

Merton Junior School



Staff Code of Conduct

'Be wise, together we succeed'

Date Reviewed: June 2024

Next Review Date: June 2026

Headteacher

Signed:

Date: June 2024

Chair of Governors

Signed:

Date: June 2024

Date Approved: November 2016

Date Reviewed: March 2019 (adapted from The Key Model Policy)

Date Reviewed: July 2022 (extra details added – link to Staff Absence procedure etc.)

Date Reviewed: March 2024 – Parent Code of Conduct created, and brought inline with this policy.

Contents

1. Aims, scope and principles	1
2. Legislation and guidance	2
3. General obligations	2
4. Safeguarding	2
5. Staff-pupil relationships	4
6. Communication and social media	4
7. Acceptable use of technology	7
8. Confidentiality	5
9. Honesty and integrity	5
10. Dress code	5
11. Conduct outside of work	6
12. Monitoring arrangements	6
13. Links with other policies	6

1. Aims, scope and principles

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

Many of the principles in this code of conduct are based on the [Teachers' Standards](#).

School staff have an influential position in the school, and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards.

We expect all support staff, governors and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in our staff grievance procedures.

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils.

2. Legislation and guidance

We are required to set out a staff code of conduct under regulation 7 of [The School Staffing \(England\) Regulations 2009](#).

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance '[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)', we should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

3. General obligations

Staff set an example to pupils. They will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school
- Treat pupils and others with dignity and respect
- Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Express personal beliefs in a way that will not overly influence pupils, and will not exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within
- Adhere to the Teachers' Standards
- Follow School Policies and Procedures at all times
- Take responsibility for their role and act in a proactive manner regarding any issues which may arise

Each staff member has a Line Manager and it is vital that they communicate any issues or concerns with this member of staff. If a staff member is dissatisfied with the outcome of this conversation/s, and an agreed time limit has been met, then this may be escalated to a member of the Senior Leadership Team – the School Business Manager, the SENDCo, the Assistant Headteacher or Headteacher. If the member of staff is still not satisfied then a formal complaint may need to be made to the Headteacher to review the circumstances (see Formal Grievance procedure).

4. Safeguarding

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, or neglect.

Staff will familiarise themselves with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies and procedures and the Prevent initiative, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

These policies and procedures will be given to staff during their induction and are available in the PPA room and online in Teachers Pool / Current Policies / Statutory Policies.

4.1 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

This section is based on 'Section 1: Allegations that may meet the harm threshold' in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that anyone working in the school, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place inside or outside of school

We will deal with any such allegation quickly and in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be the headteacher, or the chair of governors where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation, and advice will be sought directly from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). All documentation and reports will be stored, securely, in a confidential file, only accessibly by the members of the Senior Leadership Team.

4.2 Low-level concerns about members of staff

Please read this alongside our school's Low Level Concern Policy (which can be found in Teachers' Pool – Policies)

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harm threshold, is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt'. For example, this may include:

- Being over-friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on a personal device
- Engaging in 1-to-1 activities where they can't easily be seen
- Humiliating pupils

Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy. We also encourage staff to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage staff to report it.

All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way.

Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed, and the staff member supported to correct it, at an early stage.

This creates and embeds a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff, while minimising the risk of abuse.

Reporting and responding to low-level concerns is covered in more detail in our Child Protection and Safeguarding policies, as well as our Low Level Concern Policy, all of which can be found in our Policy folder in Teachers' Pool.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

4.3 Whistle-blowing

Whistle-blowing reports wrongdoing that it is "in the public interest" to report. Examples linked to safeguarding include:

Pupils' or staff members' health and safety being put in danger

Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement

Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest

Staff are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. Their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and their confidentiality will be respected.

Staff should consider the examples above when deciding whether their concern is of a whistle-blowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or school procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

Staff should report their concern to the headteacher. If the concern is about the headteacher or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the chair of the governing board.

Concerns should be made in writing wherever possible. They should include names of those committing wrongdoing, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter.

For our school's detailed whistle-blowing process, please refer to our Whistleblowing Policy.

5. Staff/pupil relationships

Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so.

If staff members and pupils must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

- This takes place in a public place that others can access
- Others can see in to the room
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of school hours if possible, unless taking part in extracurricular activities arranged by school.

Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes social media profiles.

While we are aware many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to pupils are not acceptable, unless prior agreement is received from the Headteacher, or if the whole class are to receive gifts – e.g. at Christmas, Easter or at the end of the school year.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, or if a staff member is concerned at any point about a fellow staff member and a pupil, this should be reported in line with the procedures set out in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies.

6. Communication and social media

School staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, you must check that your public profile is set to private.

Staff must not have any unauthorised contact or accept 'friend' requests through social media with any pupil (including former pupils and/or those who attend other schools) unless they are family members.

The school are aware that there are members of staff who live in the community and are therefore friends with parents; this relationship/friendship must be professional in nature and information regarding school and pupils kept confidential. Formal action will be taken in the event of this not being adhered to.

Staff, who the above does not apply to, should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship. They will not make any efforts to find pupils' or parents' social media profiles.

Staff, who have children attending the school, must not use personal communication methods to communicate concerns, issues or questions about their child. Proper communication methods should be used, as per other parents – i.e. email to the school office or Year Group email address, a request for a meeting via Home School Book.

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at the school without their consent.

Staff should follow the Staff Absence Procedure (see separate document) regarding any absences.

7. Acceptable use of technology

Staff will not use technology in school to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.

Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school equipment for personal use, in school hours or in front of pupils. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.

We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system.

Please refer to the current guidance for ICT Acceptable Use.

8. Confidentiality

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the school, staff, pupils and their parents.

This information will never be:

- Disclosed to anyone without the relevant authority
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

If there is doubt about whether or not to share information, advice must be sought from a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child is at risk of harm.

Information obtained during the course of an individual's work should never be used for personal gain or benefit, nor should it be passed onto others who might use it in such a way.

9. Honesty and integrity

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities.

Staff will not accept bribes. There may be occasions where children or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff, for example as an end of year 'thank-you', and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value or to suggest to pupils that gifts would be appropriate or desired. Gifts that are worth more than £25 must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register. **Money should never be accepted as a gift.**

Staff should not solicit or accept any gift, hospitality or other reward from external parties which influences the way in which they carry out their duties or leads the giver to expect preferential treatment.

Information obtained during the course of an individual's work should never be used for personal gain or benefit, nor should it be passed onto others who might use it in such a way.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the school about their qualifications and professional experience is correct.

10. Dress code

Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner.

Outfits will not be overly revealing, and we ask that tattoos are covered up, where possible.

Clothes will not display any offensive or political slogans.

For full guidance please see the Appropriate Clothing Guidance.

11. Conduct outside of work

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school, or the teaching profession into disrepute. This covers relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school on social media.

Staff will take consideration into how they present themselves on Social Media, remembering that they are representing the school and profession in their posts, comments and images.

Staff must disclose any misconduct or alleged misconduct made against them, including any incidents arising from alternative or additional employment outside of this school. Disclosure must be made to the Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher without delay, after which consideration will be given to the relevance or otherwise of the misconduct to their role in the school

12. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every two years, but can be revised as needed. It will be approved by the headteacher.

Our governing board will ensure this code of conduct is implemented effectively, and will ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard children and deal with any concerns.

13. Links with other policies

This policy links with our policies on:

- Staff disciplinary procedures, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct. It also sets out examples of what we will deem as misconduct and gross misconduct
- Staff grievance procedures
- Child Protection
- Safeguarding
- ICT Acceptable Use
- Low Level Concern
- Whistle-blowing
- Home-School Communication