



## **Code of Conduct for William Fletcher Primary School Staff, volunteers and Governors**

### **Scope**

This code applies to all school employees, volunteers and governors where specified.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

It is expected that staff and governors will:

- Comply with the principles set out in this document
- Bring to the attention of the appropriate level of management any breach of this guidance
- Maintain conduct of the highest standard so that confidence in their integrity is sustained
- Teachers must adhere to the Teachers Standards Document 2012

All staff and governors at William Fletcher Primary School set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils. They must, therefore, demonstrate the highest standards of conduct in order to encourage pupils to do the same. All staff must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

As a school we have adopted the Local Authority's Dignity at Work Policy. In summary broad expectations are:

- To undertake your job competently giving your best possible performance
- To ensure that any action is in line with the William Fletcher Primary School Vision Statement, aims of the school and for the good of the whole school community
- To make a positive contribution to the school ethos
- To work as an effective member of a team
- To provide the best possible education and environment for our pupils following agreed school policies at all times
- To treat all members of the school community with dignity and respect
- To abide by a dress code
- To behave in a professional manner at all times (including through the use of social media), acting as an ambassador for William Fletcher Primary School

### **Raising concerns – Grievances and whistleblowing**

- Staff should report any significant concerns they may have about any aspect of service provision, or the conduct of employees, Governors, or others acting on behalf of the school without fear of victimisation (See School Safeguarding policy)
- In the first instance, staff should raise concerns via the school's internal complaints procedure. Where concerns have not been addressed satisfactorily through the internal complaints procedure, staff can report unresolved issues under the school's Whistleblowing Policy

### **Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy**

*The section is based on 'Section 2: Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold' in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022.*

This section applies to all concerns (including allegations) about members of staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors, which do not meet the harm threshold.

Concerns may arise through, for example:

- Suspicion
- Complaint
- Disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside the school
- Pre-employment vetting checks

We recognise the importance of responding to and dealing with any concerns in a timely manner to safeguard the welfare of children.

### **Definition of low-level concerns**

The term 'low-level' concern is any concern – no matter how small – 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, **and**
- Does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the designated officer at the local authority

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- Being overly friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door

### **Sharing low-level concerns**

We recognise the importance of creating a culture of openness, trust and transparency to encourage all staff to share low-level concerns so that they can be addressed appropriately.

We will create this culture by:

- Ensuring staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others
- Empowering staff to share any low-level concerns
- Empowering staff to self-refer
- Addressing unprofessional behaviour and supporting the individual to correct it at an early stage
- Providing a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised
- Helping to identify any weakness in the school's safeguarding system

### **Responding to low-level concerns**

If the concern is raised via a third party, the headteacher will collect evidence where necessary by speaking:

- Directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously
- To the individual involved and any witnesses

The headteacher will use the information collected to categorise the type of behaviour and determine any further action.

### **Record keeping**

All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing. In addition to details of the concern raised, records will include the context in which the concern arose, any action taken and the rationale for decisions and action taken.

Records will be:

- Kept confidential, held securely and comply with the DPA 2018 and UK GDPR

- Reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, we will decide on a course of action, either through our disciplinary procedures or, where a pattern of behaviour moves from a concern to meeting the harms threshold as described in the school safeguarding policy, we will refer it to the designated officer at the local authority
- Retained at least until the individual leaves employment at the school

Where a low-level concern relates to a supply teacher or contractor, we will notify the individual's employer, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

## References

We will not include low-level concerns in references unless:

- The concern (or group of concerns) has met the threshold for referral to the designated officer at the local authority and is found to be substantiated; and/or
- The concern (or group of concerns) relates to issues which would ordinarily be included in a reference, such as misconduct or poor performance

## Conduct outside of Work

The governing body expect staff and governors not to engage in conduct in public which could seriously damage the reputation of the school, their own reputation or that of other members of the school community. To avoid any doubt, this includes;

- The misuse of alcohol and drugs
- Criminal offences that involve violence, possession or misuse of drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as Gross Misconduct
- If at any time during their employment at William Fletcher a member of staff is convicted or receives a caution, reprimand or warning from the police for any reason they must inform the Headteacher within 5 days. Governors are expected to inform the Chair of Governors. Failure to do so may result in a formal disciplinary action which could be considered gross misconduct and in the case of Governors suspension. A copy of Oxfordshire County Council Disciplinary procedure can be found in the school policy folder or alternatively can be found on the intranet at: [Disciplinary Procedure \(.doc format, 166Kb\)](#)

## Close Personal Relationships at Work

- The governing body will not interfere unduly in the private lives of staff but with the public interest in mind will take legitimate action when close personal relationships at work have an actual or potential impact on School services. Where close personal relationships exist staff are requested to inform the Headteacher. Issues involving close personal relationships will be approached sensitively and managed promptly, effectively, fairly and lawfully.

## Communication, Computer Usage and the Internet

- School equipment, systems and network is provided to enable staff to undertake their role efficiently
- Misuse of the equipment, systems and network may be grounds for disciplinary action
- All teaching staff are expected to check their work email at least once on every day that they work
- Work email should only be used for work purposes
- Technology, such as mobile phones, text messaging, emails, websites, blogs and webcams, should only be used to contact learners with the explicit prior approval of a member of the leadership team
- Staff should not share their personal phone numbers or email addresses with pupils or parents / carers. However, we recognise that staff who are on a residential visit or school day trip may need to contact a child's parents in the event of an emergency and using a

personal mobile phone maybe the best way to do this. Staff should try to remember to dial 141 and then the recipient's number to avoid sharing personal phone numbers.

- Members of staff who use social networking websites (e.g. Facebook, twitter etc) should be aware that these sites are accessible to learners, parents and colleagues and as such the same rules apply about publishing pictures or comments that could damage either the adult's reputation or that of the school. Members of staff must not communicate with pupils through social networking sites.
- All staff should ensure they follow the school policy on the use of Mobile phones at work.

### **Dress and appearance**

- Dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self- expression. However, staff and governors should ensure that they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake.
- Whilst the school recognises the right of staff to choose what they wear and how they appear they are role models for children and should dress in a smart and tidy manner.

Please note none of the following should be worn to work:

- Denim jeans (except for lunchtime assistants)
- Revealing tops
- Visible underwear

### **Specialist situations:**

- Teaching or supporting games and PE: suitable PE kit and footwear into which you change for the lesson
- Trips and visits: if children are expected to wear school uniform staff should also wear work attire. For residential visit casual wear is acceptable
- INSET and training: casual wear
- Premises staff ( caretakers and cleaners) should wear appropriate work wear and footwear to ensure warmth and ability to undertake respective roles

### **Disciplinary Action**

- All staff are expected to comply with this agreement.
- Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

Deborah Nind

September 2022

Next review date: September 2023