

Woodlea Primary School

Staff Code of Conduct



Policy name	Woodlea Staff Code of Conduct
Date written	July 2024
Written by	Abigail Oliver Headteacher
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Adapted from the MOPP V2.1 October 2021 version

1. Purpose and principles

This Code of Conduct aims to establish a set of principles which underpin the expected conduct of staff at Woodlea Primary 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 action being taken under the school disciplinary procedure which can be found in the 'Policies' folder on the staff shared computer network, as well as being provided on induction to all new members of staff. 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, including governors;
- casual workers;
- temporary and supply staff, either from agencies or engaged directly;
- student placements, including those undertaking initial 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. The Code of Conduct exists in addition to Hampshire County Council's Local Government 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, pupils, 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 pupils 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.

4. Safeguarding

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.

Woodlea Primary School recognises its statutory and moral duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils 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).

In this school the DSL is Abigail Oliver (Headteacher). The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are Lillian Zwarts (SENDCO), Lucy Ventham (EYS and KS1 Lead) and Emma Duffield (HLTA).

Staff have a professional duty to report concerns about the welfare of a child. Any such concerns must be raised without delay to the school's DSL/DDSLs in the first instance. In the event that none of the above are available staff must ring **Hampshire County Council's Safeguarding team (01962 876364)**. 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 to the DDSL if the DSL cannot be located. Staff can also go straight to the Hampshire LADO the number for which is on the child protection policy and is also in the staffroom/toilets.

Staff should be familiar with the school's child protection policy, which is available to all staff procedure which can be found in the 'Policies' folder on the staff shared computer network. 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'

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64f0a68ea78c5f000dc6f3b2/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2023.pdf

all staff in Woodlea Primary 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 from www.gov.uk or a copy can be found in the Staffroom or on request from the Headteacher.

Further information is found in the guidance document 'The avoidance of unnecessary contact and allegations' and in 'Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings' (May 2019) provided by the Safer Recruitment Consortium.

5. Appropriate relationships

Pupils

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 pupil's permission must be gained for that contact wherever possible. If physical contact is made to remove a pupil from a dangerous situation or an object from a pupil to

prevent either harm to themselves or others, then this should be recorded and reported to Abigail Oliver (Headteacher). In cases where accidental physical contact was made, it should be reported to Abigail Oliver (Headteacher). In all cases staff should act in accordance with the school's restraint policy which can be found in the 'Policies' folder on the staff shared computer network.

Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a pupil 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. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64f0a68ea78c5f000dc6f3b2/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2023.pdf defines a child as everyone under the age of 18.

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 which can be found in the 'Policies' folder on the staff shared computer network.

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 not have any unauthorised contact or accept 'friend' requests through social media with any pupil (including former pupils and/or those who attend other schools) unless they are family members. 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 and Social Media Policy which can be found in the 'Policies' folder on the staff shared computer network. for further guidance on acceptable and unacceptable use of IT, social media and mobile phones.

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 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2016 and the Data Protection Act 2018. 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 the 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/woodland activities and the need to dress appropriately and safely when undertaking these activities, such as wearing appropriate footwear, removing jewellery etc. Staff should wear appropriate clothing for the teaching of PE. Staff teaching PE may change from their normal work clothes to their PE kit at lunchtime or may wear appropriate PE kit on the days they are teaching PE lessons. The levels of professional dress set out below apply to staff wearing PE kit.

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, pupils and the school. All members of staff must dress in a professional manner while at work. The school relies on the professionalism of its staff to determine what clothes are appropriate to wear, though there are some clothes that the school deems not to meet the professional standards we expect. The school expects that staff members will present themselves in a way that:

- Is appropriate to their role and activities being undertaken that day
- Is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative
- does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding
- is absent from any political or otherwise contentious slogans

The following rules apply:

Tops

- Tops should be smart and not creased, torn or stained.
- Sleeveless tops are allowed, but must have thick straps. Any tops that reveal bra straps (such as vest tops with thin straps, halter neck or sports back tops), as well as 'bardot' style tops, which reveal all of the shoulders and a large part of the chest, or any tops that reveal the stomach/back/underwear are not allowed. Please be particularly aware of the back of your top becoming untucked if you are sitting on stools/leaning across a desk.
- Cleavage must not be visible. Please be particularly aware if you are likely to be bending in front of pupils (during first aid, talking to pupils sitting on the floor) or leaning across a table.
- Staff may wear a polo shirt with the Woodlea logo, in place of a blouse, smart top or shirt.
- Smart hooded tops may be worn, but removed for any activity where there is a risk that the hood may become trapped.

Trousers, shorts, leggings, skirts and dresses

- Skin tight trousers, including lycra/leather/leather-look/PVC trousers/jeggings are not allowed. Leggings are also skin tight and are therefore not suitable on their own. They should be treated like tights and may be worn with a dress for classroom activities.

- Casual shorts and tracksuit bottoms are allowed when staff are teaching/supporting PE, woodland activities, working in the EYFS or playtime support. Staff in the EYFS may wear these items on all days, as they are likely to be taking part in messier activities, working in the woodland, or supporting learning on the floor.
- Smart tailored shorts may be worn for classroom teaching, but must be no shorter than just above the knee.
- Underwear must not be visible. Please be particularly aware of items showing above or through trousers when bending/squatting.
- Black denim jeans are allowed.
- Smart denim skirts or dresses are allowed in any colour.
- Fashion rips/holes are not allowed.
- Dresses, skirts and shorts must not be shorter than just above the knee. Any side or front slits in longer skirts must not go past this point.
- Staff should consider the suitability of their clothing for the activity (e.g. if you are sitting on the floor/crawling around outside, decide whether trousers are more appropriate than a skirt or shorts).

Footwear

- Footwear needs to be appropriate for our woodland setting that has areas of uneven ground, exposed tree roots, mud and hills. Staff need to be able to walk quickly/run safely in their shoes if evacuating the site. This can include smart trainers of any colour.
- Very high shoes or boots, or those with stiletto heels are not allowed.
- Flipflops, sliders or sandals without a form of heel strap are not allowed.
- Croc style shoes are too casual for work, so are not allowed.

PE/EYFS/Woodland activities clothing

On days when staff are teaching/supporting PE, EYFS or woodland activities, staff should follow the rules of wearing clothing and footwear that is:

- Smart, clean and non-restrictive (for active modelling of PE skills)
- Not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative
- Not being distracting, causing embarrassment or giving rise to misunderstanding
- Being absent of any political, sports team or otherwise contentious slogans/logos.
- Tracksuits, baggy shorts at/just above the knee, polo tops, smart t-shirts, Woodlea logo tops and hooded tops are allowed. If supporting swimming, staff must wear a t-shirt or polo top and shorts over their swimwear. Sports leggings are allowed if worn with a long top.

Lunchtime Supervisors

Staff who only work during lunchtime should follow the rules of wearing clothing and footwear that is:

- Smart, clean and non-restrictive (to be able to run and play safely and comfortably with children)
- Not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative
- Not being distracting, causing embarrassment or giving rise to misunderstanding
- Being absent of any political, sports team or otherwise contentious slogans/logos
- Any clothing and footwear permitted in this document, including tracksuits, baggy shorts at/just above the knee, polo tops, smart t-shirts, Woodlea logo tops and hooded tops.
- Suitable for running across grass and playground surfaces.
- Suited to the weather.
- Hats may be worn, but not those which cover the ears and restrict hearing.

Non-School Uniform Days and Trips

If the school is having a non-school uniform day, or going on a trip, staff are able to wear jeans and other comfortable clothing, but it should continue to meet the expectations of:

- Being appropriate to their role and activities being undertaken that day
- Not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative
- Not being distracting, causing embarrassment or giving rise to misunderstanding
- Being absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans

Jewellery

Jewellery may be worn, but must not pose a health and safety hazard if caught or grabbed. All bracelets, non-stud earrings, large fashion style rings and necklaces must be removed during P.E. sessions. Staff may continue to wear wedding/religious/sentimentally significant rings.

Tattoos/body art

Tattoos and/or body art are allowed, but any tattoos that may cause offence (due to sexual or frightening images or words) must be covered. Staff will also need to decide whether a tattoo reveals personal details that they wish to remain private (such as names of family members or significant dates).

School photos and parent/carers events

Staff should dress smartly for class photos and after school events attended by parents and carers, such as parent/carers consultation evenings. It is not appropriate to wear PE kit on these occasions.

If a member of the school SLT deems a member of staff's clothes do not reach the level of professionalism we require, the member of staff will be asked to go home to change.

9. Equal opportunities

The Governing Body of the school is committed to equality for all in the appointment, development, training and promotion of staff, and in all dealings with pupils 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 pupils, 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 'Policies' folder on the staff shared computer network

10. Conduct outside work

Care must be taken by staff to avoid any conflict of interest between activities undertaken outside school and responsibilities within school. In no case should actions or activities undertaken outside of work (including but not limited to relationships and social media contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults) bring the school into disrepute.

Staff must disclose any misconduct or alleged misconduct made against them, including any incidents arising from alternative or additional employment outside of this school. Disclosure must be made to the Headteacher without delay, after which consideration will be given to the relevance or otherwise of the misconduct to their role in the school

Teachers are reminded that the Teachers' Standards, and specifically Part Two: Personal and Professional Conduct, set out their responsibilities in relation to upholding public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school.

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

11. Low Level Concerns

The term 'low level concerns' is outlined in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and refers to concerns about an adult working in or on behalf of the school who may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with this code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work. This concern does not necessarily meet the allegations threshold for referral to the LADO, but nevertheless should be shared responsibly, recorded and dealt with appropriately.

The purpose of managing low level concerns is to create and embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency; also to protect staff from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.

Staff can protect themselves by following this code of conduct and 'The avoidance of unnecessary contact and allegations' guidance, including the Do's and Don'ts.

Low level concerns about a staff member, including a volunteer or contractor, should be reported in the same way as allegations as outlined in the school's Child Protection policy.

12. 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, a relationship with a Governor, another staff member or a contractor who provides services to the school. Where such a declaration is necessary this should be made to the Headteacher.

Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided it does not conflict with the interests of the school nor be at a level which may contravene the Working Time Regulations or affect an individual's performance at work.

13. 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 Governing Body 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 senior leadership 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 which can be found in the 'Policies' folder on the staff shared computer network.

14. 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 which can be found in the 'Policies' folder on the staff shared computer network.

15. 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 or to suggest to pupils that gifts would be appropriate or desired. Money should never be accepted as a gift.

It is not acceptable for staff to give gifts to pupils. Rewards given to children in class will be stickers, certificates or small value items. Any other type of reward must be discussed with the Headteacher. Occasionally for whole school special events, further rewards may be given if deemed appropriate by the SLT.

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.

16. 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.