



Bembridge Church of England Primary School

'Learning to love God, one another and ourselves'



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1				
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3				

Contents

1.1 Introduction	p.3
1.2 Scope	p.3
1.3 General obligations	p.4
2.1 Professional conduct and behaviour	p.5
2.2 Safeguarding pupils	p.5
2.3 Pupil Development	p.6
2.4 Honesty and Integrity	p.6
2.5 Conduct Outside Work	p.6
2.6 Social Contact	p.7
2.7 Physical Contact	p.7
2.8 Sexual Contact with Children and Curriculum Issues	p.8
2.9 Confidentiality	p.8
2.10 Equality	p.8
2.11 Employment	p.9

Code of Conduct and Guidelines for Safe Working Practices for the Protection of Children and Staff

The following Code and guidelines set out specific areas of conduct and behaviour that constitute expected and safe practice.

If staff are in any doubt about any aspect of this guidance or need to seek further clarification about a particular situation in the absence of specific guidance, they are advised to speak to the Head Teacher.

1.1 Introduction

The Governors of Bembridge CE Primary School have a legal duty under **section 175 of the Education Act 2002** and under the statutory guidance of **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021** to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by creating and maintaining a safe learning environment. In addition all staff employed under Teacher's Terms and Conditions of Employment have a statutory obligation to adhere to the '**Teachers' Standards 2012**' – personal and professional conduct. The Public are entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from school staff, governors and volunteers and to have trust and confidence in their integrity. In this regard, all Bembridge CE Primary School staff have a duty to keep children and young people safe and protect them from harm. Staff should ensure that they do not put themselves in situations in which allegations of abuse or inappropriate behaviour could be made.

Staff should ensure that they set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils. All staff must, therefore, demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same, and must avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct. Adults should work and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way.

All adults working in Bembridge CE Primary School must therefore act with the utmost good faith with regard to the business of the school and not do anything, which may adversely affect its reputation.

The following code has been drawn up with a view to reducing the risk of staff being accused of improper or unprofessional conduct in all aspects of their work. It aims to help staff work safely and professionally and clarify what behaviour constitutes safe practice and what is unacceptable and/or illegal.

1.2 Scope

The Code applies to all adults working in schools whatever their position, roles or responsibilities and is therefore aimed at all school-based staff and volunteers. The Code is predominantly geared towards safe working practices for the protection of children and in this connection should be read in conjunction with Bembridge CE Primary School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies. However, the code also encompasses other general aspects of conduct expected within Bembridge CE Primary School.

The Code cannot cover every eventuality. Its purpose is to show the standard expected of employees, but it does not replace the general requirements of the law. Nor can the code provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not appropriate behaviour for staff in all circumstances. There may be occasions and circumstances in which adults have to make decisions or take action in the best interests of the child or young person which could contravene this guidance or where no guidance exists. Individuals are expected to make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the children in their charge. Such judgements should always be recorded and shared with the Head Teacher. In undertaking these actions individuals will be seen to be acting reasonably.

1.3 General obligations

Staff should understand the responsibilities that are an intrinsic part of their employment or role. They should make a professional judgement about their actions and behaviour and seek to avoid conduct, which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation or intentions.

If there is an incident where staff feel there may be a concern, they should discuss the circumstances that informed their action, or their proposed action with a senior colleague, to help ensure that the safest practices are employed and the risk of actions being misinterpreted reduced.

Records should be made of any incidents and decisions made or further actions agreed, with their justifications, in accordance with school policy.

All staff should know the designated person for child protection, be familiar with local child protection arrangements and understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children and young people. Currently the designated leads for Child Protection are **Elizabeth Chambers** and **Clemma Yardley**.

Staff should understand their responsibility to voice any general concerns that they might have about practice within the school, in accordance with the **Whistle Blowing policy** for the school.

Staff should also be aware of and comply with financial and administrative regulations for Bembridge CE Primary School.

Unlawful, unsafe or inappropriate behaviour may result in disciplinary action being taken including dismissal.

2.1 Professional conduct and behaviour

- Staff should not behave in a manner, which would lead a reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or act as a role model.

- All staff who work in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils. Staff must avoid therefore using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.
- Staff should not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work and the provision of a balanced and professional service, ensuring that they work to the professional standard required.
- All staff must demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same.
- Discussions or contact with parents must not take place via any unofficial channels and a professional role must be upheld.
- All staff must avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct. Staff should not use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine pupils, make (or encourage others to make) unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate other individuals or might be interpreted as such.
- Staff should ensure that they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks that they undertake and that through their appearance, they promote a positive and professional image.
- Staff should adhere to the staff dress code as outlined in Appendix 1
- Staff should be punctual and well-prepared and should carry out tasks to the best of their ability, taking pride in their work.
- Staff should ensure that all absences from work are genuine.
- Staff are encouraged to look after their physical and mental wellbeing. This includes maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

2.2 Safeguarding pupils

- Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from all forms of abuse as outlined in the **Safeguarding Policy**.
- The duty to safeguard pupils includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil to the school's DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) – the Headteacher.
- Staff are made aware of the school's **Safeguarding, Child Protection and Whistleblowing Policies** and must be familiar with these documents. They are available on the school website, server and paper copy on all safeguarding boards.
- Staff must not demean or undermine pupils, their parents or carers, or colleagues.
- Staff must take reasonable care of pupils under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.
- Staff must be aware of, and take care to avoid, situations which could place them in vulnerable position.
- Staff should ensure that there is visual access and/or an open door in one to one situations.
- Staff must read and follow the DFE 'Use of Reasonable Force Recommendations' and the school's Behaviour Policy. These are available on the server and in the staff room

2.3 Pupil Development

- Staff must comply with all school policies and procedures and in particular those that support the well-being and development of pupils.
- Staff must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of pupils.
- Staff must follow reasonable instructions that support the development of pupils

2.4 Honesty and Integrity

- Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and use of school property and facilities.
- All money handled should be clearly labelled and sent as soon as practicable to the school office. Staff should not transport monies offsite unless with the permission of senior staff.
- Staff should ensure that receipts are provided for **pre-agreed** items purchased for school use.
- Staff should ensure that they use public funds entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner and that they do not give or receive any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage, which might be misinterpreted.
- Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to the Headteacher, with the exception of 'one off' token gifts from pupils or parents up to the value of £25 (Gifts above this value should be declared to the Headteacher). Personal gifts from individual members of staff to pupils are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted.
- Staff should not seek or receive preferential rates for themselves by virtue of their dealings on behalf of the school.

2.5 Conduct Outside 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.
- Criminal offences of an employee or their partner or an individual that lives in their household that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct is unacceptable. All staff must complete a staff suitability declaration. Staff must exercise extreme caution when using information technology and be aware of risks to themselves or others – see Social Media Policy and Acceptable Use Policy. Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute.
- Staff may undertake work outside of school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict/compete with the interests of the school, does not contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance and if paid work is declared appropriately for tax purposes.

- Private work should not use the school's time or use the school's premises or equipment, without prior approval of the Headteacher.

2.6 Social Contact

- Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils to secure or strengthen a friendship. This includes giving any personal details to a pupil such as a home/mobile phone number, home or email address. Only in exceptional circumstances can this be done, with the prior approval of a senior member of staff. There will be occasions when there are social contacts between pupils and staff, where for example the parent and teacher are part of the same social circle. These contacts however, must be easily recognised and openly acknowledged.
- Staff should advise senior staff of any regular social contact they have with a pupil, where it is apparent that it may give rise to a concern.

2.7 Physical Contact

- It is unrealistic to suggest that staff should never touch pupils. There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, such as when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance or as an integral part of some lessons such as PE. However innocent actions and appropriate physical contact can often be misconstrued and it is therefore crucial that staff only initiate physical contact for the minimum time necessary and in ways appropriate to their own role and needs of the child.
- Staff should, where feasible, seek the child's permission before initiating contact.
- Staff should, in the event of an incident being misinterpreted, report to the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) straight away.
- Staff should avoid any physical contact when children are in the state of undress or any visually intrusive behaviour when they are in changing rooms. Staff should announce their intention of entering a changing room and avoid remaining in the room unless pupils needs require it.
- Staff should not change in the same place as children.

2.8 Sexual Contact with Children and Curriculum Issues

- There may be occasions when, as part of the curriculum, a teacher has to raise subject matter that is sexually explicit. In such situations a lesson plan should highlight the areas of risk and sensitivity. Staff should respond to questions with careful judgement and avoid entering into inappropriate or offensive discussions about sexual activity.
- Staff should not use their status or standing to form or promote relationships with children which are of a sexual nature.

- Staff should not pursue sexual relationships with children and young people either in or out of school.
- Staff should not make sexual remarks to a pupil (including email, text messages, phone or letter), or use any communication which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative.
- Staff should not discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of pupils.
- Staff should not confer special attention and favour upon a child which might be misconstrued as being part of a 'grooming' process.

2.9 Confidentiality

- Where staff have access to confidential information about pupils or parents or carers, staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil.
- Staff should not use any information obtained in the course of their duties to the detriment of Bembridge CE Primary School or for personal gain or benefit or pass this information on to others who might use it in such a way.
- All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to remain confidential. For example, where a pupil is bullied by another pupil, 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 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.
- However, staff have an obligation to share with the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a pupil. Staff must never promise a pupil that they will not act on information that they are told by the pupil.
- Staff must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the loss, destruction, inaccuracy or disclosure of information does not occur as a result of their actions, including information relating to school business and pupil data.

2.10 Equality

- All staff should adhere to the Single Equalities Policy, in addition to the requirements of the law.
- Staff should not discriminate in recruitment and employment practices, nor in the delivery of services.
- Staff should also ensure that in their dealings with parents and other members of the public, they ensure the provision of an efficient and impartial delivery to all individuals.

2.11 Employment

- All staff involved in appointments and/or tendering process should ensure that these are made on the basis of merit.

- Staff should not be involved in an appointment or decisions relating to discipline, promotion or pay adjustments for any individual who is a relative or with whom they are in a close personal relationship.
- All relationships of a business or private nature with external contractors, or potential contractors should be made known to Headteacher / Chair of Governors.

This Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

Child Protection Policy

Safeguarding Policy

Whistle Blowing Policy

Single Equalities Policy

Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy

Social Media Policy

Acceptable Use Policy

Health & Safety Policy

Safer Recruitment Policy

Mobile Phone Policy

This code of conduct will be reviewed on an annual basis, and up-dated where appropriate.

September 2017

Reviewed September 2018

Reviewed September 2019 (KCSIE 2019)

Reviewed September 2020

Reviewed September 2021

Appendix 1

Dress and Appearance Code

Why have a dress and appearance code for adults working in school?

- To promote a positive and professional image
- To ensure thought is given so dress and appearance are appropriate to role
- To make sure dress and appearance are not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative
- To ensure dress and appearance do not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding

- To make sure dress and appearance are absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans
- To ensure dress and appearance is not discriminatory
- To ensure dress and appearance are appropriate to activity and give consideration to health and safety

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, staff should consider the manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role, which may be different to that adopted in their personal life.

All staff are expected to dress in keeping with their professional status and as a good example to students and visitors. Staff should ensure that they are dressed smartly, decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake. Those who dress or appear in a manner that could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism, allegation or compromise the health and safety of themselves and others.

Staff dress is expected to be formal rather than casual, we are a profession and that needs to be reflected in our attire, especially if your role involves working with other agencies or regular meetings with parents.

Body piercing should be removed or covered and any jewellery worn should conform to the school's Health and Safety policy.

In line with other agencies such as the Police, discrete tattoos (not facial tattoos) , are acceptable but should not undermine the dignity and authority of your role, cause offence to members of the wider community or colleagues and/or invite provocation or indicate unacceptable attitudes towards any individual or section of the community.

As a school we expect the children to wear school uniform and conform to a dress code, therefore it is appropriate to expect the same from members of staff.

Code

- Please be aware of health and safety issues with shoes – no very high heels or flip flops. Trainers only for sporting activities/trips.
- T-shirts - no slogans or phrases on clothing e.g. FCUK, no bra straps showing.
- Fitted t-shirts or polo shirts for men. For general classroom or office work men should wear a smart collared shirt (and tie if desirable)
- Jewellery - be careful when wearing jewellery as it may catch on things. No overly large earrings.
- Skirts—no miniskirts.
- No jeans – except for mufti or practicality on school visits. On these occasions jeans should still be smart and not ripped or overly faded.
- MSAs to wear tabards /hi- vis jackets on playground

Please remember you are at work. Whatever your role in school there is an expectation that you will present the children with a positive role model.