

*Be the best we can, for ourselves, for others and for God*



## **HILDENBOROUGH CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY**

**Sept 2016**

*Christian values underpin all that we do at Hildenborough CEP School. We feel it is important for both adults and children alike to understand that Christian values are based on God and the work of Jesus Christ. We believe that the understanding and application of Christian values strengthens the school community's spiritual development and this is reflected through daily deeds and actions. Core Christian values include hope, righteousness, love, and putting God first in our lives. As a school we have chosen the particular Christian values of love, honesty and courage to enhance the children's curriculum and daily school life.*

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**LOVE. HONESTY. COURAGE.**



# HILDENBOROUGH CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

*Love Courage Honesty*



## Introduction

This Code of Conduct reflects the advice in the DfE document *Guidance for safe working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings 2016*.

All staff employed under Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Employment have a statutory obligation to adhere to the *Teachers' Standards 2012* and in relation to this Code of Conduct, *Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards – Personal and Professional Conduct*.

## Purpose, Scope and Principles

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all adults at Hildenborough Church of England Primary School are expected to observe. All adults 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. All members of the school community have an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation, and the reputation of Hildenborough Church of England Primary School, whether inside or outside working hours.

*[For the purposes of this document, the term staff refers to all adult members of the school community.]*

Staff should be aware that a failure to comply with the following Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including dismissal.

It is recognised that not all people who work with our children work as paid or contracted employees. The principles and guidance outline in this Code of Conduct still apply and should be followed by any person whose work brings them into contact with our children.

## Responsibilities

Staff are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority; manage risk; use resources; and safeguard children.

All staff have a responsibility to keep pupils safe and to protect them from abuse (sexual, physical and emotional), neglect and safeguarding concerns. Pupils have a right to be safe and to be treated with respect and dignity. It follows that trusted adults are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure their safety and well-being. Failure to do so may be regarded as professional misconduct.

This means that staff should:

- ~ Understand the responsibilities which are part of their employment or role, and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached.
- ~ Always act, and be seen to act, in the child's best interests.
- ~ Avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- ~ Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour.

When staff accept a role working in Hildenborough Church of England Primary School they should understand and acknowledge the responsibilities and trust involved in that role.

## **Making professional judgements**

Our staff are expected to make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the children in their charge and, in so doing, will be seen to be acting reasonably. These judgements should always be recorded and shared with senior leaders. Adults should always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably.

## **Power and positions of trust and authority**

As a result of their knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, all those working with children in our school are in a position of trust in relation to all children on the roll.

The relationship between a person working with a child/ren is one in which the adult has a position of power or influence. Staff should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and distance with the pupils – over familiarity and over friendliness is unacceptable. Staff must avoid behaviour which could be misinterpreted by others and report and record any such incident if witnessed.

## **Confidentiality**

The storing and processing of personal information is governed by the Data Protection Act 1998. Staff may have access to confidential information about children and their families which must be kept confidential at all times and only shared when legally permissible to do so and in the interest of the child. Records should only be shared with those who have a legitimate professional need to see them.

Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a child or her/his family for their own, or others' advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other organisations). Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the child. Confidential information should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need-to-know basis. In circumstances where the child's identity does not need to be disclosed, the information should be used anonymously.

There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a child, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a responsibility to pass information on without delay to the Designated Safeguarding Leads, Pam Scott, David Hemsley, Caroline Stone or Jonathan Kenward.

If a child or their parent / carer, makes a disclosure regarding abuse or neglect, the member of staff should follow the school's Safeguarding procedure. The adult should not promise confidentiality to a child or parent, but should give reassurance that the information will be treated sensitively.

Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

## **Standards of behaviour**

All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain confidence and respect of the general public and those with whom they work.

There may be times where an individual's actions in their personal life come under scrutiny from the community, the media or public authorities, including with regard to their own children, or children or adults in the community. Staff should be aware that their behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, could compromise their position within the work setting in relation to the protection of children, loss of trust and confidence, or bringing the employer into disrepute.

This means staff should not:

- ~ Behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or to act as an appropriate role model.
- ~ Make, or encourage others to make sexual remarks to, or about, pupils.
- ~ Use inappropriate language to, or in the presence of, pupils.
- ~ Discuss their personal or sexual relationships with or in the presence of pupils.
- ~ Make [or encourage others to make] unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate, or might be interpreted as such.

The Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 set out grounds for disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 where the person or a person living in the same household or employed in the same household meets certain criteria set out in the Regulations. All staff must complete the school disqualification form.

### **Dress and appearance**

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression and some individuals will wish to exercise their own cultural customs. However staff should select a manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role and which may be necessarily different to that adopted in their personal life. Staff should ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake. This means that staff should wear clothing which:

- ~ promotes a positive and professional image
- ~ is appropriate to their role
- ~ is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative
- ~ does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding
- ~ is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans
- ~ is not considered to be discriminatory
- ~ is compliant with professional standards

### **Gifts, rewards, favouritism and exclusion**

Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.

There are occasions when pupils or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff, e.g. at Christmas or as a thank-you and this is usually acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value. Similarly, it is inadvisable to give such personal gifts to pupils or their families. This could be interpreted as a gesture either to bribe or groom. It might also be perceived that a 'favour' of some kind is expected in return.

Any reward given to a child should be in accordance with agreed practice, consistent with the school's behaviour policy, recorded and not based on favouritism. Adults should exercise care when selecting children for specific activities, jobs or privileges in order to avoid perceptions of favouritism or injustice. Similar care should be exercised when pupils are excluded from an activity. Methods of selection and exclusion should always be subject to clear, fair, agreed criteria.

### **Infatuations and ‘crushes’**

All staff need to recognise that it is not uncommon for children or parents to be strongly attracted to a member of staff and/or develop a ‘crush’ or infatuation. They should make every effort to ensure that their own behaviour cannot be brought into question, does not appear to encourage this and be aware that such infatuations may carry a risk of their words or actions being misinterpreted.

Any member of staff who receives a report, overhears something, or otherwise notices any sign, however small or seemingly insignificant, that a child or parent has become or may be becoming infatuated with either themselves or a colleague, should immediately report this to the Headteacher. .

### **Social contact outside of the workplace**

It is acknowledged that under some circumstances, staff may have genuine friendships and social contact with parents of pupils, independent of their professional relationship. Staff should recognise that some types of social contact with children or their families could be perceived as harmful or exerting inappropriate influence on children, and may bring the staff member and school into disrepute. It is important that staff protect their own integrity and that of the children they work with at all times.

If a pupil or parent seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise her/his professional judgement. This also applies to social contacts made through outside interests or the staff member’s own family.

Some staff may, as part of their professional role, be required to support a parent or carer. If that person comes to depend upon the staff member, or seeks support outside of their professional role, this should be discussed with the Headteacher, and where necessary referrals made to the appropriate support agency.

### **Staff should:**

- ~ Advise the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher of any regular social contact they have with a pupil which could give rise to concern
- ~ Refrain from sending personal communication to pupils or parents unless agreed with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher
- ~ Inform the Headteacher of any relationship with a parent where this extends beyond the usual parent/professional relationship
- ~ Inform the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher of any requests or arrangements where parents wish to use their services outside of the workplace e.g. babysitting, tutoring etc.

### **Communication with children/parents (including the use of technology)**

Staff should ensure that they establish safe and responsible online behaviours, following the school e-safety policy and working to local and national guidelines and acceptable use policies which detail how new and emerging technologies may be used.

Staff should not request or respond to any personal information from children or parents. They should ensure that their communications are open and transparent and avoid any communication which could be interpreted as ‘grooming behaviour’

Staff should not give their personal contact details to children or parents for example, email address, home or mobile telephone numbers, details of web based identities. If children locate these by any other means and attempt to contact or correspond with the staff member, the adult should not respond and must report the matter to the Headteacher immediately. The child/parent should be firmly and politely informed that this is not acceptable.

**Staff should:**

- ~ Not seek to communicate/make contact or respond to contact with pupils/parents outside of the purposes of their work
- ~ Not give out their personal details
- ~ Use only equipment and Internet services provided by the school when in school
- ~ Follow the policy for e-safety and the Acceptable Use agreement
- ~ Ensure that their use of technologies does not bring the school into disrepute

**Physical contact**

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with children; however, it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role and in relation to the pupil's individual needs and any agreed care plan.

**Staff should:**

- ~ be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the pupil, an observer or any person to whom this action is described
- ~ never touch a pupil in a way which may be considered indecent
- ~ always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny
- ~ never indulge in horseplay or fun fights
- ~ always allow/encourage pupils, where able, to undertake self-care tasks independently
- ~ ensure the way they offer comfort to a distressed pupil is age appropriate
- ~ always tell a colleague when and how they offered comfort to a distressed pupil
- ~ establish the preferences of pupils
- ~ consider alternatives, where it is anticipated that a pupil might misinterpret or be uncomfortable with physical contact
- ~ always explain to the pupil the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take
- ~ report and record situations which may give rise to concern
- ~ be aware of cultural or religious views about touching and be sensitive to issues of gender

Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action by them or a colleague could be misinterpreted, or if an action is observed which is possibly abusive, the incident and circumstances should be immediately reported to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher and recorded. Where appropriate, the Headteacher will consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer (the LADO).

Extra caution may be required where it is known that a child has suffered previous abuse or neglect. Staff need to be aware that the child may associate physical contact with such experiences. They also should recognise that these pupils may seek out inappropriate physical contact. In such circumstances staff should deter the child sensitively and help them to understand the importance of personal boundaries.

A general culture of 'safe touch' should be adopted, where appropriate, to the individual requirements of each child. Pupils with disabilities may require more physical contact to assist their everyday learning. The arrangements should be understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the pupil's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny.

### **Other activities that require physical contact**

In certain curriculum areas, such as PE, drama or music, staff may need to initiate some physical contact with children, for example, to demonstrate technique in the use of a piece of equipment, adjust posture, or support a child so they can perform an activity safely or prevent injury.

Physical contact should take place only when it is necessary in relation to a particular activity. It should take place in a safe and open environment, i.e. one easily observed by others and last for the minimum time necessary. The extent of the contact should be made clear and undertaken with the permission of the child. Contact should be relevant to their age / understanding and adults should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the child.

### **Intimate / personal care**

Children should be encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their own personal care as is possible and practicable. When assistance is required, this should normally be undertaken by one member of staff, however, they should try to ensure that another appropriate adult is in the vicinity who is aware of the task to be undertaken and that, wherever possible, they are visible and/or audible. Intimate or personal care procedures should not involve more than one member of staff unless the child's care plan specifies the reason for this.

Staff should always consider the supervision needs of the pupils and only remain in the room where their needs require this. When entering the toilets or changing rooms [such as at the swimming pool], staff must always announce their intention of entering.

### **Sexual conduct**

Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a pupil is unacceptable. This means that staff should:

- ~ not have any form of sexual contact with pupils
- ~ avoid any form of touch or comment which is, or may be considered to be, indecent
- ~ avoid any form of communication with a pupil which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive, provocative or give rise to speculation e.g. verbal comments, letters, notes, by email or on social media, phone calls, texts, physical contact
- ~ not make sexual remarks to or about a pupil
- ~ not discuss sexual matters with or in the presence of pupils other than within agreed curriculum content or as part of their recognised job role

### **Behaviour management**

Corporal punishment and smacking is unlawful. Staff should not use any form of degrading or humiliating treatment to punish a child. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards children is completely unacceptable.

Where pupils display difficult or challenging behaviour, adults should follow the school's behaviour policy using strategies appropriate to the circumstance and situation.

Where a pupil has specific needs in respect of particularly challenging behaviour, a behaviour and positive handling plan, including assessment of risk, will be drawn up by the SENCo and agreed by all parties.

Staff should:

- ~ Not use force as a form of punishment
- ~ Try to defuse situations before they escalate e.g. by distraction
- ~ Be mindful of and sensitive to factors both inside and outside of the school which may impact on a pupil's behaviour

- ~ Follow the school Behaviour Policy
- ~ Behave as a role model
- ~ Avoid shouting at children other than as a warning in an emergency/safety situation

### **The use of control and physical intervention**

The law and guidance for schools states that adults may reasonably intervene to prevent a child 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 should:**

- ~ Adhere to the school physical intervention policy
- ~ Always seek to defuse situations and avoid the use of physical intervention wherever possible
- ~ Where physical intervention is necessary, only use minimum force and for the shortest time needed

Staff should not use physical intervention as a form of punishment

Great care must be exercised in order that adults do not physically intervene in a manner which could be considered unlawful. In all cases where physical intervention has taken place, the staff involved must record the incident and subsequent actions and report these to the Headteacher and the child's parents.

### **One to one situations**

Staff working in one to one situations with pupils at the school, including visiting staff from external organisations, should:

- ~ work in a public area of the school and ensure that wherever possible there is visual access and/or an open door in one to one situations
- ~ always report any situation where a child becomes distressed or angry
- ~ consider the needs and circumstances of the child involved

Arranging to meet with children from the school away from the work premises should not be permitted unless the necessity for this is clear and approval is obtained from the Headteacher, the child and their parents/carers.

### **Home Visits**

All work with children and their parents should usually be undertaken in the school. There are however occasions, in response to an urgent, planned or specific situation where a home visit may be necessary.

### **Staff should:**

- ~ agree the purpose for any home visit with the Headteacher and always take another member of staff along – visits should not be made alone.
- ~ avoid unannounced visits wherever possible
- ~ ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in one to one situations
- ~ always make detailed records including times of arrival and departure
- ~ ensure any behaviour or situation which gives rise to concern is reported immediately to the Headteacher

### **Transporting pupils**

Members of staff are not allowed to use their vehicles to transport pupils, except in an emergency. In this instance they **MUST** have insurance cover for business purposes. It is a legal requirement that all passengers wear seatbelts and the driver should ensure that they do so. They should also be aware of and adhere to current legislation regarding the use of car seats for younger children.

Staff should never offer to transport pupils outside of their normal working duties, other than in an emergency or where not doing so would mean the child may be at risk. In these circumstances the matter should be recorded and reported immediately to the Headteacher and the child's parents.

### **Educational visits**

Staff should:

- ~ adhere to the schools' Educational Visits policy
- ~ always have another adult present on visits, unless otherwise agreed with senior staff
- ~ undertake pre-visits and risk assessments
- ~ have parental consent to the activity
- ~ ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times
- ~ never sleep in the same area / room as the children, unless it involves a dormitory situation and the arrangements have been previously discussed and agreed with the Headteacher, parents and pupils
- ~ refer to local and national guidance for educational visits.

Staff should take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere of an educational visit where a more relaxed discipline or informal dress and language code may be acceptable. However, staff remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour cannot be interpreted as seeking to establish an inappropriate relationship or friendship.

### **Photography, videos and other images**

Many educational activities involve recording images. These may be undertaken for displays, publicity, to celebrate achievement and to provide records of evidence of the activity. Under no circumstances should staff use their personal equipment to take images of pupils at or on behalf of the school.

Staff should:

- ~ adhere to the school's policy on photographic images
- ~ only publish images of pupils where they and their parent/carer have given explicit written consent to do so
- ~ only take images where the pupil is happy for them to do so
- ~ only retain images when there is a clear and agreed purpose for doing so
- ~ store images in an appropriate secure place in the school
- ~ ensure that a senior member of staff is aware that the photography/image equipment is being used and for what purpose
- ~ be able to justify images of pupils in their possession
- ~ avoid making images in one to one situations

Staff should not:

- ~ take images of pupils for their personal use

- ~ display or distribute images of pupils unless they are sure that they have parental consent to do so (and, where appropriate, consent from the child)
- ~ take images of children using personal equipment
- ~ take images of children in a state of undress or semi-undress
- ~ take images of children which could be considered as indecent or sexual

### **Exposure to inappropriate images**

Staff should take extreme care to ensure that children are not exposed, through any medium, to inappropriate or indecent images.

Staff should:

- ~ abide by the school's acceptable use and e-safety policies
- ~ ensure that children cannot be exposed to indecent or inappropriate images
- ~ ensure that any books/films or material shown to children are age appropriate

Staff should keep their passwords confidential and not allow unauthorised access to equipment. In the event of any indecent images of children or unsuitable material being discovered on a device the equipment should not be tampered with in any way. It should be secured and isolated from the network, and the Headteacher informed immediately. The Headteacher will contact the LADO without delay. Adults should not attempt to investigate the matter or evaluate the material themselves as this may lead to a contamination of evidence and a possibility they will be at risk of prosecution themselves.

### **Whistleblowing**

Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. The school has a whistleblowing policy that meets the terms of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. Staff who use whistle blowing procedures will have their employment rights protected.

Staff should recognise their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of the Headteacher and/or relevant external agencies and that to not do so may result in charges of serious neglect on their part where the welfare of children may be at risk.

This means that staff should:

- ~ Report any behaviour by colleagues that raises concern.
- ~ Report allegations against staff and volunteers to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher; where they have concerns about the response, this should be reported directly to the LADO.

### **Sharing concerns and recording incidents**

All staff should be aware of the school's safeguarding procedures, including the procedures for dealing with allegations against staff and volunteers. In the event of an allegation being made, by any person, or incident being witnessed, the relevant information should be immediately recorded and reported to one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads.

Members of staff should feel able to discuss any difficulties or problems that may affect their relationship with, or behaviour towards, pupils, so that appropriate support can be provided and/or action can be taken.

In order to safeguard and protect children and colleagues, where staff have any concerns about someone who works with children, they should immediately report this to the Headteacher.