



## **New Forest Small School** **STAFF CONDUCT POLICY**

Member of Staff Responsible	Headteacher
Regularity of Review	Every 2 years

### **1. Purpose and principles**

The school is committed to ensuring that all staff should be treated equally and in a consistent, fair and sensitive manner.

All people within the school community have a right to be treated equally with respect and courtesy at all times.

This Code of Conduct aims to establish a set of principles which underpin the expected conduct of staff at New Forest Small School with the intention of encouraging staff to achieve the highest standards of conduct at work and of minimising the risk of improper conduct occurring.

The school requires that all staff have read and comply with the Code of Conduct. Where clarification is needed on any aspect of this document, this should be sought from the headteacher.

Breach or failure to observe the provisions of this document may lead to disciplinary action.

The Code of Conduct is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of conduct and behaviour and in circumstances where guidance does not exist individuals are expected to use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils.

### **2. Scope**

The Code of Conduct applies to:

- all members of staff, including teaching and support staff;
- volunteers;
- casual workers;
- temporary staff;
- student placements, including those undertaking teacher training, and apprentices.

References to 'staff' throughout the Code of Conduct refer to all of the above groups.

Any links within this document to other documents are for ease of use and do not form part of this Code of Conduct.

### **3. Professional standards at work**

Staff are expected to demonstrate the highest possible standards of personal and professional conduct and behaviour and consistently act with honesty and integrity. The school expects staff to treat each other, Students, parents and the wider school community with dignity and respect at all times.

Furthermore, staff must have regard for the ethos and values of the school as well as its policies and procedures and act in accordance with these at all times, including in their dealings with those who come into contact with the school e.g. visitors.

Staff must act in accordance with their duty of care to students and ensure that the safety and welfare of the children and young people at the school are accorded the highest priority. In this and other ways staff should always maintain standards of conduct and behaviour which sustain their professional standing and that of the school.

Teachers are reminded of, and are expected to uphold, their wider responsibilities as set out in the [Teachers' Standards](#), including an understanding of, and acting within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

#### **4. Safeguarding**

New Forest Small School recognises its statutory and moral duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of students and understands that staff play a vital role in meeting these responsibilities. Staff must be aware of their individual safeguarding responsibilities, including to provide a safe environment in which children can learn, to be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect, to identify children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm and to take appropriate action in such cases to prevent concerns from escalating.

All members of staff must be aware of the school's systems for supporting child safeguarding, including the role of the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL – often referred to as the Child Protection Liaison Officer (CPLO)).

Concerns about the welfare of a child must be raised without delay to the school's DSL/CPLO in the first instance or one of the other designated CPLOs as above, if the DSL/CPLO cannot be located. **In the event that none of the above are available. If no one is available or if a member of staff has concerns then any member of staff can make a referral and call to the reception/MASH team (Multi Agency Support Team ). The number is 0845 603 5620**

There should be no delay in reporting a concern if there is risk of immediate serious harm to a child.

Staff are reminded of their duty to report safeguarding concerns about staff. Any concerns or allegations must be raised without delay to the school's DSL in the first instance or the deputy DSL.

Staff should be familiar with the school's Safeguarding and child protection policy, which is available to all staff in the staff handbook. All staff will receive appropriate child protection training and will be provided with guidance on child safeguarding as part of their induction to the school.

In accordance with the statutory guidance published by the Department for Education '[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)' (Sep 2016) all staff in New Forest Small School are required to read Part One '[Safeguarding information for all staff](#)' and will be provided with a copy as part of their induction to the school. The full document is available via the above link or from [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

Further information is found in '[Guidance for safer working practice for adults who work with children and young people in education settings](#)' provided by 4LSCB and in the guidance document 'The avoidance of unnecessary contact and unfounded allegations' These documents can be found in the General Info for Staff folder.

## **5. Appropriate relationships**

### **Students**

Individuals who work or volunteer in a school environment are in a position of trust. Staff should be mindful of the need to maintain professional boundaries appropriate to their position and must always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably.

Staff should act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to question their actions or intent. Staff should think carefully about their conduct so that misinterpretations are minimised.

Staff must avoid unnecessary physical contact with children. Where physical contact is essential, e.g. for safety reasons, the student's permission must be gained for that contact wherever possible. If physical contact is made to remove a student from a dangerous situation or an object from a student to prevent either harm to themselves or others, then this should be recorded and reported to **the Headteacher immediately and certainly within 24 hours**. In cases where accidental physical contact was made, it should be reported to the Headteacher. In all cases staff should act in accordance with the school's management of physical restraint policy. This can be found in the policy file.

Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a student is unacceptable. Staff are reminded that under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is a criminal offence for a person aged 18 or over to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18, where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual.

### **Parents**

Staff are expected to interact with parents in a polite and respectful manner and recognise parents' entitlement to express any concerns they may have about their child's learning, safety or wellbeing. Staff should avoid discussing school matters with parents outside school if approached and should instead refer the parent to the normal school communication channels.

## **6. Use of IT including social media**

Internal e-mail and internet systems must be used only in accordance with the school's acceptable use of ICT policy. This can be found in the policy file.

Social networking sites offer the opportunity for communication with children, young people and their parents outside normal professional boundaries. School staff must take care to protect their privacy and protect themselves from risk of allegations in relation to inappropriate relationships and cyberbullying. Staff must use discretion and their best judgement when engaging with online relationships with parents or ex-pupils through social networking sites, instant messaging or other media, whether this is through school or personal ICT facilities. Staff must exercise caution when having contact online through social media with parents so as not to compromise the school's reputation or school information.

Please refer to the school's acceptable use of ICT policy for further guidance on acceptable and unacceptable use of ICT, social media and mobile phones.

All staff are asked to sign the school's User Policy and Practice which they then agree to follow.

See ICT, mobile & photo policy.

All colleagues in this policy are strongly advised to consider their use of social networking sites. If colleagues use these sites they should at no time make reference to school users or promote themselves in an unprofessional manner. Colleagues must not allow current students to become part of their site membership in order to protect themselves or indeed become a 'friend' on a student's site.

## **7. Confidentiality and disclosure of information**

Staff must ensure that they do not disclose confidential information to anyone who does not have the right to receive it. Where information is disclosed this should be in line with the principles of the [Data Protection Act 1998](#). Equally staff should not prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law. If there is doubt about whether or not to share information, advice must be sought from an appropriate senior member of staff i.e. Headteacher

Information obtained during the course of an individual's work should never be used for personal gain or benefit, nor should it be passed onto others who might use it in such a way.

## **8. Dress and appearance**

An individual's dress and appearance is a matter of personal choice; however, staff should ensure that they dress appropriately, decently and safely for a school environment and for the role they undertake, as well as setting a good example to both pupils and visitors.

Staff should have particular regard to the health and safety risks involved with certain lessons i.e. physical education/food technology and the need to dress appropriately and safely when undertaking these activities, such as wearing appropriate footwear, removing jewellery etc.

A reasonable, smart and non-extreme code of dress will be expected from all staff at the school. Staff should lead by example and model the expectations we set for students

The school recognises the diversity of cultures and religions of its staff and will take a sensitive approach when this affects dress and uniform requirements. However, priority will be given to health and safety, security and other similar considerations of other staff, students and the school.

### **9. Equal opportunities**

The school is committed to equality for all in the appointment, development, training and promotion of staff, and in all dealings with students and parents of the school. It also recognises that all members of staff have the right to work in a safe environment without fear of discrimination, harassment or abuse.

All students, colleagues, parents, members of the public and wider school community have the right to be treated with fairness and equality and must not be discriminated against. The school expects staff to uphold these principles.

Please refer to the school's equalities policy for further guidance which can be found in the policy file.

### **10. Conduct outside work**

Care should be taken by staff to avoid any conflict of interest between activities undertaken outside school and responsibilities within school. In no case should outside activities bring the school into disrepute.

Where staff are in doubt as to whether there is a conflict of interest advice must be sought from the headteacher.

### **11. Declaration of interests**

Staff should consider carefully whether they need to declare to the school any relationship with an individual where this might cause a conflict with the school's activities, for example, another staff member or a contractor who provides services to the school. Where such a declaration is necessary this should be made to the Head Teacher.

Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided it does not conflict with the interests of the school or affect an individual's performance at work.

### **12. Whistleblowing**

The [Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998](#) (as amended) gives protection to people who disclose reasonable concerns about serious misconduct or malpractice at work. This is sometimes known as Whistleblowing. The headteacher of the school will treat all matters of malpractice very seriously and allegations about such matters will be dealt with quickly and with appropriate confidentiality.

Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibilities in bringing matters of concern to the attention of headteacher in the school. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

A clear procedure is provided for staff to raise issues with the purpose of assisting in reducing the risk of serious concerns being mishandled, whether by the individual or by the school. Please refer to the school's "Whistleblowing" Policy for further information. This can be found in the policy file.

### **13. Health and safety**

Staff must adhere to the school's Health and Safety policy and should ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and others in the school environment safe.

Please refer to the school's Health and Safety policy for further information. This can be found in the policy file.

### **14. Gifts and hospitality**

There may be occasions where children or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff, for example as an end of year 'thank-you', and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value. Money should never be accepted as a gift.

It is not acceptable for staff to give gifts to students and any rewards given to children must be given in agreement with the declared reward practice of the school. See the school Behaviour policy in the policy file.

Staff should not solicit or accept any gift, hospitality or other reward from external parties which influences the way in which they carry out their duties or leads the giver to expect preferential treatment.

### **15. Use of school resources and funds**

The use of school resources, property and equipment is for school-related activities only, except where otherwise agreed.

All members of staff must use any public or school funds entrusted or handled by them in a responsible and lawful manner.

### **16. Attendance at work**

If extreme weather conditions exist, all staff will be expected to make every reasonable effort to attend at work unless hazardous to do so. If conditions (e.g. heavy snow) all into question the feasibility of this staff are expected to check their emails, School website or contact the headteacher. Avoidable failure to attend at work will result in deductions of salary and possible disciplinary action. Therefore the failure of the first means of transport will simply require the colleague to make use of other potential methods of travelling to work.

For information regarding staff absence please see the school's Staff Policy.

### **17. Smoking**

New Forest Small School is a non-smoking site including e-cigarettes. Candidates for teaching and support staff posts will be made aware of this and any visitors or working

persons breaking this principle will be politely asked to refrain from smoking and disciplinary action followed, where necessary.

### **18. Alcohol/Drug**

Appendix **A** attached to this policy will be applied with regard to staff.

Any allegations against members of staff (e.g. violence towards a student or inappropriate behaviour to fellow colleagues)

These will be investigated as an urgent matter and in reasonable confidence. If evidence emerges indicating the possibility of serious unprofessional conduct, the colleague concerned may be asked to go home pending further enquires or suspended from their post pending an investigation. Hampshire guidance and practice will be followed.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **ALCOHOL AND DRUGS POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

#### **Policy:**

It is a school priority to discourage the use of drugs or alcohol. Members of staff have a vital role model responsibility in this area.

## **Procedures:**

### Serious Misconduct Caused by Alcohol or Drugs

#### *Intoxicated members of staff*

If a member of staff is known to be, or strongly suspected of being, intoxicated by alcohol or drugs during working hours, the Head will be consulted. Arrangements will be made for the member of staff to be escorted from the school premises immediately and temporarily suspended from their role whilst an investigation takes place.

#### *Consumption of alcohol on the premises*

The only times when consumption of alcohol will be acceptable will be on agreed occasions e.g. social events, farewell parties for staff retiring or leaving, when the school day is over and students have left the school site. The only exception being an evening event where students may be present e.g. Music Concert interval.

### Drug Abuse

Drug abuse by members of staff is regarded extremely seriously, whether it occurs during working hours or at other times and whether on or off school premises. Members of staff who take drugs which have not been prescribed on medical grounds will, in the absence of mitigating circumstances, be deemed to be committing an act of gross misconduct and will be liable to dismissal as will any members of staff believed to be buying or selling drugs, or in possession of unlawful (i.e. un-prescribed) drugs.

### Dependency Problems

If the Head feels a member of staff's unsatisfactory performance may be drug or alcohol related, he or she will arrange to hold a meeting with the member of staff.

### Treatment

Where the member of staff acknowledges that he or she has a drug- or alcohol-related problem and is given help and treatment, this will be on the understanding that:

(a) While they are undergoing treatment if absence from work is appropriate this will be treated as sick leave and the member of staff may be entitled to sick pay.

(b) Every effort will be made to ensure that on completion of the recovery programme he or she is able to return to the same work.

However, where such a return is not reasonably practicable, the full circumstances surrounding the case will be reviewed with the benefit of an up-to-date medical opinion and a course of action agreed. This may include the offer of suitable alternative employment, the consideration of retirement on the grounds of ill-health, or dismissal.

### Relapse

Where a member of staff, having received treatment, suffers a relapse, the headteacher will consider the case on its individual merits. Medical advice will be sought in an attempt to ascertain how much more treatment/rehabilitation time is likely to be required for a full recovery. At the discretion of the staff disciplinary committee of the governing body, more treatment or rehabilitation time may be given in order to help the member of staff to recover fully.

### Recovery Unlikely

If, after a member of staff has been receiving treatment, recovery seems unlikely the school may become unable to wait indefinitely for the member of staff to return. In such cases, dismissal may result. There will be full consultation with the member of staff before any such decision is taken and a full medication investigation will have been undertaken.