

## Professional Code of Conduct for Staff

In ODST schools we are committed to ensuring that our pupils are and feel safe. All our schools' staff are valued members of their school community. Each one is expected to set and maintain the highest standards for their own performance, to work as part of a team and to be an excellent role model for our pupils. This code of conduct sets out the key principles for the creation and maintenance of a safe school culture.

All staff are expected to treat pupils, colleagues, parents and governors with respect and dignity, to be honest and to act professionally at all times.

Staff members should be aware that any breach of a school's Professional Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action.

This Code of Conduct is an addition to our school's Safeguarding/Child Protection policies, Safe Internet Use policies, Teaching Learning and Assessment policies and other policies regarding the employment and management of the performance of our staff.

### Professional Behaviour and Conduct

At St Christopher's, all staff should:

- place the safety and welfare of pupils above all other considerations;
- treat all members of the school community, including pupils, parents, colleagues and governors with consideration, respect and tolerance;
- where firmness/admonition is called for this should be exercised calmly;
- adhere to the principles and procedures contained in the policies in our safeguarding policies, in teaching and learning policies and for teaching staff the DfE Teachers' Standards;
- exercise due confidentiality towards matters that are either discussed or overheard;
- be punctual and well-prepared, including being ready to teach/ support promptly at the very beginning of every lesson;
- carry out all tasks to the best of their ability, taking pride in their work;
- ensure that all absence is genuine;
- demonstrate a clear understanding of and commitment to non-discriminatory practice;
- recognise the power imbalances between pupils and staff, and different levels of seniority of staff and ensure that power and authority are never misused;
- have a proactive approach to safeguarding (it is essential that all staff have regular safeguarding training and are alert to, and report appropriately, any behaviour that may indicate that a child is at risk of harm);
- know the procedures for dealing with and reporting safeguarding concerns (see Safeguarding Policy for detail);
- never condone inappropriate behaviour by pupils or staff;
- take responsibility for their own continuing professional development;

- refrain from any action that would bring the school into disrepute;
- value themselves, taking care of physical and mental wellbeing, including maintaining a healthy work/life balance;
- seek appropriate support for any issue that may have an adverse effect on their professional practice;
- when necessary access counselling and support, which can be provided internally or externally. Trade Unions can also provide support and advice for their members; membership of a Trade Union is strongly recommended;
- share a responsibility to look after the resources of the school and exercise due financial care; not wasting resources unnecessarily (including resources such as heat/light), following the principles of 'reduce, re-use, recycle' where appropriate;
- be aware of how to record/report concerns of 'whistleblowing' (see Whistleblowing Policy for further details).

### **Dress and Appearance**

School staff should ensure that they are dressed and present in a manner that is suitable and professional, taking into account their position as role models for the pupils in the school. This includes suitable sports kit for PE sessions. We would also expect that staff would also be respectful of the different cultural and religious backgrounds of the pupils in our schools. St Christopher's is committed to promoting diversity and will therefore respect individual preference in terms of customs, culture and tradition. However, the style of dress or appearance should not interfere with the key role of teaching and learning, modelling and demonstrating such learning through, for example, modelling phonic sounds for younger pupils and providing a role model for our pupils.

### **Relationships with Pupils**

All school staff should:

- treat each child as an individual and make adjustments to meet individual needs;
- encourage all pupils to reach their full potential;
- understand that school staff are in a position of trust and that sexual relationships with a child, even over the age of 16, may be an offence.

### **Relationships with Parents/Carers**

Staff should aim to create a welcoming and open relationship with parents and carers. All parental concerns should be treated seriously and dealt with promptly.

### **Physical Contact with Pupils**

All school staff should:

- avoid inappropriate physical contact with pupils;
- ensure that the safe handling practices of Team Teach or similar professional methods are put into practice if physical intervention/restrain is required.

There are times in a non-restraint context when physical contact between a pupil and a member of staff may be deemed appropriate. These situations will be in a caring context

when pupils need reassurance or support. It is important that the member of staff assesses the 'reasonableness' of their actions taking the following in account:

- the age of the pupil;
- the severity of the distress of the pupil;
- the knowledge of the individual child;
- the relationship that exists between the member of staff and the pupil
- the situation for such contact including seeing pupils on your own, after school or in isolated situations

The level of contact used should be the minimum necessary to achieve the desired outcome. Due care needs to be taken to ensure that this supportive contact is agreed and open, with the circumstances in which this takes place clear to all concerned.

### **Transporting Pupils**

The transportation of pupils within teachers' cars for professional purposes is only to take place with permission from the parent/carer of the child. Where possible the teacher should transport more than one child rather than a pupil on their own.

Each school will assess the insurance and other needs prior to this eventuality.

### **Photography, Video and Images of Pupils**

All school staff should:

- take images of pupils and/or staff only for professional purposes in accordance with the trust's policy and with the knowledge of the Senior Leadership Team;
- ensure that photographs are stored only in the appropriate file on the school network;
- ensure that only pupils who have had consent given by their parents are included in photographs;
- ensure that only photographs containing pupils whose parents have given their consent are placed on the school website and given to third parties;
- use only school tablets, cameras and other recording devices to record images or videos. Where an alternative camera is used to take a photograph, the pictures need to be transferred to the appropriate school file and deleted from the camera before the device is taken off the school site.

### **E-Safety**

All school staff should:

- ensure that all electronic communication with pupils, parents, carers, staff and others is compatible with their professional role and in line with school policies;
- use school ICT systems and resources for school business only; this includes school email addresses;
- not talk about their professional role in any capacity when using social media such as Facebook and YouTube.
- not normally become 'friends' with parents of school pupils on social networking sites such as Facebook;

- not put online any text, image, sound or video that could upset or offend any member of the whole school community or be incompatible with their professional role;
- not use social networking sites linked to the school to express political views without making clear if necessary, that those views are their own not those of their employer
- not give out their own personal details, such as mobile phone number, personal email address or social network details to pupils, parents, carers and others;
- not disclose any passwords and ensure that personal data is kept secure and used appropriately.

## **Conclusion**

By adhering to this code of conduct, staff can be assured that they are playing their part in safeguarding pupils and protecting themselves. It is trustees' expectation that all staff should sign a copy of this document or the school's equivalent.

We would require all schools to gain agreement to this Code of Conduct through induction for new staff and to hold on file a signed copy of this for each employee. This should be reviewed annually and staff invited to re-sign the code to reinforce the need for exemplary professional behaviour.

Agreed by Governors at Performance and Standards Committee: 10<sup>th</sup> March 2017

To be reviewed annually: March 2018