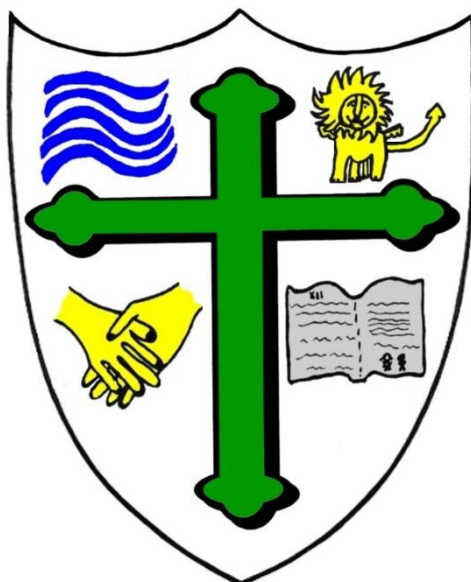


Highcliffe St Mark Primary & Fledglings Pre-School



Staff and Volunteer Code of Conduct Policy

DSL Gavin Withey
Deputy DSLs Claire Barker, Jacqui Fuller, Emma Stansbie, Darren Whittaker, Laura Simmons, Pippa Pandit
Safeguarding Governor Lisa Caola

Reviewed (date)	September 2025
Reviewed by (name)	Gavin Withey
Approved by Governors (if applicable)	
Review due (date)	September 2026

Code of Conduct

To be read in conjunction with the national guidance: 'Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings – Feb 2022'.

Definition

References made to 'child' and 'children' refer to children and young people under the age of 18 years. However, the principles of this document apply to professional behaviours towards all pupils, including those over the age of 18 years. 'Child' should therefore be read to mean **any pupil** at the education establishment.

References made to adults and staff refer to all those who work with children in an educational establishment, in either a paid or unpaid capacity.

The term 'allegation' means where it is alleged that a person who works with children has

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or,
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

Introduction

Schools have a legal duty to create and maintain a safe learning environment for children. A staff Code of Conduct is a **mandatory** requirement as described in the DfE statutory guidance: 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.

Highcliffe St Mark Primary School seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for children in our care. The following code of conduct draws together existing laws, regulations and conditions of service designed to protect the interests of staff and volunteers and the children with whom they work and this has been agreed following consultation with recognised trade unions.

Staff should be aware that a failure to comply with this code could result in disciplinary action including dismissal.

Purpose and Scope

All staff and volunteers working in a school setting have a legal and moral duty to keep children safe and protect them from harm. Staff should ensure they do not put themselves in situations in which allegations of abuse or inappropriate behaviour could be made.

This code applies to all adults working in our school whatever their position, role or responsibilities.

All staff have a responsibility to be aware of systems within our school which support safeguarding. These are explained as part of staff induction and through regular staff training.

The code should be read in conjunction with the relevant statutory and other guidance documents issued nationally or by the DfE and Home Office as well as other related school policies (see **Appendix 1** of this policy).

This code cannot cover every eventuality. Its purpose is to show the standard expected of staff but it does not replace the general requirements of the law.

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, Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct which this code supplements.

It is recognised that the vast majority of adults who work with children act professionally and aim to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for children in their care. Achieving these aims is not always straightforward, as much relies on child and staff interactions where tensions and misunderstandings can occur. This code aims to reduce the risk of that.

Core Principles

The welfare of the children is paramount.

Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should seek to avoid any conduct that would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation or intentions.

Staff are expected to maintain a professional standard of conduct, not only in regards to interactions with our children, but to extend this courtesy to their colleagues, parents and visitors of the establishment.

Staff should dress appropriately at all times for the tasks they undertake and ensure they promote a positive and professional image.

Staff should apply the expected professional standards of behaviour and not discriminate against anyone in relation to their age, disability, sex or gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnerships (in particular with adults in contact with the establishment), pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation.

Staff should not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or substances, including prescribed medication that may affect their ability to care for children.

Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in disciplinary action being taken against them, criminal action and/or other proceedings including barring by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) from working in regulated activity, or for acts of serious misconduct, prohibition from teaching by the National College of Teaching & Leadership (NCTL).

Staff and leaders, including the governing body, should continually monitor and review practice to ensure this guidance is followed and should understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children.

Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from their line manager or another senior member of staff over any incident which may give rise to concern.

Records should be made of any incident (low-level concern) and decision made or where further actions have been agreed, in accordance with school policies and confidentiality.

All staff should know the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (Gavin Withey) and be familiar with local child protection arrangements, arrangements for managing allegations

against staff, whistleblowing procedures and their Pan Dorset Children's Safeguarding Board procedures. This information can be found in the Child Protection Policy.

Staff should be aware of and comply with the school's financial and administrative regulations and any other procedure manuals.

Conduct and Behaviour

All staff who work in a school setting are in a position of trust in relation to individuals in their care and so must adopt high standards of personal integrity and conduct and behave in such a way that does not compromise their position both within and outside of the workplace or the safety and/or welfare of children and young people.

Staff should be aware that it is a criminal offence (Sexual Offences Act 2003: abuse of a position of trust) to engage in sexual activity with a pupil under the age of 18.

Teachers are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct in accordance with the minimum professional Teaching Standards.

Staff should never make (or encourage others to make) comments, either to the children colleagues, parents or visitors of the establishment, that are intended, or can be interpreted to be, unprofessional, demeaning or humiliating.

Staff should not use physical force as a form of punishment.

Staff should always adhere to the school's policies on Relationships and Behaviour and Use of Reasonable Force.

Staff should not use any information obtained in the course of their employment for personal gain or benefit. Nor should they pass it on to others who might use it in such a way.

Staff should adhere to the school's Social Networking Policy. They should make sure that their conduct online adheres to the Staff and Volunteer Code of Conduct. Mobile phones and other personal internet enabled devices should not be used within the school buildings in sight or hearing of the pupils (see Personal Mobile Phones and Internet Enabled Device Policy).

Equality Issues

All staff should adhere to the school's Equal Opportunities Policy, in addition to the requirements of the law.

All adults and children at the school have a right to be treated at all times with fairness, equality and without discrimination.

Employment Matters

All staff involved in recruitment and selection processes should ensure that appointments are made on the basis of merit, without discrimination and in accordance with the school's recruitment and selection policy and procedure.

There should always be at least one member of the interview panel who has completed Safer Recruitment training within the last 3 years.

Any staff involved in tendering processes should ensure that these are made on the basis of merit.

No member of staff should be involved in any appointment or decision relating to discipline, promotion, or pay adjustments for any individual who is a relative or with whom they are in a close personal relationship.

All relationships of a business or private nature with external contractors, or potential contractors, should be made known to the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors (if the Headteacher).

Public Duty and Private Interest

Staff should not put themselves in a position where their duty to the school and their private interests conflict.

Other Employment/Private Work

Any external work undertaken must not bring the school into disrepute or conflict with the school's interest. Any copyright created by a member of staff during their employment with the school becomes the property of the school.

Safeguarding

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils/students from:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- neglect

The duty to safeguard children and young people includes the duty to report child welfare concerns to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Gavin Withey or in his absence a deputy Safeguarding Lead.

Staff should be aware of and adopt the recommended procedures and best practice guidance outlined in the national Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (Feb 2022).

Staff should be aware of and follow the statutory responsibilities outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Staff should be aware of the risks to children from radicalisation and being drawn into terrorism as outlined in the Prevent Duty guidance.

Guidance for Safer Working Practice

- (i) This document will be used to support the Code of Conduct and as such may be referred to in any disciplinary proceedings.
- (ii) Staff should read this document in conjunction with this code.

Keeping Children Safe in Education

- (i) This document sets out the statutory duties schools must follow and includes guidance on mandatory reporting requirements. It is advised that this is read alongside **Working Together to Safeguard Children**.

- (ii) Staff should ensure they understand and are familiar with their responsibilities and where this includes mandatory reporting expectations they understand their role in any locally agreed procedures for reporting, such as informing the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- (iii) Staff should be aware of the personal reporting duty with regard to known cases of female genital mutilation (FGM). Supplementary to Keeping Children Safe in Education, staff can obtain further guidance in the '**Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation – procedural information**' document.
- (iv) Staff should refer any concerns about another member of staff to the Headteacher, or if the concern is about the Headteacher or to the Chair of Governors or equivalent.
- (v) Staff should raise concerns of poor or unsafe practice or potential failures in safeguarding, using the school's whistleblowing policy. Staff can also use the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline: 0800 0280285
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/>

Prevent Duty

- (i) Under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, staff must have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'
- (ii) Staff should refer any concerns regarding radicalisation to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead or a senior member of staff, following the school's normal safeguarding procedures.
- (iii) Relevant staff should understand when it is appropriate to make a referral to the Channel programme, a mechanism for schools to make referrals if they are concerned that an individual might be vulnerable to radicalisation. Contact details for Channel are displayed in staffrooms.
- (iv) Staff should ensure they have undertaken some form of Prevent awareness training such as the government's online training:
<https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/edu/screen1.html>

Financial inducements, gifts, hospitality and sponsorship

Staff should not seek or receive preferential rates for themselves by virtue of their dealings on behalf of the school

Staff should ensure that gifts from an individual person with a value of £50 or more are declared if they are received.

Where staff provide gifts they should ensure they are of insignificant value and given to all children equally.

Use of School Time and Facilities

The school's property and facilities (e.g. stationary, computers, photocopiers, mobile phones) may only be used for school business unless permission for their private use has been granted.

Publication of Books/Articles

Staff must consult with the Headteacher before publishing books, articles, letters, dissertations etc where they are described as holding an appointment at the school.

Disciplinary Action

All staff should be aware that a failure to meet these standards of behaviour and conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

Dealing With Allegations

Keeping Children Safe In Education states that schools and colleges should have their own procedures for dealing with concerns and/or allegations against those working in or on behalf of schools in a paid or unpaid capacity, this includes, members of staff, supply teachers, volunteers and contractors.

There are two levels of allegation/concern:

1. Allegations that may meet the harms threshold.
2. Allegation/concerns that do not meet the harms threshold – referred to for the purposes of this guidance as ‘low level concerns’.

Procedures in our school are consistent with local safeguarding procedures and practice guidance.

Allegations that may meet the harms threshold

The harms threshold is defined as a concern which might indicate a person would pose a risk of harm if they continue to work in their present position, or in any capacity with children in a school or college. These procedures should be followed where it is alleged that anyone working in the school or a college that provides education for children under 18 years of age, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors has:

- **behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or;**
- **possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child and/or;**
- **behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or**
- **behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.** This includes behaviour that may have happened outside of school, that might make an individual unsuitable to work with children, this is known as transferable risk. Where appropriate an assessment of transferable risk to children with whom the person works should be undertaken. This would often be in conjunction with advice from the local authority designated officer (LADO).

Any such allegation should be reported without delay to the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors if the concern is about the Head Teacher). A “case manager” will be assigned and will lead any investigation. This will usually be the Head Teacher, or, where the Head Teacher is the subject of an allegation, the Chair of Governors.

Concerns Which Do Not Meet The Harms Threshold - Low Level Concerns

Highcliffe St Mark Primary School promotes an open and transparent safeguarding culture in which all members of our community know that all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the school (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately. Central to the success of this culture is that everyone shares any concerns they might have responsibly and with the right person and these are recorded and dealt with appropriately. Safeguarding is of utmost importance to all adults in our school community and this enables us to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour early; minimise the risk of abuse; and ensure that adults working in or on behalf of the school are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the ethos and values of our school.

What is a Low Level Concern?

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold set out at paragraph 338 of Keeping Children Safe In Education (detailed in the harms threshold behaviours). A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of our school may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse. It is crucial that any such concerns, including those which do not meet the harm threshold, are shared responsibly and with the right person, and recorded and dealt with appropriately. Ensuring they are dealt with effectively should also protect those working in or on behalf of schools from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.

In our school, such concerns should be shared with the Headteacher or the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the Headteacher's absence. If the concern is regarding the Headteacher, concerns should be shared with the Chair of Governors.

APPENDIX 1

POLICIES AND OTHER DOCUMENTS TO BE CONSIDERED AND READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT (Listed in alphabetical order)

Policy/Procedure/Guidance
Allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers
Child Protection Policy**
Data Protection Policy
Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
Drugs and Alcohol Policy
Equal Opportunities Policy
Online Safety/Internet Use/Social Networking/ICT Policies
Guidance for Safer Working Practice* national guidance for those working with children and young people in Education Settings. Link: https://www.saferrecruitmentconsortium.org/GSWP%20Sept%202019.pdf
Health and Safety Policy
Intimate Care
Keeping Children Safe in Education*- DfE statutory guidance Link: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2
Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation procedural information* Link: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information
Use of Positive Force
Prevent Duty Guidance* Link: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance
Recruitment and Selection Policy
School Record Keeping Policy
Whistleblowing Policy
Use of Reasonable Force Policy

*It is expected that staff will adhere to the statutory duties and/or best practice outlined within these documents as applicable to their role and responsibilities.

VERSION	DATE	REVIEWER	COMMENT
1	September 24	GW	References to 'Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings' updated to Feb 2022
2	September 24	GW	Under 'Conduct and Behaviour' a reference has been added to include information about use of mobile phones and internet enabled devices
3	September 25	GW	Change made to School name and DSL's. Change made to Keeping Children Safe in Education date.