

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

The following statements reflect our vision for our school:

- Our Catholic Christian values are an essential part of our school lives.
- We promote a positive, healthy lifestyle with respect for ourselves, others and the environment around us.
- We respect the beliefs and cultures of other communities.
- We all have individual gifts, talents, skills and abilities.
- We are all on a fun learning journey in order to achieve our full potential.
- We work together in a safe and stimulating environment, having high expectations of ourselves and others.

This Code aims to give guidance to all employees as they carry out their roles within the school. It is important that the environment which we create is one which is enjoyable, supportive, non-threatening, safe, clean and conducive to working and learning. We are all expected to conduct ourselves in a responsible and professional manner when undertaking our duties and fulfilling our responsibilities, and to comply with lawful and reasonable instructions from the Headteacher. We all have a responsibility to understand what is expected of us and the role we have to play in working within the spirit of these guidelines.

Code of Conduct

This Code is designed to give clarification about key issues which we may come across in the course of our work. It cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for us. It does highlight behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable.

DEALING WITH ANY NEW OR UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES

In such cases, we are expected to make judgements about our behaviour, in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the children in our charge and colleagues they, or we, work with, and in so doing, will be seen to be acting reasonably. If it isn't clear what the right action is, we are expected to consult the Headteacher.

This means that where no specific guidance exists we should:

- *discuss the circumstances that informed the action, or the proposed action, with a senior colleague. This will help to ensure that the safest practices are employed and reduce the risk of actions being misinterpreted.*
- *always discuss any misunderstanding, accidents or threats with the Headteacher.*
- *always record discussions and actions taken with their justifications.*

PERSONAL CONDUCT

We should maintain high standards in terms of language and behaviour in order to avoid giving offence to other employees, children or visitors to school.

Appearance/Dress Code

While there is no formal dress code in school, we are expected to present ourselves in a professional and business-like manner. We should dress appropriately to our professional role. We should ensure we are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks we undertake.

General Conduct at Work

We are expected to conduct ourselves within the overall values of the school, school policies and procedures and our contractual obligations.

Language and attitude

We are expected to be sensitive and considerate in the way we communicate with our colleagues and our children. We should talk to others in the way we would like to be spoken to ourselves. Constructive criticism can be expressed clearly but in a way which lets the other person retain their dignity and self-respect.

Confidentiality and Corporate responsibility

We should all be aware of our duty to manage a united school approach when dealing with members of the public and children. This means taking responsibility for incidents of dispute or dissatisfaction and not 'washing dirty linen in public'. This applies equally to criticising the school publicly and using the press to air your concerns or grievances.

This means that we should wear clothing which:

- *promotes a positive and professional image.*
- *is appropriate to our role.*
- *is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative.*
- *does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding.*
- *does not have any political or offensive slogans.*
- *would be considered discriminatory.*

There are certain actions school would consider as either general or gross misconduct.

For example:

Staff should avoid publicly blaming colleagues for failures in process or experience.

Staff are expected to manage any dissatisfaction and reassure the person that school will do everything it can to put things right.

It is a disciplinary offence to 'go public' with information that could potentially harm the school's reputation.

Staff with concerns should always follow school procedures in the first instance.

OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

Membership of Societies

The school encourages membership of societies and professional bodies. However, should you find that when acting in an official capacity you may be influenced by a membership or association, you should report the conflict of interests to the Headteacher.

Other Employment

You should not engage in other employment if doing so will have an adverse effect on the way in which you perform your duties, or could result in a conflict of interests. If you have any doubts then you should speak to the Headteacher.

For example:

Private work, or work connected with an outside interest, must not be done in school time, nor with the use of school materials, without the consent of the Headteacher. Staff are required to register any business interests on the 'Register of Business Interests' form which is available from the school office.

GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

Staff receiving gifts

We all have to take care that we do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. If such a gift is offered it should be tactfully refused and the Headteacher informed that the offer was made.

Invitations to working meals, a social function to which other employees are invited, or some other general celebration are generally acceptable. If in doubt, advice should be sought from the Headteacher.

Staff giving gifts/rewards

Any reward given to a child should be recognised practice within the establishment, consistent with agreed strategy, recorded and not based on favouritism.

This means that you should:

- *ensure that gifts received or given in situations which may be misconstrued are declared.*
- *where giving gifts other than as above ensure that these are of insignificant value and given to all equally.*
- *there are occasions when learners or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff (e.g. at Christmas or as a thank you) and this is acceptable, as are small gifts from companies such as calendars, diaries, pencils etc.*
- *generally, only give gifts to an individual young person as part of an agreed reward system.*

USE OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES (ICT), AND SOCIAL NETWORKING

The Acceptable Use of School ICT facilities is clearly outlined within the 'Acceptable Use of ICT' Policy.

The aim of the guidelines are to ensure security of school IT systems and to safeguard the school, you as an employee and our children.

Social Networking

Social networking is a phenomenon that raises

See the 'Acceptable Use of ICT Policy' for full details.

<p>issues for the school in terms of interactions between child and child, staff and child and staff and staff. Facebook, Bebo and Twitter are ways in which members of the school community can communicate with each other. As these methods of communication are relatively new, children and staff can be unaware of the implications of their comments/postings.</p> <p>Often, comments which may be understood as humorous or flippant by the people making them can be misinterpreted or cause great offence to a wider audience and bring the school or individual into disrepute.</p> <p>For these reasons a code of practice has been developed which</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes clear the limits of 'free speech' on the internet. • Draws clear boundaries that staff must not or would be ill-advised to cross. • Lays out the potential penalties for breaking the code of practice. 	<p><i>See the 'Acceptable Use of ICT Policy' for full details.</i></p>
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USE OF SCHOOL RESOURCES

<p>All staff must endeavour to use school time, resources and property responsibly and efficiently at all times. Inappropriate or dishonest use of resources can merit disciplinary action. Similarly, if you become aware of dishonesty or maladministration by another employee, you are expected to draw this to the attention of an appropriate senior member of staff. If in doubt, ask the Headteacher.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>As a general rule, employees should not gain financially from using school resources, equipment or materials.</i> • <i>If in doubt, always check with your line manager.</i>
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CONFIDENTIALITY

<p>Within the school, communication should be open and accessible to all.</p> <p>However, during your employment, all information should be considered confidential to outsiders and academic records of students should not be divulged unless required by law or expressly authorised to do so.</p> <p>Personal information on anybody is internally confidential unless part of agreed procedures. Any breach of confidence is a serious disciplinary offence. If you are in doubt about such a matter you should consult the Headteacher.</p>	<p><i>This means that staff:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>are expected to treat information they receive about children and young people in a discreet and confidential manner.</i> • <i>in any doubt about sharing information they hold or which has been requested of them, should seek advice from a senior member of staff. All staff need to be cautious when passing information to others about a child.</i>
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However, there are circumstances in which it is our responsibility to share information e.g. when the safety of a child is at risk.

RELATIONSHIPS

Please also see our guidance on 'Safeguarding'.

For the purposes of the Code, the definition of 'relationships' includes:

- business, commercial or financial relationships
- close friendships/social relationships
- family relationships
- intimate relationships including marital, sexual, romantic and emotional

Relationships between staff and students

There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable children and staff have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification. Wherever possible, staff should avoid behaviour, which might be interpreted by others, and report and record any incident with this potential.

You should conduct yourself at all times in ways that are consistent with school policy and procedures and acknowledge your professional and ethical responsibility to protect the interests of children and accept the obligations and constraints inherent in that responsibility.

Should a personal relationship already exist when the member of staff or child enters the school, it is the responsibility of the member of staff to declare their involvement to the Headteacher. There will be no requirement to give details of the involvement.

You should not establish or seek to establish social contact with children for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship.

You must not have any sort of friendship or romantic or sexual relationship with any child who is under the age of 18. To maintain the relationship with children based on trust, confidence and equal treatment, you must not enter into an intimate relationship with a child for whom you have a responsibility in the areas of teaching/learning, assessment, selection, pastoral care or research.

Examples:

This means that you should not:

- *Behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question your suitability to work with children or act as a role model.*
- *Compromise your position within the work setting by your behaviour outside work e.g. invite learners to join your social networking site or join theirs.*
- *Where you are a person aged 18 or over in a position of trust with a child under 18, engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of that child, or to cause or incite that child to engage in or watch sexual activity as these are criminal offences.*
- *Make sexual remarks to a child (including email, text messages, phone or letter).*
- *Discuss your own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of, children.*
- *Discuss a child's sexual relationships in inappropriate settings or contexts.*

Such relationships can lead to perceived or actual conflicts of interest, which can have a detrimental effect on the teaching and learning environment for other students and colleagues.

PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH CHILDREN

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. You should therefore, use your professional judgement at all times.

Physical contact should never be secretive, or for your gratification, or represent a misuse of authority.

This means that you should:

- *be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or anyone to whom this action is described.*
- *never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent. (Staff who are required to provide personal care of an intimate nature are fully trained and follow clear protocols.)*
- *always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny.*
- *never indulge in horseplay, tickling or fun fights.*

Considerations should be made to children for whom touching is particularly unwelcome. For example:

- *Some children may be particularly sensitive to physical contact because of their cultural background, or because they have been abused.*

Touching children, including well-intentioned gestures such as putting a hand on a shoulder, can, if repeated regularly, lead to serious questions being raised. As a general principle, staff must not make gratuitous physical contact with their pupils. It is particularly unwise to attribute touching to their teaching style or as a way of relating to pupils. Teachers and other staff do, however, have the right to use reasonable physical force to restrain pupils in certain circumstances.

Any form of physical punishment of pupils is unlawful as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour unless it is by way of restraint. It is particularly important that staff understand this both to protect their own position and the overall reputation of the school.

Some staff are likely to come into physical contact with children from time to time in the course of their duties. Staff should be aware of the limits within which such contact should properly take place and the possibility of such contact being misinterpreted.

CHILDREN IN DISTRESS

There may be occasions when a distressed child needs comfort and reassurance. This may include age-appropriate physical contact.

You should use your discretion in such cases to ensure that what is normal and natural does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same child over a period of time.

You should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

If you have a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance you should seek further advice from a senior manager.

This means that you should:

- *consider the way in which you offer comfort to a distressed child.*
- *make sure that the physical contact is what the child wants. It might be appropriate to hold a child's hand if he/she is distressed – ask them first.*
- *always tell a colleague when and how you offered comfort to a distressed child.*
- *record situations which may give rise to concern.*
- *don't give someone a hug because it would make you feel better if you did.*

CARE, CONTROL AND PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

There may be occasions where it is necessary for staff to restrain a child to prevent them from inflicting injury to others, self-injury, damaging property, or causing disruption. In such cases only the minimum force necessary may be used and any action taken must be to restrain the child.

Whilst the school does not expect you to physically intervene with children, we recognise that some staff will feel they have no option in certain situations. This should happen only in the most extreme and unusual occasions. You should be aware that any such physical intervention could be open to challenge and must only be at a minimum level of restraint.

Under no circumstances should physical force be used as a form of punishment. You should have regard to the health and safety of yourself and others.

The use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence.

Where an employee has taken action to physically restrain a child they should make a written report of the incident to the Headteacher.

This means that you should:

- *always seek to defuse situations using strategies other than physical interventions.*
- *always use minimum force for the shortest period necessary – preferably with assistance from a colleague.*
- *understand that the school will support you if you have to physically intervene to stop a child harming him/herself or others – if you have used minimum reasonable restraint.*
- *understand that the school will take action against you if you have acted unprofessionally, or used force to punish a learner or used unnecessary force.*

POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

All children have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Our recommended approach is based on strong evidence which shows that the encouragement and reinforcement of positive actions is more effective in changing and improving behaviour than focussing on unacceptable actions and trying to minimise them through use of sanctions and penalties.

You should not use any form of degrading treatment to punish someone. The use of humour can help to defuse a situation but the use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards children is not acceptable in any situation.

How we do this is dependent on the individual's or group's accomplishment. Therefore, rewards and recognitions may take many different forms, from structured reward systems to a smile and a 'thank you'.

This means that you should:

- *not use force as a form of punishment*
- *try to defuse situations before they escalate*
- *apply the Positive Behaviour Management and Anti-bullying Policy consistently and fairly.*

ONE TO ONE SITUATIONS

If you are working in one to one situations with children you may be more vulnerable to allegations.

This means that you should:

- *avoid meetings with children in remote or secluded areas.*
- *ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in one to one situations.*
- *inform other staff of the meeting beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by.*
- *always report any situation where a child becomes distressed or angry to a senior colleague.*
- *consider the needs and circumstances of the child involved.*
- *only give children a lift in a car with permission from the Headteacher.*

WHISTLEBLOWING

Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, without fear of repercussion. We have a clear and accessible Whistleblowing Policy that meets the terms of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant external agencies. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

This means that you should:

- *report any behaviour by colleagues that raises concern.*

ATTENDANCE

<p>Any deviance in core contracted hours must be agreed with the Headteacher.</p>	<p>Unauthorised Absence <i>This is defined as any absence from work without the prior agreement of the Headteacher. This is regarded as serious misconduct and could result in disciplinary action. A deduction would be made from your salary for any unauthorised absence.</i></p> <p>Lateness <i>You, or someone acting on your behalf, must notify your manager as soon as possible that you are going to be late. The time of your anticipated arrival should be given. Avoidable or persistent lateness is seen as gross misconduct and could result in disciplinary action being taken.</i></p> <p>Other Absence <i>See Staff Handbook</i></p>
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BULLYING AND HARASSMENT AND VICTIMISATION

<p>St Malachy's Catholic Primary School firmly believes that the dignity of all employees must be respected, that staff should behave courteously and considerately towards those with whom they come into contact and that the school environment should be pleasant for all.</p> <p>The school is firmly opposed to any form of discrimination based on these human attributes or values and is committed to appropriate positive action.</p>	<p><i>There is a detailed 'Dignity at Work Procedure' which all employees should familiarise themselves with.</i></p>
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