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that models the highest possible standards for all the pupils within the school. As a member of a school community, each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside of working hours.

The policy applies to all employees in schools and can also be applied for casual staff. The school will also have other policies specific to the individual school, that all employees must be aware of including the Disciplinary policy, Capability policy, Dignity at work policy, Grievance policy, Substance misuse policy, Whistleblowing reporting procedure, the gifts and hospitality policy, Equal Opportunities policy and the Internet and electronic media policy in connection with this code. These policies are available in the school office.

If you are unsure what is expected of you, you must raise the matter with the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors in the case of the Headteacher).

If you consider you need to declare anything for the record, then do not wait until the end of the year, for your performance management or appraisal, or for the Headteacher to ask you to do so - declare it immediately by speaking to the Headteacher.

Aims

- To safeguard pupils and protect staff
- To make explicit expectations of performance and conduct
- To minimise opportunities for abuse
- For all staff to have confidence to report concerns with full confidentiality
- To respond promptly to concerns: we always investigate and address issues
- To exercise appropriate sanctions
- To create and maintain an ethos of mutual respect, openness and fairness

Following the school's policies

All staff are expected to follow the school's policies, including the behaviour policy, and in all interactions in school. Pupils and staff are expected to work together to build a school whose relationships are characterised by mutual and appropriate respect. Praise and building on the positive should always come first. Where firmness/a warning is called for, this should be exercised calmly, and staff should avoid shouting at pupils unless there is a Health and Safety risk. The school behaviour policy and associated documents establish expectations and

approved sanctions. All new staff should be issued with a copy of these policies, and any behaviour concerns should be dealt with in line with them. Where a member of staff is having difficulties managing pupil behaviour, they should discuss this matter with the Headteacher, a member of the Senior Leadership Team or a Teaching and Learning Lead at the earliest opportunity.

General Professional Conduct:

- Staff will welcome children's return after an absence when taking the register.
- Staff should recognise when children have been polite and encourage such actions.
- Physical contact with children should always be limited, though it may be required in PE, as an example, to offer brief reassurance or in the use of positive handling.
- Staff will never transport children in their cars without another adult present, appropriate insurance and prior permission of the Headteacher.
- Staff will exercise great caution in uploading information to IT social networking sites. Any information that brings the school into disrepute will be dealt with under the disciplinary policy.
- Mobile phones will be out of sight during all times of supervision. (In cases where an "emergency" is expected seek the agreement of the Headteacher for the phone to be available).
- Staff will arrive promptly for lessons, assemblies and meetings and will not leave a meeting early without seeking the agreement of the person leading it.

Physical contact with children

All staff should be aware of what physical contact with pupils is appropriate:

- Staff should only exercise physical restraint as a last resort to prevent injury/ damage to property.
- Staff are allowed to comfort a child who is hurt/distressed in a manner appropriate to the age of the child.
- Adults should not initiate any physical contact unnecessarily, and there should be clear boundaries.
- Children should not be picked up (unless medically necessary or being restrained).
- Adults should avoid being in a room alone with a child where the door is closed. Where this is unavoidable, leave a door open (where possible). The adult should position themselves so that the child has a clear exit out of the room.

Treating all staff with respect

Relationships between staff should be characterised by fairness, openness and respect. This means valuing all contributions, acknowledging difference, and working together to build a climate of continuous improvement. Politeness and respect are essential ingredients. Where differences occur they should be dealt with calmly and fairly.

Treating of resources responsibly and exercise due financial care

All staff have a responsibility to look after the resources of the school. This includes: not wasting resources unnecessarily (this includes physical resources and those such as heat/electricity); following the principles of 'reduce, re-use, recycle' where appropriate; signing out for items taken from the school premises (e.g. school iPads and laptops).

All money handled should be clearly labelled and sent to the school office by the end of the working day.

Acceptable use of ICT Equipment

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour Use of ICT by Adults, GDPR/Data Protection Policy and Safeguarding Policy. Staff, Governors and Visitors should read and sign the 'Acceptable Use Agreement' annually. Staff who are in contact with pupils should not use their mobile phones in school during their directed hours / paid hours of employment. Outside of these times, mobile phones should only be used in areas of the school where pupils are not present. Staff must not use their mobile phone as a camera in school. Any photograph/video must be taken using school equipment. Staff must only save images on school computers.

All staff are expected to behave professionally and exercise confidentiality

All staff are expected to behave thoughtfully and responsibly. Staff should be punctual and well-prepared, and should carry out tasks to the best of their ability, taking pride in their work. All absence should be genuine. Staff are expected to dress appropriately; all staff should set a good example in what they wear, avoiding clothing that is overly casual. Staff should exercise due confidentiality towards matters that are either discussed or overheard. Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risk to themselves and others. Staff must have no personal contact with former of pupils until they reach the age of eighteen, and they have not been a pupil at Copnor Primary School for a minimum of seven years. Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute.

Dress Code:

- Staff will dress smartly to promote a professional image. (Sleeveless tops are fine, but not spaghetti straps, Bardot, off the shoulder or low-cut tops.)
- Teachers should change for PE and should not be attired in coats and gloves. It is acceptable to wear PE kit all day as long as the kit is smart.
- Loose jewellery should be taken off for PE/games.

Conduct Outside of 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 community.

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 not use social media e.g. Facebook/Twitter/Instagram/Snapchat with pupils or former pupils unless the former pupil is aged at least eighteen and has not been a pupil at the school for over seven years. Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute. Staff must only use their school email account or school learning platform account when communicating electronically with pupils, parents and colleagues. Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict

with the interests of the school and is not to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance.

All members of staff must declare any business interests outside of school that may be connected either to the supply of goods / services to the school or be rewarded through association with the school. Where families or pupils are known to staff members in a personal capacity, and there is the potential for a conflict of interests, it is the responsibility of the staff member to ensure that a declaration is made to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the Chair of Governors in the case of the DSL.

Confidentiality

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

All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential (e.g. where a pupil/student is bullied by another pupil/student/member of staff), this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate school procedure. It must not be discussed outside the school, including with the pupil's/student'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.

Staff have an obligation to share with their line manager or the Headteacher, 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/student.

Staff should seek to establish a good and open relationship with parents

Staff should aim to create a welcoming and open relationship with parents. All parental concerns should be treated seriously and dealt with promptly.

All staff need to be aware of the policy and procedures for Child Protection

It is essential that all staff have regular training in Child Protection concerns and know the procedures for dealing with and reporting concerns. All staff have a duty to look out for signs of physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect of pupils in the light of a child's behaviour. Staff must pass any concerns on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and in their absence one of their deputies. Avoid trying to involve yourself too closely with any issues: always pass concerns on.

All staff need to exploit the potential of the curriculum to develop a proactive approach to behaviour and child protection issues.

Staff need to take a proactive approach towards both safeguarding and behaviour policies, through the creation of a positive classroom environment where all children are respected, and through PSHE and circle time in particular. This includes 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.

The expression of extremist views by staff will not be tolerated and should be reported to the Chair of Governors, DSL or Headteacher, who will contact relevant authorities if and where appropriate.

Concerns/Allegations about members of staff (including Whistleblowing)

The school will follow the guidance outlined in ***Portsmouth City Council's Management of Allegations of Abuse Policy*** which is written in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education and local HIPS procedures manual that schools and the Local Authority align to. Keeping Children Safe in Education covers two levels of concern.

- Allegations that may meet the harm threshold (KCSIE Section 1)
- Allegations/concerns that do not meet the harm threshold – referred to for this purpose as 'low level concerns' (KCSIE Section 2)

Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

KCSIE, Part 4, section 1 relates to managing cases of allegations that might indicate a person would pose a risk of harm if they continue to work in their present position, or in any capacity with children in a school. Part four, section 1 should be followed where it is alleged that anyone working in the school (including supply teachers and volunteers) has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm to children
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

If a school has been informed of an allegation or any member of staff has a concern that appears to meet the criteria above, the school must inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) **immediately**. This must be done within **one working day**. The purpose of an initial discussion is for the LADO and the Headteacher to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action in accordance with KCSIE and to consult police and children's social care as appropriate.

In order to ensure that confidentiality is maintained and that no-one would act prejudicially towards the person causing concern, members of staff must inform only the DSL and Headteacher and no-one else. We recognise that the concern may be unfounded but that child safety must take precedence over any perceived loyalty to a colleague. If the concern is centred on the DSL, the member of staff must immediately raise it to the most senior member of staff within the school, currently this would be the Headteacher. If the Headteacher becomes the DSL of the School, then concerns would be raised straight to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

If a parent, child or other raises an allegation, the person must immediately be directed towards the DSL who will deal with the issue. The DSL or Chair of Governors will contact the LADO within 24 hours and these will be seen through to conclusion, even if the person resigns.

Allegations that do not meet the harm threshold – low level concerns

KCSIE, Part four, section 2 shows how low-level concerns and allegations that do not meet the harm test should be addressed. This is in accordance with direction provided from the LADO as well as within this policy.

The school should create a culture in which all concerns about adults are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately, is critical. If implemented

correctly, this should:

- encourage an open and transparent culture
- enable schools and colleges to identify inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour early
- minimise the risk of abuse, and
- ensure that adults working in or on behalf of the school or college are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the ethos and values of the institution.

What is a low-level concern?

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work
- does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO. Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:
 - being over friendly with children
 - having favourites
 - taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy
 - engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
 - humiliating pupils.

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

Low-level concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources. For example: suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.

It is crucial that all low-level concerns are shared responsibly with the right person, and recorded and dealt with appropriately. Ensuring they are dealt with effectively should also protect those working in or on behalf of schools and colleges from becoming the subject of potential false low-level concerns or misunderstandings.

Where staff have any concerns about another member of staff, these should be reported immediately to the DSL. Where the concern is about the Headteacher, it should be reported directly to the Chair of Governors. All concerns will be investigated thoroughly and confidentially, and appropriate action taken.

A member of staff always has the right to report a concern to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where they have concerns about a member of staff in relation to safeguarding/child protection. Her name is Rebecca Paradise. She is available at 023 9288 2500 or email LADO@portsmouthcc.gov.uk.

Sharing low-level concerns

Schools should ensure that their low-level concerns policy contains a procedure for sharing confidentially such concerns which is clear, easy to understand and implement. Whether all low-level concerns are shared initially with the DSL (or a nominated person (such as a values guardian/safeguarding champion)), or with the headteacher/principal is a matter for the school or college to decide. If the former, then the DSL should inform the headteacher of all the low-level concerns and in a timely fashion according to the nature of each particular low-level concern. The Headteacher should be the ultimate decision maker in respect of all low-level concerns, although it is recognised that depending on the nature of some low-level concerns and/or the role of the DSL in some schools, the headteacher may wish to consult with the DSL and take a more collaborative decision-making approach.

Low-level concerns, which are shared about supply staff and contractors, should be notified to their employers, so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified. If schools are in any doubt as to whether the information which has been shared about a member of staff as a low-level concern in fact meets the harm threshold, they should consult with their LADO.

Schools and colleges should ensure they create an environment where staff are encouraged and feel confident to self-refer, where, for example, they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.

Recording low-level concerns

All low-level concerns should be recorded in writing. The record should include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, and action taken. The name of the individual sharing their concerns should also be noted, if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible.

Any records of low-level concern regarding staff are to be kept in the school's secure area which is only available to the DSL and their deputies. They are kept confidential, held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

Records will be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, the school will decide on a course of action, either through its disciplinary procedures or where a pattern of behaviour moves from a low-level concern to meeting the harm threshold, in which case it should be referred to the LADO (as per Part four, Section one of KCSIE Sep 22). Consideration should also be given to whether there are wider cultural issues within the school or college that enabled the behaviour to occur and where appropriate policies could be revised, or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again.

Records will be kept regarding low level concerns at least until the individual leaves their employment.

Part three of KCSIE is clear that schools and colleges should only provide substantiated safeguarding concerns/allegations that meet the harm threshold in references. Low-level concerns should not be included in references unless they relate to issues which would normally be included in a reference, for example, misconduct or poor performance. It follows that a low-level concern

which relates exclusively to safeguarding (and not to misconduct or poor performance) should not be referred to in a reference. However, where a low-level concern (or group of concerns) meets the harm threshold for referral to the LADO and found to be substantiated, it should be referred to in a reference.

Responding to low-level concerns

If the concern has been raised via a third party, the headteacher and DSL should collect as much evidence as possible by speaking directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously, and to the individual involved and any witnesses.

The information collected will help them to categorise the type of behaviour and determine what further action may need to be taken. This information needs to be recorded in writing along with the rationale for their decisions and action taken.

All staff should take care of their physical and mental wellbeing

All staff are encouraged to look after their physical and mental wellbeing. This includes maintaining a healthy work-life balance. We take issues of stress very seriously, and look to provide appropriate support and help in these cases.

All staff should have access to counselling and support

Staff needing support are encouraged to discuss issues and concerns with the headteacher in confidence. Support can be provided both internally (e.g. through the provision of a mentor), or externally through the Occupational Health Service. Trade Unions also provide help, support and advice for their members, and membership of a trades union is strongly encouraged.

Conclusion

All staff are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. By adhering to this code of conduct staff can be assured they are playing their part in safeguarding pupils and protecting themselves.

Policy agreed: September 2023

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