



STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

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STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

This Code of Conduct was adopted by the Local Governing Body on:

Chair of Governors:

Signature:

Date:

Headteacher:

Signature:

Date:

All staff are required to read the Code of Conduct and sign to state that they have done this, understand it and agree to abide by the requirements.

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Background

In our capacity as academy staff and governors, we have a duty to behave in a way that reflects well on Mears Ashby C of E Primary School, working at all times within the law and according to our academy, Peterborough Diocese Education Trust and Local Authority policies and procedures. At no time should public confidence in the academy be put at risk by the actions or words of a member of academy staff or governing body. Volunteers are asked to make the same commitment.

It is important that all adults read, understand and sign the academy's Code of Conduct. If the behaviour of a member of staff falls below the standards in this code, the Headteacher / Chair of Governors may take disciplinary action, including possible dismissal.

The Code of Conduct cannot cover every eventuality. Its purpose is to alert staff to some areas of common agreement and potential risks of accusation whilst working in an academy environment. It does not replace the general requirements of the law, common sense and good conduct.

1. Propriety and Behaviour

- 1.1. All adults working with pupils have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of the pupils. It is therefore expected that they will all adopt high standards of personal conduct both in and out of the academy in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their colleagues, pupils, parents / carers and the public in general and all those with whom they work.
- 1.2. There may be times, for example, when an adult's behaviour or actions in their personal life come under scrutiny from local communities, the media or public authorities. This could be because their behaviour is considered to compromise their position in their workplace or indicate an unsuitability to work with pupils. Misuse of drugs, alcohol or acts of violence would be examples of such behaviour.
- 1.3. Adults in contact with pupils should therefore understand and be aware, that safe practice also involves using judgement and integrity about behaviours in places other than the work setting.
- 1.4. The behaviour of an adult's partner or other family members may raise similar concerns and require careful consideration by an employer as to whether there may be a potential risk to pupils in the workplace.
- 1.5. All practitioners will respect the rights of all who pupils, parents / carers and colleagues who may have protected characteristics (e.g. age, gender, race, disability) treating others equally well and avoiding all forms of discrimination.

2. Dress and Appearance

- 2.1 Adults will dress modestly and appropriately for working with children / young people and families.
- 2.2 A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However adults should dress in ways which are appropriate to

their role and this may need to be different to how they dress when not at work.

- 2.3 Adults who work with children and young people should take care to ensure they are dressed appropriately for the tasks and the work they undertake.
- 2.4 Those who dress in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations.

3. Personal Living Space

- 3.1 No child or young person should be in or invited into the home of an adult who works with them. (Where staff have personal relationships of a social nature with families whose children attend the academy, staff will declare these to the Headteacher and agree that their personal relationship will not affect their professional conduct surrounding the pupil's learning experience).
- 3.2 Under no circumstances should children or young people assist with chores or tasks in the home of an adult who works with them. Neither should they be asked to do so by friends or family of that adult.

4. Gifts, Rewards and Favouritism

- 4.1 Gifts from suppliers or associates of the academy must be declared to the Headteacher.
- 4.2 There are occasions when children, young people or parents / carers may wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to adults e.g. on special occasions or as a thank-you and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.
- 4.3 Care should also be taken to ensure that adults do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.
- 4.4 The giving of gifts or rewards to pupils should be part of an agreed policy for supporting positive behaviour or recognising particular achievements.
- 4.5 In some situations, the giving of gifts as rewards may be accepted practice for a group of children, whilst in other situations the giving of a gift to an individual child or young person will be part of an agreed plan, recorded and discussed with the Headteacher and the parent or carer.
- 4.6 It is acknowledged that there may specific occasions when an adult working with a child or young person may consider it appropriate to give a child or young person a small personal gift if insignificant value. This is only acceptable practice where, in line with the agreed policy, the adult has first discussed the giving of the gift and the reason for it, with the Headteacher and the parent or carer and the action is recorded. Any gifts should be given openly and not be based on favouritism.
- 4.7 Adults need to be aware however, that the giving of gifts can be misinterpreted by others as a gesture either to bribe or 'groom' a young person so all actions must be completely open and transparent.
- 4.8 Staff should also exercise care when selecting pupils for academy teams, productions, trips and / or specific work tasks in order to avoid perceptions of favouritism or injustice. Similar care should be exercised when pupils are

excluded from an activity. Methods of selection and exclusion should always be subject to clear, agreed criteria.

5. Infatuations / Special Relationships

- 5.1 Occasionally, a child or young person may develop an infatuation with an adult who works with them. These adults should deal with these situations sensitively and appropriately to maintain the dignity and safety of all concerned.
- 5.2 They should ensure that they do not form a “special relationship” with any pupil and remain aware that such infatuations can carry a risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and should therefore make every effort to ensure that their own behaviour is above reproach.
- 5.3 An adult, who becomes aware that a child or young person is developing an infatuation or trying to form a special attachment, should discuss this at the earliest opportunity with a Headteacher.

6. Position of Power and Trust & Staff / Pupil Relationships

- 6.1 As a result of their knowledge, position and / or authority, all adults working with children and young people are in positions of trust in relation to the young people in their care. It is vital for all those in positions of trust to understand the power this can give them over those they care for and the responsibility they must exercise as a consequence of this relationship.
- 6.2 A relationship between an adult and a child cannot be a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people. Adults have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.
- 6.3 Adults should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. They should report and record any incident with this potential to the Headteacher.

7. Communication with Pupils and Families

- 7.1 All forms of communication between pupils and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries.
- 7.2 Adults should not share any personal information with pupils and should not request personal information from the child/young person (other than that which is appropriate as part of their professional role).
- 7.3 Staff will not give out their personal details, telephone numbers, e-mails or addresses to pupils or parents / carers.
- 7.4 Adults will ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.
- 7.5 Only internal e-mail systems should be used to contact pupils and parents / carers and this must be in accordance with the E-Safety and Acceptable Use policies.
- 7.6 Phone calls to parents / carers will always be made from the academy telephone, not personal phones.

7.7 If on an academy trip and staff need to contact parents / carers, they will ring the academy which will then contact the parent/carer or, in the case of an emergency, staff will use the academy mobile phone. Personal mobile phones will not be used to contact parents/carers.

8. Social Media

8.1 Staff must observe the guidance in the Acceptable Use Policy which they have signed to state that they have agreed the terms.

8.2 Staff must not enter into cyber communication with children or their families. Where these relationships are already in place, they must be declared to the Headteacher as outlined in this code of conduct and the E-Safety policy.

9. Personal Mobile Phones, Cameras, Handheld Devices

9.1 All staff must ensure that their personal mobile phones, cameras and other such recording devices are stored securely during working hours on academy premises or when on outings. (This includes visitors, volunteers, trainees, parents / carers and pupils).

9.2 Mobile phones must not be used in any teaching area in the academy or within toilet or changing areas.

9.3 Only academy equipment should be used to record classroom activities. Photos and video footage should be put onto the secure academy system as soon as possible and not sent to, or kept on, personal devices.

9.4 During academy outings nominated staff will have access to an academy mobile phone which can be used for emergency or contact purposes.

9.5 All telephone contact with parents or carers must be made on the academy phone and a note kept. Personal mobile phones should not be used.

9.6 Parents or carers are permitted to take photographs of their own children during an academy production or event. The academy protocol requires that photos of other people's children are not published on social networking sites such including Facebook, Snap Chat, Instagram, You Tube or other such sites.

9.7 Parents or carers are not permitted to video academy productions or events without written permission of the Headteacher.

9.8 Staff and parents / carers are advised against the misuse of network sites such as Facebook and Twitter to share confidential, negative or abusive comments or information regarding the academy, a member of staff, parent/carer or child. (Misuse will be dealt with through official channels such as the Police).

10. Social Contact

10.1 Adults who work with children should not seek to have social contact with them or their families, unless the reason for this contact has been firmly established and agreed with the Headteacher.

10.2 Where staff have personal relationships of a social nature with families whose children attend the academy, staff will declare these to the Headteacher and agree that their personal relationship will not affect their professional conduct

surrounding the pupil's learning experience at Mears Ashby C of E Primary School.

- 10.3 Where such relationships exist, staff will ensure that no information regarding the academy, staff or pupils will be discussed and will sign a confidentiality declaration to support this.
- 10.4 Under no circumstances should an adult visit a pupil in their home outside agreed work arrangements or invite a child or young person to their own home or that of a family member, colleague or friend. If in an emergency, such a one-off arrangement is required, the adult must have a prior discussion with the Headteacher and the parents or carers and a clear justification for such arrangement is agreed and recorded.

11. Sexual Contact

- 11.1 All adults should clearly understand the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their contacts with children and young people.
- 11.2 Any intimate or sexual relationships between children/young people and the adults who work with them will be regarded as a grave breach of trust resulting in immediate disciplinary action and Designated Officer (LA) involvement. The police may be also be contacted.
- 11.3 Any sexual activity between an adult and a pupil at Mears Ashby C of E Primary School will be regarded as a criminal offence and may be a matter for disciplinary action and Police involvement.

12. Physical Contact

- 12.1 Not all children and young people feel comfortable about physical contact, and adults should not make the assumption that it is acceptable practice to use touch as a means of communication.
- 12.2 Staff should never initiate physical contact in the form of hugs or cuddles and should always try to dissuade pupils from such contact. "Side on" contact should be used instead.
- 12.3 When physical contact is made with a child or young person this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.
- 12.4 It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact. Adults should use their professional judgement at all times, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and – so far as is possible - use a level of contact and / or form of communication which is acceptable to the child for the minimum time necessary.
- 12.5 Physical contact which occurs regularly with an individual child / young person is likely to raise questions unless there is explicit agreement on the need for, and nature of, that contact.
- 12.6 Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If an adult believes that their action could be misinterpreted, or if an action is observed by another as being inappropriate or possibly abusive or inappropriate, the incident and circumstances should be reported to the Headteacher as outlined in the procedures for handling allegations and an appropriate record made. Parents/

carers should also be informed in such circumstances.

- 12.7 Where a child / young person seeks or initiates inappropriate physical contact with an adult, the situation should be handled sensitively and care taken to ensure that contact is not exploited in any way. Careful consideration must be given to the needs of the pupil and advice and support given to the adult concerned.
- 12.8 It is recognised that some children and young people who have experienced abuse may seek inappropriate physical contact. Adults should be particularly aware of this when it is known that a pupil has suffered previous abuse or neglect.
- 12.9 In all circumstances where a child or young person initiates inappropriate physical contact, it is the responsibility of the adult to sensitively deter the pupil and help them understand the importance of personal boundaries. Such circumstances must always be reported and discussed with the Headteacher and the parent / carer.

13. Other Activities that Require Physical Contact

- 13.1 Adults may have to initiate some physical contact with children and young people, for example to demonstrate technique in the use of a particular piece of equipment, adjust posture, or perhaps to support a pupil so they can perform an activity safely or prevent injury. Such activities should be carried out in accordance with the code of conduct, regulations and best practice.
- 13.2 Contact should be relevant to their age or understanding and adults should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the child or young person.
- 13.3 Guidance and protocols around safe and appropriate physical contact is provided in the Physical Intervention and Safeguarding / Child Protection policies, and should be understood and applied consistently. Any incidents of physical contact that cause concern or fall outside of these protocols and guidance should be reported to the Headteacher and parent or carer and must be recorded in the Numbered Page, Bound Book.
- 13.4 It is good practice if all parties clearly understand at the outset, what physical contact is necessary and appropriate in undertaking specific activities. Keeping parents / carers, children and young people informed of the extent and nature of any physical contact may also prevent allegations of misconduct or abuse arising.

14. Behaviour Management

- 14.1 Behaviour will be managed in keeping with the guidance set out in the Behaviour Policy. Adults will always respect the pupil's well-being and self-worth and not seek to affect the pupil's dignity or act in a way which may result in the child/young person feeling shame or humiliation.
- 14.2 Where a child / young person has specific needs in respect of particularly challenging behaviour, a Positive Handling Plan may be drawn up and agreed by all parties. Only in these circumstances should an adult deviate from the Behaviour Policy of the Academy.
- 14.3 See the Behaviour Policy for further guidance.

15. Use of Physical Intervention

- 15.1 In no circumstances will an adult use any physical force or contact in relation to discipline.
- 15.2 Physical intervention will only be used to protect a child or young person from danger. This may include stopping a pupil physically harming another, or stopping a pupil from engaging in an action which puts them at risk of harm.
- 15.3 See the Physical Intervention Policy for full guidance.

16. Pupils in Distress

- 16.1 There may be occasions when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance and this may involve physical contact. Young children, in particular, may need immediate physical comfort, for example after a fall. Adults should use their professional judgement to comfort or reassure a child in an age-appropriate way whilst maintaining clear professional boundaries. An arm around the shoulder (side on contact) is preferable. Under no circumstances should hugs and cuddles and sitting on laps be initiated by any adult worker. However in the case of pre-school and nursery children it is recognised that hugs and cuddles can sometimes be part of helping children to deal with separation issues. If they are considered to be absolutely necessary in this context then transparency is key. Therefore they should only ever be given in response to an emotional need and in a setting where other adults are present.
- 16.2 Early Years Staff play a large role in supporting children to separate from their main carer and find ways to independently engage in learning. If pupils are unsettled at drop off, the staff need to work closely with the child and their family to enable the pupil to feel safe and secure.
- 16.3 Staff are encouraged to value the voice of the child in situations where pupils are feeling distressed and provide appropriate levels of comfort for the pupil to enable them to relax and engage in learning.
- 16.4 Pupils should not be left feeling distressed at any time during the academy day or during extra-curricular activities, without adult input, even if the pupil needs some time to themselves. They need to have access to an adult at all times. If staff need to attend to something else, they will ask another member of staff to be with the pupil and communicate to the pupil that this handover has happened.

17. Intimate / Personal Care

- 17.1 Children and young people are entitled to respect and privacy at all times and especially when in a state of undress, changing clothes or undertaking any form of personal care. There are occasions where there will be a need for an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard young people and/or satisfy health and safety considerations. This supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the young people concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.
- 17.2 Adults need to be vigilant about their own behaviour, ensure they follow agreed guidelines (Policies and Risk Assessments) and be mindful of the

- needs of the children and young people with whom they work.
- 17.3 See Toileting and Intimate Care Policy and associated specific Risk Assessments for further guidance.

18. First Aid and Administration of Medication

- 18.1 Health and Safety legislation places duties on all employers to ensure appropriate health and safety policies and equipment are in place and an appropriate person is appointed to take charge of first-aid arrangements.
- 18.2 Some pupils may need medication during school hours. In circumstances where children need medication regularly a Health Care Plan will be drawn up (with Health colleagues) to ensure the safety and protection of pupils and staff. Appropriate training will be given to staff and the Plan must be adhered to by staff to protect all involved.
- 18.3 See First Aid and Medication Policy for full details.

19. Home Visits

- 19.1 All work with pupils and parents / carers should, wherever possible, be undertaken in the academy or other recognised workplace. There are however occasions, in response to urgent or specific situations where it is necessary to make one-off or regular home visits. In these circumstances it is essential that appropriate policies and related risk assessments are in place to safeguard pupils and staff.
- 19.2 A risk assessment should include an evaluation of any known factors regarding the child/young person, parents/carers and others living in the household. Risk factors such as hostility, child protection concerns, complaints or grievances can make adults more vulnerable to an allegation. Specific consideration should be given to visits outside of school hours or in remote or secluded locations. Following an assessment, appropriate risk management measures should be in place before visits are agreed. Where little or no information is available, visits should not be made alone and clear procedures for 'reporting into a manager' must be in place.
- 19.3 Carrying out academy planned Home Visits staff must remain respectful of the children and families and, where possible, respect the protocols within the family home taking account of and being sensitive to any cultural expectations.
- 19.4 Please refer to Lone Working / Home Visits Policy for further information.

20. Transporting Pupils

- 20.1 There may be occasions when adults are expected or asked to transport pupils as part of their duties. Adults, who are expected to use their own vehicles for transporting pupils should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy, appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.
- 20.2 Two adults must be present in the vehicle at all times so the driver can concentrate while the other adult is able to monitor the pupils.

- 20.3 It is a legal requirement that all passengers should wear seat belts and it is the responsibility of the staff member to ensure that this requirement is met. Adults should also be aware of current legislation and adhere to the use of car seats for younger children.
- 20.4 It is inappropriate for adults to offer lifts to a pupil outside their normal working duties, unless this has been brought to the attention of the Headteacher and has been agreed with the parents/carers.
- 20.5 There may be occasions where the pupil requires transport in an emergency situation or where not to give a lift may place a child or young person at risk. Such circumstances must always be recorded and reported to the Headteacher and parents/carers.

21. Trips and Outings

- 21.1 Adults should take particular care when supervising children and young people on trips and outings, where the setting is less formal than the usual workplace. Adults remain in a position of power and trust and need to ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times and stays within clearly defined professional boundaries.
- 21.2 Where out of school activities include overnight stays, careful consideration needs to be given to sleeping arrangements. Children, young people, adults and parents / carers should be informed of these prior to the start of the trip.
- 21.3 In all circumstances, those organising trips and outings must pay careful attention to ensuring safe staff / child ratios and to the gender mix of staff especially on overnight stays.
- 21.4 Health and Safety arrangements require members of staff to keep colleagues/ employers aware of their whereabouts, especially when involved in activities outside the usual workplace.
- 21.5 Risk Assessments must be understood and strictly followed.

22. Photography and Video

- 22.1 Working with pupils (especially in Early Years) involves the taking or recording of images for evidence of their learning. Any such work should take place with due regard to the law and the need to safeguard the privacy, dignity, safety and well-being of children.
- 22.2 Informed written consent from parents or carers and agreement, where possible, from the child or young person, should always be sought before an image is taken for any purpose.
- 22.3 Care should be taken to ensure that all parties understand the implications of the image being taken especially if it is to be used for any publicity purposes or published in the media, or on the Internet. There also needs to be an agreement as to whether the images will be destroyed or retained for further use, where these will be stored and who will have access to them.
- 22.4 Adults need to remain sensitive to any children who appear uncomfortable, for whatever reason, and should recognise the potential for such activities to raise concerns or lead to misunderstandings.
- 22.5 It is not appropriate for adults to take photographs of children using personal devices or to use images for their personal use. Academy equipment should

be used and photographs uploaded to the academy secure system.
Equipment containing images should not be taken out of the academy.

- 22.6 For images to be used for other purposes, such as promotion or training, permission will be sought in writing from the parents / carers and a detailed explanation will be given so they are aware of where the image will be used.

23. Access to Inappropriate Images and Internet Usage

- 23.1 There are no circumstances that will justify adults possessing indecent images of children or young people. Adults who access and possess links to such websites will be viewed as a significant and potential threat to children.
- 23.2 Accessing, making and storing indecent images of children on the internet are illegal. This will lead to criminal investigation and the individual being barred from working with children and young people, if proven.

24. Confidentiality and Data Protection

- 24.1 Members of staff may have access to confidential information about pupils in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities. In some circumstances staff may be given highly sensitive or private information. They should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil or her / his family for their own, or others' advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other schools / services).
- 24.2 Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the pupil.
- 24.3 Confidential information about a child or young person should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need-to-know basis. In circumstances where the child's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.
- 24.4 There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a child or young person, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a duty to pass these on but only to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy DSL).
- 24.5 All staff must be familiar with the Data Protection Policy and the requirements related to data storage. Care must be taken to ensure that staff laptops are stored securely and documents are encrypted as appropriate.
- 24.6 All documents that have pupil / family names, addresses or other such identification details must be securely locked away and not left on desks, in insecure drawers or cupboards or taken off site.

25. Information Sharing

- 25.1 Sharing information is an intrinsic part of the job when working with children and young people. The decisions about how much information to share, with whom and when, can have a profound impact on individuals' lives. It could ensure that an individual receives the right services at the right time and prevent a need from becoming more acute and difficult to meet. At the other end of the spectrum it could be the difference between life and death. Poor or non-existent information sharing is a factor repeatedly flagged up as an issue

in Serious Case Reviews carried out following the death of, or serious injury to, a child.

- 25.2 Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk of abuse or neglect. No practitioner should assume that someone else will pass on information which may be critical to keeping a child safe.
- 25.3 Staff should be familiar with the guidance on “Information Sharing” 2015, particularly with the “seven golden rules” and understand what this means for them in their daily work.

26. Whistleblowing

- 26.1 Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which adults can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. Each employer should have a clear and accessible whistle blowing policy that meets the terms of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.
- 26.2 Adults who use whistleblowing procedure should be made aware that their employment rights are protected.
- 26.3 Please see the academy Whistleblowing Policy for further information.