St Patrick's safer working practices code of conduct for adults

Introduction:

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 sets out the requirement for all schools to have a staff code of conduct, sometimes referred to as a staff behaviour policy. This code of conduct should be followed by all staff (including visiting staff), volunteers and governors. It should be read alongside our Child Protection policy, Managing Allegations policy and our Online safety and Acceptable Use policies.

Our school is committed to safeguarding children and promoting children's welfare and expects all staff, governors, volunteers and visitors to share this commitment and maintain a vigilant and safe environment. It is our willingness to work in a safe manner and challenge inappropriate behaviour that underpins this commitment.

Everyone is expected to adhere to this "Code of Conduct" along with the Safer Recruitment Consortium Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings 2022

Everyone must also read and understand Part One and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. This code of conduct aims to support adults so they don't work in a manner which might lead to an allegation against them by raising awareness of illegal, unsafe, unprofessional and unwise behaviour and by supporting staff and volunteers to understand what safe, professional conduct is. Equally it aims to reduce the opportunity for any adult intent on grooming or harming a young person. The policy aims to reduce the risk of incidents or misunderstandings occurring by developing and setting out clear guidelines and boundaries. It encourages you to work in an open and transparent way that should avoid someone questioning your motives, intentions or suitability to work with young people.

Our school promotes an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about adults working in or on behalf of the school are dealt with promptly and appropriately. Creating this culture in which all concerns are shared responsibly, in a timely way with the right person, and are recorded and dealt with appropriately is critical to effective safeguarding practice. This culture enables the school to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour at the earliest possible stage, minimises the risk of abuse and ensures that all adults working in or on behalf of the school are clear about professional boundaries and act within these, in accordance with our ethos and values. This culture also empowers individuals to share concerns with key staff about their own behaviour at the earliest possible opportunity.

As part of our safeguarding induction all new staff and volunteers will receive a copy of this code of conduct alongside a copy of the Safer Recruitment Consortium document "Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings". These documents will be reissued and revisited as part of on-going training to support staff and volunteers with their understanding of key expectations. This will ensure that staff and volunteers are provided with opportunities to consider the implications of both documents within our school, within their own role and enable them seek clarification, should it be required.

It is a key principle of this code of conduct that everyone understands their responsibility to share without delay any concerns they may have about a child's welfare or an adult's behaviour towards a young person.

This includes any behaviours which may not meet the harm threshold and may be deemed to be a 'low level concern' as set out in our child protection policy. In addition, everyone has a responsibility to escalate their concerns to the Local Authority Designated Officer if they feel that safeguarding concerns they have raised about a child or adult working at the school are not being addressed by the school. Further information and guidance regarding how school will respond to concerns about an adult's conduct towards children where the harm threshold is met are set out in our managing allegations policy.

Code of Conduct:

- Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- If you have any concerns that a child is being harmed, abused or neglected you must share your concerns immediately both verbally and in writing with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead or another member of the school's Leadership Team. Always listen carefully to the child and report what they tell you in the child's own words. Never promise to keep a secret.
- If you receive an allegation against an adult working in the school or observe behaviour that concerns you, you must discuss your concerns without delay with the Headteacher. In the absence of the Headteacher, concerns should be shared with another senior member of staff such as the Deputy Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead, or the Chair of Governors. Concerns regarding the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors or Local Authority Designated Officer. The school's Whistleblowing Policy and the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline are available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns internally. Staff can call the NSPCC on 0800 028 0285 – the line is available from 8:00am to 8:00pm, Monday to Friday and 9am – 6pm at the weekend or email: help@NSPCC.org.uk. Safeguarding-Mate can also guide staff should they have a concern about an adult's behaviour.
- If you are worried that the behaviour of an adult working in the school (including all third party staff, supply staff and volunteers) is giving cause for concern, no matter how small the concern is and even if it does not meet the harm threshold, you must share your concerns with the designated safeguarding lead without delay. This is in line with the low level concern procedures set out within our child protection policy. Concerns regarding the designated safeguarding lead should be directed to the headteacher.
- Anyone (in emergencies or if they are required to) can make a referral about their concerns for a child directly to Children's Services.

You should:

- Follow the school's child protection policy and procedures and in line with this share safeguarding information appropriately but also act accordingly with sensitive and confidential information.
- Read, understand and adhere to the Safer Recruitment Consortium document "Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings" alongside this policy.
- Be alert to the indicators of harm and abuse towards a child, including child on child abuse.
- Dress appropriately according to your role, ensuring that clothing is compliant with professional standards and is not likely to be viewed as offensive or revealing and that it is absent of any political or other contentious slogans or images. This applies to online or virtual teaching, as well as face to face.
- Act as an appropriate role model, treating all members of the school community with respect and tolerance.
- Always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which could be misinterpreted by others. This includes within school, in your personal life and in any online activity. All staff have a responsibility to model safe practice at all times.
- Ensure that you appropriately challenge any form of derogatory and sexualised language or behaviour to ensure that everyone is respectful at all times.
- Ensure gifts given or received are recorded and discussed with your Line Manager.
- Respect others' confidentiality unless sharing information is appropriate to ensuring their welfare.
- Ensure that when working one to one with a child, it is only undertaken when absolutely necessary (both in person and online), in line with guidance given by the school and is with the prior knowledge and approval of senior leaders and parents/carers.

- Adhere to the school's policies, particularly those related to safeguarding - including child protection, behaviour, attendance, physical intervention, intimate care, anti-bullying, equal opportunities, data protection, health and safety and online safety (acceptable use policy).
- Ensure that you understand your responsibilities under the UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018 and be clear that where personal information is recorded electronically, systems and devices are kept secure.
- Ensure you are familiar with the DfE Data Protection guidance for schools, which will help school staff, governors and trustees understand how to comply with data protection law, develop their data policies and processes, know what staff and pupil data to keep and follow good practices for preventing personal data breaches.
- Report any behaviour or situations which you feel may give rise to a complaint or misunderstanding in respect of your own actions both in and out of school.
- Share situations with the designated safeguarding lead if you feel your actions might have sat outside this code of conduct or may appear to others that they have done so.
- Share with the Headteacher (or Designated Safeguarding Lead in their absence) any behaviour of another adult working in or on behalf of the school where it gives you cause for concern or breaches this code of conduct or the school's safeguarding policies in line with the low level concern procedures set out in our child protection policy. Examples of such behaviours include, but are not limited to, being over friendly with children, having favourites, taking photographs of children on their mobile phone or engaging with a child on a one to one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door. Your intervention may allow for their practice to be supported and developed and/or prevent a child from being harmed.
- Understand that it may be appropriate to discuss with the Headteacher matters outside of work, including online, which may have implications for the safeguarding of children in the workplace. This includes information about yourself or other adults working in or on behalf of the school. You must ensure that you are aware of the circumstances where this would be applicable.
- Be aware that behaviour by yourself, those with whom you have a relationship or association, or others in your personal life (in or out of school or online), may impact on your work with children.
- Staff are encouraged to declare any relationships which exist outside of the workplace with any children, families or staff. This is in line with our school culture and enables any implications for practice to be considered and staff to be provided with appropriate advice to support safer working practices.
- Understand the circumstances where it may be necessary to 'self-report' incidents where they could have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, or may appear compromising to others, or if they have behaved in a manner which, on reflection, they consider to fall below the standards set out within the code of conduct for staff.
- Inform the head-teacher of any cautions, convictions or relevant orders accrued during your employment, and/or if you are charged with a criminal offence.
- Understand that if you commit a relevant offence that would appear on your DBS certificate or you become disqualified under the Childcare Act 2006 (those staff covered by the scope of the guidance): www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006 then you must inform your headteacher. (The Childcare Act 2006 does not cover all settings or even all staff within a setting.)

Never:

- Act in a way both at work and/or in your personal life (including online) that brings yourself, school or the teaching profession into disrepute.
- Make, encourage or ignore others, making personal comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate any member of the school community including ignoring any form of child on child abuse.
- Use your position to intimidate, bully, humiliate, coerce or undermine any member of the school community. This includes shouting in anger and aggressively to punish them rather than raising your voice to be heard or avoid danger.
- Undermine fundamental British values including democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance for those with different faiths, beliefs or from different cultures.
- Develop 'personal' or sexual relationships with children and young people, including making sexual remarks or having inappropriate sexual banter. In addition, the Sexual Offences Act 2003 makes it clear that all members

of staff are in a position of trust and would therefore be committing a criminal offence to have a sexual relationship with a young person in full time education/below the age of 18, even if that pupil is over the age of consent.

- Engage in inappropriate conversations with students or share inappropriate personal information about yourself or others.
- Discriminate favourably or unfavourably towards a child.
- Give personal contact details to pupils or communicate outside of school using social networks, email, text, WhatsApp, etc. or meet a young person out of school unless part of a planned school activity with the prior knowledge and agreement of your Line Manager.
- Have conversations online or via social networking sites that make reference to children, parents or other colleagues at the school or be derogatory about the school. Never make any statements or post images online or on social networking sites that might cause someone to question your suitability to act as a role model to young people or bring your own or the school's reputation into disrepute. You should never communicate with parents through social network sites and you are strongly advised to declare any existing friendships/relationships to your Line Manager.
- Use personal equipment to photograph children (always use the school's equipment) and ensure any photographs are only stored in the designated secure place on the school's network and not on portable equipment.
- Post on the school's website or social media accounts any photographs of children without their consent. (Some children may be put at risk by their whereabouts being made public)
- Use your personal mobile phone (or other personal IT equipment including 'wearable' technology) in areas used by children unless in emergencies or under an agreed protocol set out by the headteacher. If you need to keep your phone on your person due to exceptional circumstances, please ensure a member of safeguarding team is aware, and calls must be taken away from children. Please check CPOMS/ emails on school devices when in areas used by children. In early years settings mobile phones should be locked away rather than carried by staff in areas occupied by children and other electronic devices with image sharing capabilities should be treated in the same manner as mobile phones.
- Undertake 'one to one' activities out of the sight of others unless it is a planned activity with the prior knowledge of your Line Manager and in keeping with your own responsibilities. You should not cover windows or door panels but always act in an open and transparent way.
- Transport children unsafely, for example by driving whilst using your mobile phone, consuming alcohol, failing to ensure that seat belts are worn or driving without appropriate insurance. Any trips should be planned and with the prior knowledge of your Line Manager. Unforeseen events should be reported to your Line Manager. It is good practice to have another adult to act as an escort during the journey
- Consume or be under the influence of alcohol or any substance, including the misuse of prescribed medication, when professionally active and responsible for either pupils, parents, other colleagues and/or school property
- Have physical contact with young people that might be misconstrued or considered indecent or harmful. Ensure you are always able to give an account of the reasons for physical contact or physical intervention. Where physical contact is required, it is good practice for it to be within the sight of others. Any physical contact with a child that was needed to control or restrain a child should always be the minimum required.

All school employees should have a clear understanding of their responsibilities under this code of conduct. It aims to help avoid poor working practices that may lead to a person's behaviour being investigated and the consideration of disciplinary procedures.