



STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

In Whitehouse Primary School and Nursery Unit we want all our pupils and staff to feel happy, safe and secure so that they can benefit fully from their time in school and be enabled to contribute wholeheartedly to the educational experience which our school offers.

We aim, at all times, to behave appropriately and warmly towards each other and to support one another both personally and professionally. As staff members in Whitehouse Primary School and Nursery Unit, we are mindful that our behaviour towards our pupils should always be above reproach and we acknowledge the need to exercise prudence in our dealings with the children in our care.

In addition, we recognise that our relationships with each other help promote a positive atmosphere within the school and beyond. Pupils and parents are often very perceptive in detecting the nature and quality of working relationships. Indeed, employees need to see their behaviour towards each other as potentially influencing the actions of our pupils.

Therefore, this code is aimed in the first part at summarising our approach towards pupils. This code reflects good practice in a number of our pastoral and curricular policies e.g. Child Protection and Using I.C.T.

The second part guides staff towards how we treat each other. It must be stated that we feel we have excellent employees who already exhibit these standards and indeed exceed the guidance of the code.

This code is very much written to communicate our standards to external stakeholders, provide guidance to new staff and provide a framework to enable Governors to deal with any potential staffing issue in the unlikely event that they should arise.

Section 1: Staff/Pupil Relationships

We subscribe to the following good practice in this area:

- When the need arises to interview a pupil alone it is important to let another member of staff know that the meeting is happening and where it will be taking place. The venue should, if at all possible, have a window and, if this is not so, a door should be left ajar if this is appropriate to the meeting.
- It is good practice to avoid unnecessary physical contact with our pupils. We acknowledge, however, that it is neither practical nor desirable to suggest that there should be no physical contact and we would not wish to see a distressed child deprived of a reassuring or comforting touch because of a fear of physical contact. Where a pupil indicates, however, that he/she is uncomfortable with such contact it should never take place. Additionally, it is prudent to avoid any physical contact which might be open to misinterpretation by the student or by others.
- Where physical contact is required to maintain the safety of the pupil or others around them that safety must take precedence over all other considerations.
- There should never be any physical response to misbehaviour, whatever the provocation, except where it is required to maintain the safety of the pupil or that of others. In this event the Safe Handling policy should be fully adhered to and the incident reported immediately to the Principal.
- If it is necessary to administer first-aid this is best done with another person present. The welfare of the pupil is, however, paramount and intervention should never be delayed because there is no other adult present.
- It is inevitable that some of our teaching will involve the use of sensitive materials and it is very difficult to anticipate when these might impact negatively on our pupils. If the material to be used is very contentious, and if there are concerns about any pupils in a class in relation to it, it is good practice to consult with the Principal.

- It is strongly recommended that members of staff do not allow pupils to have access to their personal mobile phone numbers or to their personal email addresses. If contact via mobile phone is necessary e.g. on a school trip, a mobile phone (or a SIM card) provided by the school should be used. All electronic communications with pupils should be via the official school e-mailing system.
- Social Networking sites present particular difficulties for staff in all schools. Great care must be taken to ensure that appropriate boundaries are maintained between staff and pupils at all times. It is strongly recommended that no member of our staff communicate with pupils via social networking sites. Information directly related to the school community should never be posted on personal social networking sites. Staff should also be mindful of content attributable to them, posted on others sites (e.g. friends and family) which may not have the privacy settings recommended.
- We value greatly the relationships which exist between staff and pupils in our school and we would wish to see those maintained. It is always necessary, however, to ensure that these relationships are appropriate and professional so that the warm and caring atmosphere which is an integral part of our community and which is so nourishing for everyone is enabled to flourish.
- Staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age, maturity and gender of the pupils, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought.
- All verbal exchange in school shall be conducted in a calm and professional manner. Only in unusual circumstances, for example in emergency situations or when attracting attention in large areas, will voices be raised. Sarcastic, threatening or demeaning verbal interaction is not acceptable. Verbally humiliating or frightening pupils as a means of punishment is not acceptable. The use of humour can be helpful in diffusing situations but the humour used must be understood and appropriate.