



**Longcause Community
Special School**

CODE OF CONDUCT (STAFF) POLICY

Signature of Head:	Anne Hutchinson
Date:	14.12.2023

Created by:	Trudi Skinner
Creation date:	December 2023
Reviewed by:	Anne Hutchinson
Master file location:	Admin Shared Drive
Next review date:	December 2024

October 2018

New Policy: October 2018

September 2019

5.8 – Statement added for Position of Trust

September 2020

4.3 - Updated to refer to KCSIE 2020

5.5 – reference to DBS policy has been removed

September 2021

1.1 – expanded with KCSIE 2021 statement

1.4 – Additional statement on legislation

1.5 – Additional section on reviewing of policy

4.10 – additional section on Low level concerns added to policy from KCSIE 2021

4.11 – Additional section on staff-pupil relationships

7.7 – Additional section to Honesty and Integrity on information given by staff

11.1 – Additional information on confidential information

11.3 – changed sentence from ‘discuss with manager or DSL’ to ‘DSL/DDSL’

October 2022

Staff using work devices and personal log in details added under confidentiality

December 2022

Paragraph about Data Protection

If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact your HR Adviser.

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Purpose, scope and principles
3. Setting an example
4. Safeguarding pupils, staff and visitors
5. Allegations, criminal charges and changes to status
6. Pupil development
7. Honesty and integrity
8. Professional attire
9. Conduct and professional relationships within work
10. Conduct outside work
11. Confidentiality
12. Disciplinary action

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The governing body of Longcause School have set out this Code of Conduct for all school employees. Responsibility for day to day implementation will fall to 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.
- 1.2 In addition to this policy, all staff have an obligation to adhere to all relevant statutory legislation and the national and local terms and conditions for both teaching and support staff. Staff are expected to ensure they treat everyone with respect, oppose any forms of discrimination and bullying and are sensitive to other people's needs, attitudes and lifestyles.
- 1.3 Employees should be aware that a failure to comply with the following Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, which could lead to dismissal.
- 1.4 We are required to establish procedures for the regulation of staff 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 policy.
- 1.5 The policy will be reviewed annually by a member of the leadership team but it can be revised as required. The governing board will approve the policy as required.

1 PURPOSE, SCOPE AND PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all staff (including supply staff) at Longcause School are expected to observe. School staff are role models and are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the pupils within the school. As a member of a school community, each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside working hours.
- 2.2 This Code of Conduct applies to:
 - All staff who are employed by the school, including the headteacher and any supply staff.
 - All staff in units or bases that are attached to the school.
- 2.3 The same expectations will be shared with, and apply to, regular visitors to the school such as peripatetic staff and regular volunteers; though it is

acknowledged that external staff will be covered by the relevant Code of Conduct of their employing body.

- 2.4 Where employees have complied with the Code of Conduct, the school will protect employees against unjustified allegations of wrong doing.
- 2.5 This Code of Conduct cannot cover every eventuality and further guidance should be sought from the headteacher or, in the case of the headteacher, from the Chair of Governors and/or the school's HR advisor, if individuals are unsure of the standards expected of them.

3. SETTING AN EXAMPLE

- 3.1 All staff who work in the school will set good examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils. Therefore, staff must demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same.
- 3.2 All staff must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

4. SAFEGUARDING PUPILS, STAFF AND VISITORS

- 4.1 Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. School staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early on and provide help for children, to prevent situations from escalating, by working with other agencies to protect them from harm.
- 4.2 Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from:
 - physical abuse
 - sexual abuse
 - emotional abuse, including verbal assaults
 - bullying
 - neglect
 - unequal treatment or discrimination
- 4.3 The duty to safeguard pupils includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead. The headteacher will ensure all staff are familiar with, and have received appropriate training including refresher training on, the school's Safeguarding Policy, and understand the provisions of the Whistleblowing Procedure. In addition, all staff should read the Department for Education's (DfE) statutory document *Keeping children safe in education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges (2023)*, which is available on the DfE's website and from the headteacher.

- 4.4 Staff must not demean or undermine pupils, their parents or carers, colleagues or visitors to the school.
- 4.5 Staff should ensure they comply with the school's IT and social media policies, particularly with regard to the use of personal equipment. For example, the use of personal mobile phones or devices to record or photograph children is prohibited, and staff should only use school equipment for this purpose. Staff are expected to keep mobile phones switched off during staff meetings and for the periods of the working day when they are in contact with children. In exceptional circumstances (such as critical illness of a family member) the headteacher should be notified if a phone needs to be used. Where staff are in any doubt about the school's expectations regarding their behaviour, they should seek guidance immediately from a member of the senior leadership team.
- 4.6 Staff must ensure the highest standards of safety and welfare are taken in respect of pupils under their supervision and other colleagues and visitors to the school.
- 4.7 Staff have a duty to inform the headteacher (or suitable senior person in their absence) if they believe that a colleague or visitor is behaving in a way that compromises the safety or wellbeing of any child, group of children or a member of staff. Where staff have concerns about the headteacher, this should be referred to the Chair of Governors or in his/her absence the Vice Chair of Governors.
- 4.8 Staff can report their concerns about child protection directly to the appropriate external agency if they consider the circumstances warrant this; however, staff are encouraged to raise this with the school's DSL and/or headteacher initially.
- 4.9 If staff have concerns about safeguarding or child protection practice in the school, they should raise this with the Headteacher or Chair of Governors wherever possible. Staff can also use the school's Whistleblowing Policy, where they consider this to be more appropriate. Further advice and support can be obtained from other agencies including trade unions.

4.10 Low-level concerns about members of staff

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harms 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 one-to-one activities where they can't easily be seen
- Using inappropriate language

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 Safeguarding policy and Whistleblowing policy. It is also explained in the staff induction. 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 our Safeguarding policy, Whistleblowing policy and as part of the staff induction. Policies are available on the website, shared drive and staff board located in the staff room.

4.11 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.

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.

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 Safeguarding policy, Managing allegations and Induction.

5. ALLEGATIONS, CRIMINAL CHARGES AND CHANGES TO STATUS

- 5.1 Staff facing allegations, criminal charges and changes to status must disclose this, without delay, to their Headteacher. They must do this in all circumstances, whether they personally feel the matter is relevant or not. If in doubt, staff should seek advice from the Headteacher.
- 5.2 Examples of changes could include revisions to registration status, receiving a conviction, warning, reprimand, caution or awaiting sentence or whilst any criminal allegations made against the employee are being investigated. Such offences include motoring convictions. In all cases these must be declared as soon as practically possible to allow the school to assess the potential risks to their employment. Staff may be suspended if this is felt appropriate in the circumstances, for example, if their clearance status changes or is under review.
- 5.3 Staff are expected to disclose immediately any incidents or allegations of wrongdoing arising from alternative employment, voluntary work, incidents outside of work, or from previous employment which may or may not be covered by pre-employment checks that could affect their suitability to work with children, such as allegations of sexual misconduct or violence. Failure to do this may result disciplinary action which could lead to dismissal.
- 5.4 Staff in posts covered by the 'Disqualification' requirement under the Childcare Act 2006, must ensure that they comply with the requirement to disclose offences relevant to themselves and to those who live or work at their home, and keep this information up to date throughout the year. The headteacher and the school's HR advisor can provide further guidance in relation to this and, where in any doubt, all working at the school should seek further advice.
- 5.5 The implications of any disclosures will need to be considered and could result in disciplinary action, possibly leading to dismissal if employees are no longer able to fulfil their role in the school.
- 5.6 Failure to disclose information may result in disciplinary action which could lead to dismissal.
- 5.7 All staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that their conduct towards pupils must be beyond reproach. ^[1]~~[SEP]~~ Staff understand that under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a

person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity between a member of school staff and a pupil under 18 may be a criminal offence. When staff are supporting students in hydro, swimming lessons or PE, which requires them to change for the activity, it is essential that staff use a designated changing area away from the students.

6. PUPIL DEVELOPMENT

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

7. HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

- 7.1 Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities. All staff should therefore familiarise themselves with the relevant school policies, including those in relation to financial procedures.
- 7.2 All staff must comply with the Bribery and Corruption Act 2018. A person may be guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or if they request, agree or accept, or receive a bribe from another person. If you believe that a person has acted in a corrupt way, you should refer to the school's Whistleblowing Procedure.
- 7.3 Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to the headteacher and recorded. This does not include "one off" token gifts from pupils or parents (e.g. at the end of the term or year). However, it could include offers of hospitality and invitations to events. Individual gifts from members of staff to individual pupils should not be given as they are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted.
- 7.4 Any personal interests, financial or otherwise, which could be seen to conflict with a member of staff's role at the school must be registered with the Headteacher. This could include where a close personal relationship exists with a potential supplier tendering for a contract with the school. Staff are expected to complete a form declaring any pecuniary interests on an annual basis.

- 7.5 Staff must declare membership of any organisation classed as a secret society. This should be made in writing and sent to the Headteacher, who will record it.
- 7.6 The advice of the Headteacher should be sought wherever doubt exists about the status of gifts, offers of hospitality or a potential situation of conflict of interest.
- 7.7 Staff will ensure that all information given to the school is correct. This should include:
- Background information (including any past or current investigations/cautions related to conduct outside of school)
 - Qualifications
 - Professional experience

Where there are any updates to the information provided to the school, the member of staff will advise the school as such as soon as reasonably practicable. Consideration will then be given to the nature and circumstances of the matter and whether this may have an impact on the member of staff's employment

Staff using work devices and personal log in details

All staff members will take appropriate steps to ensure their devices remain secure. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Keeping the device password-protected – strong passwords are at least 8 characters, with a combination of upper and lower-case letters, numbers and special characters (e.g. asterisk or currency symbol)
- Ensuring their hard drive is encrypted – this means if the device is lost or stolen, no one can access the files stored on the hard drive by attaching it to a new device
- Making sure the device locks if left inactive for a period of time
- Not sharing the device among family or friends
- Installing anti-virus and anti-spyware software
- Making changes to the device, including downloading apps and programmes without seeking permission first
- Keeping operating systems up to date – always install the latest updates
- Keeping personal log in details confidential and not allow anyone else to log in on their profile.

Staff members must not use the device in any way which would violate the school's terms of acceptable use, as set out in the online safety policy

Work devices must be used solely for work activities.

If staff have any concerns over the security of their device, they must seek advice from STEM.

8. PROFESSIONAL ATTIRE

- 8.1 Whilst it is acknowledged that appearance is a matter of personal taste, it is expected that staff will present themselves in a professional manner which sets a good example to students and exhibits the importance of the job they undertake. However, clothes should be practical for the tasks required e.g. sportswear when teaching P.E.
- 8.2 Staff should be mindful of the health and safety implications, for example, when wearing jewellery, ensuring appropriate footwear, etc.
- 8.3 Staff are expected to dress with regard to the audience, particularly when representing the school at external events.
- 8.4 Staff should not dress in a manner which could cause offence or embarrassment to others.
- 8.5 No dress code can cover all contingencies, so staff must exert a certain amount of judgement in their choice of clothing and if in doubt this should be discussed with their line manager.

9. CONDUCT AND PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN WORK

- 9.1 All members of staff should arrive at a time which enables them to begin their contracted hours duties and responsibilities promptly. If in doubt, staff should clarify this with their line manager.
- 9.2 Staff are expected to take professional responsibility for fulfilling their role in school and, whatever that role, it is essential to the overall success of the school. This includes the professional courtesy of meeting deadlines that have been set and having a proactive dialogue with colleagues/line managers at the earliest opportunity if there are issues which prevent a task being completed on time. Staff will be positive in their thinking and approach, seeking constructive solutions to problems and by de-personalising issues.
- 9.3 Staff will communicate effectively and fairly with all stakeholders and operate under the Nolan principles for those in public life (see Appendix 1). They will treat all colleagues and visitors with professional respect and courtesy, showing appreciation for the contributions of others.

10 CONDUCT OUTSIDE WORK

- 10.1 Staff should not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school. This includes via a variety of methods of communication, e.g. social media, word of mouth, written, phone, text, etc.
- 10.2 Staff must notify the Headteacher of any criminal charges brought against them, regardless of whether they consider these to be relevant to their working life (see also section 5 above). In some circumstances, criminal offences may need to be referred to the relevant disciplinary body by the Headteacher, and staff need to be aware that this could result in removal of QTS. Offences that involve violence, possession or use of illegal drugs, or sexual misconduct are regarded as unacceptable and will usually result in loss of QTS. Disciplinary action within a school context could also lead to referral to other agencies.
- 10.3 Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social networking sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community, or employer into disrepute. Staff must not access illegal, adult or other inappropriate sites using school computers, nor should they use IT equipment for activities that are not related to work, during their paid working hours (e.g. internet shopping).
- 10.4 If staff are intending to undertake additional work outside the school day or their contracted hours, it is expected that they will discuss this with their Headteacher, who will review the Working Time Regulations, health and safety implications and the potential effects on their work performance, and carry out a risk assessment, as necessary.
- 10.5 The school will not unreasonably preclude any of its employees from undertaking additional employment, taking into consideration the personal circumstances of the employee in question, but any such employment must not, in the Headteacher's and governing body's view, conflict with or react detrimentally to the school's interests or endanger the health and safety of themselves or others.
- 10.6 No personal business activity or outside work of any sort may be undertaken by employees during their normal working hours for the school. Similarly, no school equipment, accommodation or resources may be used in connection with these activities.

11 CONFIDENTIALITY

11.1 Staff must treat all information that they have access to within the school. This information should never be:

- Disclosed to anyone unless required by law or with consent from the relevant party or parties
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

11.2 Where staff have access to confidential information about pupils or their parents or carers, staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil. Staff are advised to familiarise themselves with the expectations of the GDPR Policy.

11.2 All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential and handled sensitively and according to correct procedures. These must only be discussed in the appropriate forum and with the relevant individuals (whether school staff or third parties). Where in doubt, staff must seek the advice of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

11.2 However, staff have an obligation to share with the school's DSL/DDSL any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a pupil or colleague. Staff must never promise a pupil that they will not act on information that they are told by the pupil.

12 DISCIPLINARY ACTION

12.1 Failure to meet these standards of behaviour and conduct may result in disciplinary action, which could lead to dismissal.

Appendix 1

Nolan Seven Principles of Public Life

Whilst not applicable to all aspects of school life, the general principles apply.

(Originally published by the Nolan Committee: The Committee on Standards in Public Life was established by the then Prime Minister in October 1994, under the Chairmanship of Lord Nolan, to consider standards of conduct in various areas of public life, and to make recommendations).

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.