





Gateway Primary School Policy Cover Sheet

Policy Name:	Staff Code of Conduct
Adopted at / by:	FGB
Signed on behalf of the Governing Board	
Name:	Kevin Moyes
Date:	December 2024
Signed on behalf of Headteacher:	
Name:	Kayleigh Anstee
Date:	December 2024
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Introduction

All adults who work in schools must act professionally and create an environment that secures the safety and well-being of children and young people and the best outcomes for them. This relies on effective interactions and positive relationships between adults and children. People who work with children and young people can be vulnerable and the **Gateway Primary School Code of Conduct** provides advice and guidance to ensure that we are all aware of appropriate, professional behaviour. It also gives clear advice on what could be considered to be unwise behaviour or even misconduct. Our **Code of Conduct** aims to protect the safety and well-being of both children and all staff who work in the school.

As well as the guidance listed below, it is expected that staff conduct themselves within the strong values we expect of our pupils.



Purpose of Guidance

It is important that all adults working with children understand that the nature of their work and the responsibilities related to it, place them in a position of trust. This guidance provides clear advice on appropriate and safe behaviours for all adults working with children in paid or unpaid capacities. The guidance aims to:

- Keep children safe by clarifying which behaviours constitute safe practice and which behaviours should be avoided;
- Assist adults working with children to work safely and responsibly and to monitor their own standards and practice;
- Set clear expectations of behaviour and practice relevant to the staff at GPS
- Support employers in giving a clear message that unlawful or unsafe behaviour is unacceptable and that, where appropriate, disciplinary or legal action will be taken;
- Minimise the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations made against adults who work with children and young people;
- Reduce the incidence of positions of trust being abused or misused.

Guiding Principles

- The welfare of the child is paramount (Children Act 2004).
- It is the responsibility of all adults to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. This responsibility extends to a duty of care for those adults employed, commissioned or contracted to work with children and young people.
- Staff must be responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should not conduct themselves in a way which could lead others to question their motivation and intentions.
- The same professional standards should always be applied regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity.
- Staff should work and be seen to work in an open and transparent way.
- Any incidents that cause concern must be recorded and records kept of decisions made in accordance with school policy.
- **All staff should know who the Designated Safeguarding Person is and be familiar with the Child Protection Policy and understand their role in safeguarding the wellbeing of children and young people.**

Duty of care

- When accepting a role that involves working with children all staff must accept the responsibilities and trust inherent in the role.
- Teachers have a duty of care to children and must always act and be seen to act in their best interest.
- All staff whether paid or voluntary, have a duty to keep young people safe and protect them from physical and emotional harm. This is secured through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between staff and pupils and behaviour by staff that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement.
- GPS has a duty of care towards its employees and will provide a safe working environment and guidance about safe working practices in line with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The act also requires employees to take care of themselves and anyone else who may be affected by their actions.
- There will be situations in which staff must make decisions or take actions where no guidance exists. Staff must always act to secure the best interests and welfare of the students in their charge and will therefore be seen to be acting reasonably.

Power and Positions of Trust

- A relationship between a student and a member of staff is not a relationship of equals. Staff have a responsibility to ensure that they do not use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine pupils. They should not use their status or standing to form an inappropriate relationship with pupils.
- Staff should avoid behaviour or situations that could be misinterpreted by others and report and record any incident that they are concerned could be misinterpreted.
- When a person aged 18 or over is in a position of trust with a child under 18, it is an offence for that person to engage in sexual activity with that child. Further guidance is found in the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Confidentiality

- Teachers and other staff have daily responsibilities that mean they will have access to confidential information about our pupils. Our system of confidentiality works on a 'need to know' basis and confidential information must not be discussed casually with colleagues. In some circumstances however, information may need to be anonymous. Information must never be used to intimidate, embarrass or humiliate pupils. Always be cautious about passing information about pupils to other people.
- There are circumstances in which staff **MUST** share information about a child with an appropriate person – for example when abuse or neglect is suspected and this must be with the Designated Safeguarding Person, or the Head teacher. If in any doubt always consult a member of the LT. Any legal or press enquiries should always be passed to a member of the LT. All staff should make sure that pupils understand that information that they disclose to you about any matter cannot be kept confidential and that **you cannot offer them a special confidential relationship**. If you do so you are putting yourself at risk in terms of how this could be interpreted by others.
- The Data Protection Act of 1998 governs the storing and processing of information about pupils and if clarification is required, please consult the Head Teacher

Personal Conduct, Dress and Appearance

- All staff should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the respect and confidence of colleagues, pupils, parents and the wider community. It is important to behave in a manner that does not lead anyone to question an individual's suitability to work with children or act as a role model.
- No child or young person should be in or invited into the home of a member of staff unless the reason for this has been firmly established and agreed with parents/carers and the Head Teacher. Staff should be vigilant in maintaining privacy and mindful of the need to avoid placing themselves in vulnerable situations.
- Staff mobile phones should not be used in classrooms unless they are being used for educational purposes.
- Staff should think carefully about revealing inappropriate details of their personal lives to pupils and should not discuss their personal lives within the hearing of pupils.
- Staff should not make, or encourage others to make, unprofessional, personal comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate or might be interpreted as such.
- Dress is a matter of personal choice; however, staff should ensure that their dress and appearance is smart and appropriate to their professional role, which may be different from that adopted in their personal life. Staff should be dressed safely and appropriately so that appearance promotes a positive and professional image and does not render them vulnerable or open to criticism.

Gifts, Rewards, Favouritism, Infatuation

- It is acceptable to receive small tokens of appreciation from children or parents at Christmas or as a thank-you but staff should be careful not to accept any gift that could be considered a bribe to lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. Gifts of a significant value should not be accepted neither should gifts on a regular basis.
- It is not acceptable to give gifts to pupils. Any reward given to pupils should be part of the school's rewards systems and available to all pupils to avoid charges of favouritism.
- It is not uncommon for pupils to become attracted to members of staff and all staff should be aware that such situations carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted. If a member of staff finds themselves or a colleague in this situation they should talk to a member of the SLT as soon as possible to allow steps to be taken to avoid hurt and distress to both parties.

Social Contact, Physical Contact

- Staff should not establish social contact with pupils outside of school to establish a friendship or to strengthen a relationship. Social contact can be misconstrued. Staff should report any situation that they feel could compromise themselves or the school to a senior member of staff.
- Staff should not give out personal details such as their home phone number, address or private e-mail address to pupils unless the need to do so is communicated to senior staff.
- When physical contact is made with pupils it should be in response to needs at the time. A no touch approach is not always appropriate or practical in some circumstances. It is important to understand that well intentioned physical contact can be misinterpreted by the student or an observer. Staff should use their professional judgement at all times. Physical contact should never be secretive or represent an abuse of authority.
- Physical contact should never be gratuitous.
- Extra caution is required when it is known that a child has suffered from previous abuse or neglect. The child might associate physical contact with these circumstances and this makes staff vulnerable to allegations of abuse.
- Physical education and other activities requiring physical contact – staff who teach PE and who offer music tuition will on occasions need to initiate physical contact with pupils in order to support the pupils to perform a task safely/appropriately. This should be done with the student's agreement and should be for the minimum time necessary.
- Distressed pupils may need comfort and re-assurance, and this may involve age appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times and ensure that contact is not threatening, intrusive or open to misinterpretation. Always ask a member of the senior team if you are not sure what is appropriate.

Care, Control and Physical Intervention.

The circumstances in which staff can intervene with a pupil are covered in the 1996 Education Act. Staff may intervene to prevent a student from committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property, engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline. Staff must have regard to the health and safety of themselves and others. In all situations where physical intervention is used, the incident and actions must be recorded.

Under no circumstances can physical force be used as a form of punishment. The use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence.

For a detailed guide on intervention consult the school Communication Policy, including exclusions and bullying. All staff should adhere to this policy.

Behaviour Management

- Pupils should be treated with respect and dignity and we should expect pupils to treat staff in the same way. Procedures for dealing with breaches of the school's behaviour code are covered in the School's Communication, including exclusions and bullying policy and this should always be followed. Always try to defuse a situation before it escalates, the use of humour is often helpful.
- When confiscating pupils' personal property ensure that it is kept in a place that is secure and wherever possible this should be stored in the School safe. Ensure that the pupil knows why it is being confiscated and the time and place they can retrieve the item from you.
- Corporal punishment is unlawful; staff should not use degrading treatment for punishment. The use of swear words, sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards pupils is not acceptable. It is important to inform parents of sanctions and work with them to secure the changes in behaviour required.

Sexual Contact

- Any sexual contact by a member of staff towards a child or young person is illegal and this is not dependent on whether the young person consents or not. Sexual activity also includes the watching or production of pornographic material. Staff should ensure that their relationships with children and young people take place within the boundaries of a respectful, professional relationship and take care that their language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require careful thought, particularly when members of staff are dealing with adolescent boys and girls.

One to One Situations

- Staff should avoid meeting pupils in remote, secluded areas of the school and should ensure that they can be seen when they are seeing a child on their own, for example for extra help after school or in the lunch hour. Keep the door open or sit where you can both be seen through the door pane.

Home Visits

- Under no circumstances should an adult visit a child in their home outside agreed work arrangements or invite a child to their home or that of a family member, colleague or friend. If an emergency, such as a one-off arrangement is required, the adult must have a prior discussion with a senior member of staff and the parents/carers and a clear justification for such an arrangement is agreed and recorded.

Educational Visits and After School Clubs

- Staff need to take particular care when supervising pupils in less formal situations such as after school activities, residential and visits. It is important to make sure that the less formal situation doesn't lead to situations where behaviour is misinterpreted, and an inappropriate relationship established.
- Where overnight stays are involved and boys and girls are going, it is important that staffing reflects the gender balance of the pupils. All trips should be organised in line with the School's documentation. If you are in doubt discuss your concern with your Educational Visits Co-ordinator. **Lists of pupils and their whereabouts should be left in the front office** so that they can be consulted by staff at school. The list should include an estimated time of arrival back at school. **This includes arrangements for sports teams.** A contact mobile number for the supervising member of staff must be left with the names list.

Transporting Children

- There may be situations in which staff agree to transport children in their own vehicle. It is not advisable to transport a single child in a car unless there is no alternative. If a member of staff transports children in their car, they must ensure that it is with the agreement of the parents. The car must be roadworthy and appropriately insured to include the transport of children as part of your daily job. Staff must check the detail of their individual insurance policy.
- No member of staff will be expected to use their own vehicle to transport children as part of school activities. The use of volunteer parents should be discussed with a senior member of staff and the same safeguarding applied.

First Aid, Administration of Medication and Intimate Care

- The school has trained first aiders. There are lists at relevant places throughout school. Staff should be cautious about administering first aid and in general should send for trained staff as above. Wherever possible first aid should be administered with another adult present. Suitable records must be kept including accident forms if appropriate and parents informed as soon as possible. Always try to reassure pupils and explain what is happening to them.
- Please see Schools Administration of Medicines Policy.
- Staff organising school trips should make sure that a first aid trained staff member accompanies the trip and should check Local Authority guidelines to ensure that the member of staff has the required level of first aid training.
- Children who receive intimate care have a right to safety, privacy and dignity. A care plan should be drawn up and agreed with parents for pupils who require regular intimate care. Pupils should always be encouraged to be as independent as possible. We should always be mindful of the additional vulnerability of pupils with disabilities and learning needs.

The Curriculum and Sensitive Issues

- Many areas of the curriculum can include subject matter which is of a sensitive nature. It is very important that this work should clearly relate to learning outcomes that can be identified in lesson plans and schemes of work to ensure that they are not misinterpreted. Curriculum leaders should provide guidance to colleagues regarding such issues. Unplanned discussion about sexual and sensitive matters can also take place and response needs careful, sensitive and professional judgement. Always talk to a senior member of staff if guidance is needed or staff are concerned by matters that have been raised in lessons.
- Be particularly alert to any conversations or knowledge shown that could indicate child protection concerns or are offensive to the member of staff. Always seek the support and guidance of line managers or LT. Staff must be careful to avoid a situation in which they are drawn into offensive or inappropriate discussions or could be accused of encouraging such discussion.
- Parents have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of sex education but not from the aspects of the science curriculum relating to the biological aspects of human growth and development.

Photography, Videos and Other Creative Arts

- Staff should not take, display or distribute images of pupils unless they have **consent from parents or carers and the child to do so**. The school does not wish to reduce the use of photographs or films of school events in display, publicity materials or items such as the newsletter, but the guidance included in this document should be adhered to.
- There is the potential for any images of children and young people to be used inappropriately. We must take every precaution to ensure that this doesn't happen whilst still making sure that we use photographic and video records as a way of celebrating success and achievement.
- Staff should be aware that past experiences could make some children feel uncomfortable about being photographed or filmed and should be sensitive to signs of discomfort and anxiety.
- Images used for publicity purposes require the consent of the individual and parent or legal carer if under 18. This is also required for images on websites and images displayed in public places where visitors have access such as a reception area. Consent will be dealt with by administrative staff in individual schools. Such procedures are not meant to deter staff from using images but are intended to protect both children and staff.
- **The following guidelines should be adhered to**
- - If photographs are used on websites or in places with regular public access such as reception areas, first names only should be used.
 - If the photograph is to be stored for further use, permission should be sought from parents and storage must be secure.
 - All staff should be particularly careful with material stored on school laptops. Staff should download all photographs taken on school trips and at events that include children to the network and not keep pictures on their own devices.
 - Only people authorised by the Headteacher can have access to images stored on the school network.
 - **Personal mobile phones should not be used to take photographs of pupils.**

Safe Use of the Internet and Mobile Phones

- Mobile phones and the use of the internet by staff and pupils should be in accordance with the Schools's guidance on the safe use of ICT and is part of a code of conduct that is signed by parents as part of the home school agreement and by pupils. All staff should be familiar with this document and ensure that pupils using ICT in lessons, accessing websites and using e-mails are closely monitored.
- Under no circumstances should staff access inappropriate images in school and should be aware that if an illegal act is committed through downloading, storing or disseminating inappropriate materials involving children they are likely to be barred from work with children and young people. Accessing inappropriate materials including adults will also be considered a very serious matter and a breach of professional standards.
- **Staff are advised not to share personal e-mail addresses or phone numbers with pupils.** School e-mail addresses can be used by staff at their discretion to communicate with pupils and/or their parents or carers. **Staff should also exert extreme caution in the use of social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter etc.** which can easily be accessed by pupils and enable access to personal information that could be used inappropriately. It is not advisable to make comments on pupils' personal networking sites. **Staff should always ensure that their communication with pupils remains at a professional and transparent level so that their intentions cannot be misinterpreted.**

Whistle Blowing

- Whistle Blowing is the mechanism by which adults can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. 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. Staff should follow the guidelines in the School's Whistle Blowing Policy.

Sharing Concerns and Recording Incidents

- All staff must be aware of the GPS Child Protection Policy and Procedures. This includes procedures for dealing with allegations against staff. If a member of staff is the subject of an allegation s/he is advised to contact their union immediately.
- In the event of an incident occurring and an allegation being made against a member of staff, the information must be clearly and promptly recorded and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Person or in their absence to the Head Teacher. Early contact with parents/carers could avoid misunderstandings.
- Staff should feel confident, to discuss with the Head Teacher, or a member of the LT, or their line manager, any difficulties that may affect their relationships with pupils or their ability to undertake their roles as effectively as is the norm so that support can be offered or action taken.
- In line with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, staff must acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management or relevant agencies when the welfare of children is at risk. Concerns can be voiced in good faith and without fear of repercussions. In broad terms, the school would expect staff to report the following:-
 - Criminal offence
 - Any reasonable suspicions or evidence of physical, emotional or sexual abuse of children
 - Failure to comply with financial and legal obligations
 - Actions which endanger the health or safety of staff and pupils or the public
 - Actions which are intended to conceal any of the above.
- It will not always be clear that a particular action falls within one of these categories and members of staff will need to use their own judgment. However, GPS prefers that any suspicions are reported rather than ignored. If members of staff make a report in good faith, and even if it is not confirmed by investigation, they will not be liable to any disciplinary action or be otherwise disadvantaged in their employment. However, it should be noted that if they make a report maliciously, mischievously or for personal gain they may be liable to disciplinary action.
- There is a separate grievance procedure for staff wishing to raise matters relating to their individual treatment (e.g. problems with working relationships or career progression). Matters which are proper to the grievance procedure will not be considered under the Public Interest Disclosure Act.
- **It is essential that accurate and comprehensive records are maintained wherever concerns are raised about the conduct or actions of adults working with or on behalf of children and young people.**

Reference/Source Documents

- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Public Interest Disclosures Act 1998
- Oxfordshire Local Authority - Positive Handling Policy for School
- Gateway Primary School – Staff Handbook
- Gateway Primary School – Communication Policy