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Windrush Valley School

Policy Documents Annual Review Record

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STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT INC. LOW LEVEL CONCERNS

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1 Introduction

This Code of Conduct ('the Code') sets out the professional standards expected and the duty upon staff and volunteers to abide by it. All staff and volunteers have a duty to keep pupils safe, promote their welfare and to protect them from sexual, physical and emotional harm. This duty is, in part, exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between adults and pupils and behaviour by adults that demonstrate integrity, maturity and good judgement. Following this Code will help to safeguard staff and volunteers from being maliciously, falsely or mistakenly suspected or accused of misconduct in relation to pupils and the Required Professional Standards. This policy is appropriate to all staff, including those employed with the EYFS.

Staff and volunteers must feel able to raise issues of concern and everyone must fully recognise the duty to do so, particularly in terms of child protection. Adults have a duty to report any child

protection or welfare concerns to the designated member of staff in school. Anyone who has concerns must report it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). A member of staff who, in good faith, “whistleblows” or makes a public interest disclosure will have the protection of the relevant legislation.

This Code cannot provide an exhaustive list of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for staff or volunteers. However, it does highlight behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate, or inadvisable in relation to the Required Professional Standards. There will be occasions and circumstances in which staff or volunteers must make decisions or act in the best interests of the pupil where no specific guidance has been given. Adults are expected to make responsible and informed judgements about their own behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the pupils and are expected to exercise caution and avoid placing themselves in a position where their actions might be open to criticism or misinterpretation.

The Proprietor of Windrush Valley School will take a strict approach to serious breaches of this Code. Any member of staff who is found to have committed a breach of this Code will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal.

Where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff the Proprietor will follow the guidance set out in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE September 2024) where it is alleged that a member of staff or volunteer 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 s/he is unsuitable to work with children

2 Conduct and Practice Principles

There are seven principles of good conduct and practice for all staff at Windrush Valley School. Whilst these form the foundation of what happens in our school, they can also be used as guiding principles on which to base professional and personal learning in any school:

1. Put the wellbeing, development and progress of children first.

- follow policies, procedures and guidelines on matters such as communication with pupils, physical pupil contact, behaviour management, inclusion, access and equality of opportunity;
- conduct their relationships with pupils professionally and appropriately both in school and out of school;
- ensure that any communication with pupils is appropriate, including communication via electronic media, such as e-mail, texting and social networking websites;
- comply with policies, procedures and guidelines on matters such as child protection, safeguarding, educational visits or trips and their own professional and personal conduct;
- take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils;
- report any incident which may be perceived to breach the established boundaries between staff and pupils;

- contribute to the creation of a fair and inclusive school environment by addressing discrimination, stereotyping and bullying;
 - identify and address issues at all times that might impact on pupils' welfare.
- 2. Demonstrate respect for diversity and promote equality.**
- Ensure you are committed to providing equal opportunities for all pupils, regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, additional learning needs, race, religion, or belief.
- 3. Strive to establish productive partnerships with parents, guardians and carers.**
- follow policies, procedures and guidelines on communication with parents, guardians and carers, including those relating to sensitive areas such as attendance and exclusion;
 - develop and maintain good relationships between home and school, respecting the role of the parent, guardian or carer in a pupil's education
- 4. Work as part of a whole-school team**
- develop effective professional relationships with colleagues, knowing how and when to draw on advice and specialist support;
 - take responsibility for improving teaching through appropriate professional development, responding to advice and feedback from colleagues;
- 5. Cooperate with other professional colleagues.**
- behave professionally and with respect towards other members of staff;
 - support and collaborate with teachers and other professionals in matters concerning the education of pupils.
- 6. Demonstrate honesty and integrity and uphold public trust and confidence in the teaching profession and in Windrush Valley School.**
- make a positive contribution to the wider life and ethos of the school;
 - comply with policies, procedures and guidelines in respect of the use of school property, facilities, finance and ICT;
 - use school property and facilities appropriately;
 - conduct assessment- and examination-related tasks with integrity;
 - take care to ensure the accuracy of information prior to signing documents;
 - represent themselves, their experience, professional position and qualifications honestly;
 - communicate effectively and honestly with parents with regard to pupils' achievements and well-being;
 - ensure communications with parents, teachers and other professionals comply with policies, procedures and guidelines;
 - keep pupils' personal/educational records secure;
 - only disclose confidential discussions where it is appropriate to do so;
 - comply with policies, procedures and guidelines regarding the disclosure of pupil information.
- 7. Take responsibility for maintaining the quality of teaching.**
- Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils

- be accountable for pupils' attainment, progress and outcomes;
- be aware of pupils' capabilities and their prior knowledge, and plan teaching to build on these;
- guide pupils to reflect on the progress they have made and their emerging needs;
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn and how these impact on teaching;
- encourage pupils to take a responsible and conscientious attitude to their own work and study.

Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge

- have a secure knowledge of the relevant subject(s) and curriculum areas, foster and maintain pupils' interest in the subject, and address misunderstandings;
- demonstrate a critical understanding of developments in the subject and curriculum areas, and promote the value of scholarship;
- demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of standard English, whatever the teacher's specialist subject;

Plan and teach well-structured lessons

- impart knowledge and develop understanding through effective use of lesson time;
- promote a love of learning and children's intellectual curiosity;
- set homework (Prep) and plan other out-of-class activities to consolidate and extend the knowledge and understanding pupils have acquired;
- reflect systematically on the effectiveness of lessons and approaches to teaching;
- contribute to the design and provision of an engaging curriculum within the relevant subject area(s).

Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils

- know when and how to differentiate appropriately, using approaches which enable pupils to be taught effectively;
- have a secure understanding of how a range of factors can inhibit pupils' ability to learn, and how best to overcome these;
- demonstrate an awareness of the physical, social and intellectual development of children, and know how to adapt teaching to support pupils' education at different stages of development;
- have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs; those of high ability; those with English as an additional language; those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them.

Make accurate and productive use of assessment

- know and understand how to assess the relevant subject and curriculum areas, including statutory assessment requirements
- make use of formative and summative assessment to secure pupils' progress
- use relevant data to monitor progress, set targets, and plan subsequent lessons
- give pupils regular feedback, both orally and through accurate marking, and encourage pupils to respond to the feedback.

- Help children and young people to become confident and successful learners (for teachers).
- adhere to the standards for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and the End of Induction Standards;
- maintain high standards of practice in relation to teaching and learning, classroom management, planning, monitoring, assessment and reporting;
- keep their professional knowledge and skills up to date throughout their teaching career;
- maintain an up-to-date knowledge of relevant guidelines and educational developments in their phase of teaching/particular role, and teaching in general;
- reflect upon and evaluate their practice as part of their continuing professional development;
- be open to, and respond positively and constructively to feedback regarding their teaching practice;
- seek support, advice and guidance where necessary.

3 Policies

The following are important but this list is by no means exhaustive.

- Resolving Grievances Procedure
- Staff Disciplinary Procedure
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (obligatory)
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Fire Risk Prevention Policy and Risk Assessments Policy

4 Confidentiality/ Handling of Personal Information

As data controllers, all schools are subject to the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (2018). In addition, teachers owe a common law duty of care to safeguard the welfare of their pupils. This duty is acknowledged in the provisions governing disclosure of personal information about pupils, parents and other staff members.

Members of staff may have access to personal information about others in order to undertake their responsibilities. In some circumstances the information may be sensitive and/or confidential. Confidential or personal information about a pupil or his/her family must never be disclosed to anyone other than on a need to know basis and only where there is a lawful reason to do so. In circumstances where the pupil's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the pupil.

There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a pupil, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a

duty to pass information on without delay to those with designated pupil protection responsibilities.

Personal information about pupils must be held securely. Personal information about pupils must not be held off the school site other than on security protected school equipment and not without prior consent of the Headteacher. Information must only be stored for the length of time necessary to discharge the task for which it is required.

If a member of staff is in any doubt about the storage or sharing of information they must seek guidance from the Headteacher. Any media or legal enquiries must be immediately passed to the Headteacher before any response is given.

5 Propriety, Behaviour and Appearance

All adults working with children have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of pupils. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their colleagues, pupils and the public in general. An individual's behaviour or actions, either in or out of the workplace, should not compromise their position within the work setting or bring the school into disrepute. The misuse of drugs, alcohol or acts of violence would be examples of such behaviour. Staff and volunteers must ensure they are dressed in ways which are appropriate to their role and not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative and specifically should not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding; dress should be culturally sensitive and free of any political or otherwise contentious slogans, and not considered to be discriminatory. Given the sensitive nature of children staff should ensure that tattoos and body piercings are not visible at any time. Those who dress or appear in a manner which may be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations of misconduct.

Personal property of a sexually explicit nature such as books, magazines, CDs, DVDs or such material on any electronic media must not be brought onto or stored on the school premises or on any school equipment.

6 Sexual Contact with Children and Young People and Abuse of Trust

A relationship between an adult and a child or young person is not a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people. Adults should maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. They should report any incident with this potential.

Any sexual behaviour or activity, by a member of staff or volunteer with or towards a child or young person is illegal. Children and young people are protected by the same laws as adults in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour. They are additionally protected by specific legal provisions regardless of whether there is consent or not. Where a person aged 18 or over is in a specified position of trust with a child or young person under 18 years, the Sexual Offences Act 2003 makes it an offence for that person to engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of that child or to cause or incite that child to engage in or watch sexual activity.

Sexual behaviour includes non-contact activities, such as causing a child or young person to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of indecent images of children. *'Working Together to Safeguard children'*, defines sexual abuse as "forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening".

Staff and volunteers must not have sexual relationships with pupils, have any form of communication with a child or young person which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative i.e. verbal comments, letters, notes, texts, email, phone calls, social media or physical contact. The adult should not make sexual remarks to, or about, a child or young person or discuss their own sexual relationships with or in the presence of pupils. Staff and volunteers should take care that their language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculations. Attitudes, demeanor and language all require care and thought.

There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' where the sole purpose is to gain the trust of a child or young person, and manipulate that relationship so that sexual abuse can take place. Staff and volunteers should be aware that conferring special attention without good reason or favouring a pupil has the potential to be construed as being part of a 'grooming' process, which is a criminal offence.

7 Infatuations and Crushes

A child or young person may develop an infatuation with an adult who works with them. A member of staff or volunteer, who becomes aware that a pupil may be infatuated with him/herself or a colleague, must report this without delay to the Headteacher so that appropriate action can be taken to avoid any hurt, distress or embarrassment. The situation will be taken seriously and the adult should be careful to ensure that no encouragement of any kind is given to the pupil. It should also be recognised that careless and insensitive reactions may provoke false accusations. Examples of situations which must be reported are:

- Where a member of staff or volunteer is concerned that he or she might be developing a relationship with a pupil which could have the potential to represent an abuse of trust,
- Where a member of staff or volunteer is concerned that a pupil is becoming attracted to him or her or that there is a developing attachment or dependency.
- Where a member of staff or volunteer is concerned that actions or words have been misunderstood or misconstrued by a pupil such that an abuse of trust might be wrongly suspected by others.
- Where a member of staff or volunteer is concerned about the apparent development of a relationship by another member of staff or volunteer, or receives information about such a relationship

8 Gifts

Staff and volunteers need to take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed by others as a bribe, 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 acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.

Personal gifts must not be given to pupils. This could be misinterpreted as a gesture either to bribe, or single out the young person. It might be perceived that a 'favour' of some kind is expected in return. Any reward given to a pupil should be consistent with the school's behaviour or rewards policy, recorded, and not based on favouritism.

9 Social Contact and Social Networking

Windrush Valley School provides access to a landline telephone in both the school office and staff room. Personal mobile telephones must be switched off in their desk, or left in either the staff room or school office during working hours. These may only be used in the staff room and during lessons subject to the use as defined in paragraph 10.

Communication between pupils and adults should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries only. Staff and volunteers should not share any personal information with pupils. They should not request, or respond to, any personal information from the child/young person, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. If a pupil seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the adult should exercise their professional judgment in making a response and should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.

Staff and volunteers must not give their personal contact details such as home/mobile phone number; home or personal e-mail address or social networking details to pupils. It is recommended that staff ensure that all possible privacy settings are activated to prevent pupils from making contact on personal profiles and to prevent students from accessing photo albums or other personal information which may appear on social networking sites.

Staff must not have any pupils or any ex-pupils under the age of 18 as friends on their social networking sites. Staff are advised not to have any online friendships with any young people under the age of 18, unless they are family members or close family friends. Staff are advised not to have on-line friendships with parents or carers of pupils. Where such on-line friendships exist, staff must ensure that appropriate professional boundaries are maintained.

Staff are personally responsible for what they communicate in social media and must bear in mind that what is published might be read by the Proprietor, colleagues, parents, pupils, the general public and future employers. Staff must ensure that their on-line profiles are consistent with the professional image expected of Windrush Valley School employees and should not post material which damages the reputation of the school or which causes concern about their suitability to work with children and young people. Those who post material which may be considered as inappropriate would render themselves vulnerable to allegations of misconduct which may be dealt with under the school's disciplinary procedure. Even where it is made clear that the writer's views on such topics do not represent those of Windrush Valley School such comments are inappropriate.

10 Use of Mobile Phones to take photographs/videos

Staff may not use their personal phones to take photographs/videos of the children participating in school activities. They may use personal phones for emergency use only.

Staff may only take photographs/videos if they have completed and signed the 'Permission to use a personal device for photographs and videos form'. (See Appendix 1). The form will be signed by the Headteacher as approval to take photographs/videos and a copy of the form will be held on the employee's file. Any photographs/videos taken will be saved directly to the school G drive- class photos, within 1 working day of taking them and then deleted from all folders, immediately, from the personal mobile phone.

Staff will be subject to spot checks of the photographs/videos on their mobile phone (for the purposes of checking for any unapproved photographs/videos of pupils). Staff who have not completed the form or have been found to have taken inappropriate photographs/videos or have not complied with the above procedure for sending and deleting photographs/videos of pupils, will be subject to disciplinary action as per the school's Disciplinary Procedure.

11 Physical Contact and Personal Privacy

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. When physical contact is made with pupils this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate given their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity, culture and background. It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one pupil in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different pupil.

Physical contact should never be secretive or casual, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff or volunteer believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported as soon as possible to the Headteacher and a written copy made in the school's incident book, and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the pupil's file.

Physical contact, which occurs regularly with a pupil, is likely to raise questions unless the justification for this is part of a formally agreed plan (for example in relation to pupils with SEND or physical disabilities). Any such contact should be the subject of an agreed and open school policy and subject to review. Where feasible, staff should seek the pupil's permission before initiating contact. Staff should listen, observe and take note of the pupil's reaction or feelings and -so far as is possible- use a level of contact which is acceptable to the pupil for the minimum time necessary.

There may be occasions when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance. This may include age-appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation. Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance they should seek further advice from the Headteacher.

Some staff, for example, those who teach PE and games, or who provide music tuition will on occasions have to initiate physical contact with pupils in order to support a pupil so they can perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument or

assist them with an exercise. This should be done with the pupil's agreement. Contact under these circumstances should be for the minimum time necessary to complete the activity and take place in an open environment. Staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the pupil.

Pupils in the EYFS may need intimate care, such as help with toileting or changing clothes. This care should only be provided by members of EYFS staff and for those children who ask for help or whose parents/carers have informed the school they will need help. Changing soiled clothing should be done with limited contact but sufficient help to ensure the process is fast and efficient and away from other children to avoid embarrassment.

Pupils are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes or taking a shower. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard pupils, satisfy health and safety considerations and ensure that bullying or teasing does not occur, for example, when changing for swimming lessons. This supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the pupils concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

12 Behaviour Management and Physical Intervention

All pupils have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Corporal punishment is unlawful in all schools. Staff and volunteers must not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a pupil. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards pupils is not acceptable in any situation. Deliberately intimidating pupils by shouting aggressively, hectoring or overbearing physical presence is not acceptable in any situation. Any sanctions or rewards used should be in line with Windrush Valley School's Behaviour Management policy and the WINDRUSH360 reward system.

Physical intervention can only be justified in exceptional circumstances. Non-statutory guidance is available from the Department of Education website. See *'Behaviour in Schools -Advice for Headteachers and School Staff (Feb '24)'* and *'Use of reasonable force -advice for Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies for all Schools and Academies'*. Staff may legitimately intervene to prevent a pupil 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 have regard to the health and safety of themselves and others. Under no circumstances should physical force be used as a form of punishment. The use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence. It is extremely unlikely that a member of staff would decide to use a physical intervention strategy with pupils in Windrush Valley School.

All schools must have trained first aiders/appointed persons. Staff must have had the appropriate training before administering first aid or medication except in an emergency.

13 One-to-One Situations and Meetings with Pupil

One-to-one situations have the potential to make children/young persons more vulnerable to harm by those who seek to exploit their position of trust. Adults working in one-to-one settings with pupils may also be more vulnerable to unjust or unfounded allegations being made against them. Staff must recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. Every

attempt should be made to ensure that the safety and security needs of both staff and pupils are met. The Headteacher will undertake a risk assessment in relation to the specific nature and implications of one-to-one work for each worker and pupil. Where such a meeting is demonstrably unavoidable it is advisable to avoid remote or secluded areas of the school and to ensure that the door of the room is left open and/or visual/auditory contact with others is maintained. Any arrangements should be reviewed on a regular basis.

Pre-arranged meetings with pupils away from the school premises or on the school site when the school is not in session are not permitted.

No child or young person should be in or invited into the home of an adult who works with them, unless the reason for this has been established and agreed with parents/carers and the Headteacher.

14 Transporting Pupils

In certain situations; for example, out of school activities, staff, parents or volunteers (following suitable DBS checks) may agree to transport pupils. Transport arrangements should be made in advance by a designated member of staff. Wherever possible and practicable, transport should be provided other than in private vehicles.

Adults should ensure that their behaviour is safe and that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. They must ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.

It is inappropriate for staff to offer lifts to a pupil outside their normal working duties, unless this has been brought to the attention of the Headteacher and has been agreed with parents/carers.

There may be occasions where a pupil requires transport in an emergency situation or where not to give a lift may place a pupil at risk. Such circumstances must always be recorded and reported to the Headteacher and parents/carers.

15 Educational Visits and School Clubs

Staff and volunteers should take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere of an educational visit, particularly in a residential setting, or after-school activity. Staff and volunteers remain in a position of trust and the same standards of conduct apply.

16 Curriculum

Many areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit, or of an otherwise sensitive nature. Care should be taken to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the learning outcomes identified by the lesson plan. This plan should highlight particular areas of risk and sensitivity.

The curriculum can sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussion about subject matter of a sexually explicit or otherwise sensitive nature. Responding to pupils' questions can require careful

judgement and staff must take guidance in these circumstances from the Headteacher. Staff and volunteers must not enter into or encourage inappropriate discussion about sexual activity or behaviour.

17 Photography, Videos and other Creative Arts

Many school activities involve the taking or recording of images. This may be undertaken as part of the curriculum, extra school activities, for publicity, or to celebrate achievement. GDPR [2018] affects the use of photography. An image of a child is personal data; it is a requirement under the Regulation that consent is obtained from the parent of a child before any images are made such as those used for school web sites, notice boards, productions or other purposes.

Staff need to be aware of the potential for such images to be misused to create indecent images of children and/or for 'grooming' purposes. Careful consideration should be given as to how these activities are organised and undertaken, whether the images will be destroyed or retained for further use.

Staff should remain sensitive to any pupil who appears uncomfortable and should recognise the potential for misinterpretation. It is also important to consider the wishes of the child, remembering that some children do not wish to have their photograph taken.

Adults should only use equipment provided or authorised by the school to make/take images and should not use personal mobile telephones or any other similar devices to make/take images. Staff may not make/take images of children in EYFS without the prior agreement and approval of the Headteacher. Such images may be for recording examples of pupil involvement in the curriculum of the school.

The following guidance must be followed:

- if a photograph is used, avoid naming the pupil
- if the pupil is named, avoid using the photograph
- photographs/images must be securely stored and used only by those authorised to do so
- be clear about the purpose of the activity and about what will happen to the photographs/images when the lesson/activity is concluded
- ensure that a senior member of staff is aware that the photography/image equipment is being used and for what purpose
- ensure that all photographs/images are available for scrutiny in order to screen for acceptability
- be able to justify the photographs/images made
- do not take photographs in a one-to-one situation
- do not take, display or distribute photographs/images of pupils unless there is consent to do so

18 Unacceptable Use of ICT Facilities and Monitoring

Posting, creating, accessing, transmitting, downloading, uploading or storing any of the following material (unless it is part of an authorised investigation) is likely to amount to gross misconduct and result in summary dismissal (this list is not exhaustive):

- pornographic or sexually suggestive material or images of children or adults which may be construed as such in the circumstances (that is, writing, texting, pictures, films and video clips of a sexually explicit or arousing nature),
- any other type of offensive, obscene or discriminatory material or criminal material or material which is liable to cause distress or embarrassment to Windrush Valley School or others

The contents of the ICT resources and communications systems are the property of the Proprietor. Therefore, staff should have no expectation of privacy in any applications (e.g. Whatsapp Desktop) messages, search engine searches and results, files, data, document, facsimile, telephone conversation, social media post, conversation or message, or any other kind of information or communications transmitted to, received or printed from, or stored or recorded on our electronic information and communications systems.

The Proprietor reserves the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, staff usage of IT resources and communications systems, including but not limited to telephone, e-mail, messaging, voicemail, internet and social media postings and activities, to ensure that these rules are being complied with and for the following purposes:

- to monitor whether the use of the e-mail system or the internet is legitimate and in accordance with this Code;
- to assist in the investigation of alleged wrongful acts; or
- to comply with any legal obligation.

All staff consent to monitoring by acknowledgement of this Code and the use of the resources and systems. Copies of data or communications are stored for a period of time after they are created and may be deleted from time to time without notice. If necessary, information may be handed to the police in connection with a criminal investigation.

19 Reporting Concerns and Recording Incidents: whistleblowing and cyber-bullying

All staff, governors and volunteers must report concerns and incidents in accordance with the school managing allegations of abuse policy. The following is a non-exhaustive list of behaviours which would be a cause for concern and therefore reportable:

Where an adult:

- Allows a pupil/young person to be treated badly; pretends not to know it is happening.
- Gossips/shares information inappropriately.
- Demonstrates inappropriate discriminatory behaviour and/or uses inappropriate language.
- Dresses in a way which is inappropriate for the job role.
- Does not treat pupils fairly - demonstrates favouritism.
- Demonstrates a lack of understanding about personal and professional boundaries.
- Uses their position of trust to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine.
- Appears to have an inappropriate social relationship with a pupil or pupils.
- Appears to have special or different relationships with a pupil or pupils.

- Seems to seek out unnecessary opportunities to be alone with a pupil.

Staff who have concerns about child protection, alleged abuse or inappropriate use of ICT resources, virtual learning environments, camera/recording equipment, telephony, social networking and media sites, email or internet facilities or inappropriate communications, whether by pupils, parents, carers or staff, or others, should alert the school's DSL. Where a concern relates to the Headteacher personally, this should be reported to the LADO. [Refer to the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy].

Cyber-bullying can be experienced by staff as well as pupils. Staff should notify the Headteacher immediately if they are subject to cyber-bullying. Windrush Valley School will endeavour to protect staff and stop any inappropriate conduct.

20 Low-Level Concerns Policy

This policy sets out a framework whereby staff are expected to report concerns, no matter how small, about their own behaviour or that of another member of staff, volunteer, supply teacher, contractor or other person working in school.

Its purpose is to help create and embed a culture of openness, trust, and transparency. The clear values and expected behaviours are set out in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and this Staff Code of Conduct and are lived, monitored, and reinforced.

The policy should be read in conjunction with the current statutory guidance – “Keeping Children Safe in Education” Part 4, Section 2.

Who does the policy apply to?

This policy applies to all staff and other individuals who work or volunteer at Windrush Valley School.

Definition of a low-level concern

A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small, even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a ‘nagging doubt’, that a person working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the school's Code of Conduct, and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to make a referral to the LADO

Examples of behaviour that could require reporting of a low-level concern include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone when permission has not been granted;
- 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 (please refer to the school's Staff Code of Conduct), 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 and colleges from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.

Clarity around Allegation vs Low-Level Concern vs Appropriate Conduct

Allegation

Behaviour which indicates that an adult who works with children 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 they 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.

Low-Level Concern

Does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the adult's behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold set out above. 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 may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with an organisation's staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and
- does not meet the allegation threshold, or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO - but may merit consulting with and seeking advice from the LADO, and on a no-names basis if necessary.

Appropriate Conduct

Behaviour which is entirely consistent with the organisation's staff code of conduct, and the law.

Reporting low-level concerns

Where a low-level concern has been identified, this will be reported as soon as possible to the Headteacher. However, it is never too late to share a low-level concern if this has not already happened. The Headteacher will make the final decision regarding the concern however, if they choose to, they can collaborate with the DSL. If there is a conflict of interest, reporting to the Headteacher, then the concern should be reported to the LADO.

Where there is a concern about the Headteacher, this will be reported to the Chair of Governors.

Recording concerns

A summary of the low-level concern should be written down, signed, timed, dated and shared by the person bringing the information forward. (**Low-Level Concern Log- Appendix 2- G Drive- All staff- Behaviour- Low-level concern log (Staff concern)**)

Written low-level concern records will be retained and stored centrally and securely by the Headteacher.

Record Keeping

Low-level concern forms are classed as sensitive information and can be shared on a need-to-know basis in line with the Schools Safeguarding procedures. Records will be kept, in both the personnel file and in the Low-Level Concerns file, until termination of employment, when they will be destroyed.

Where concerns are reported verbally to the Headteacher a record of the conversation will be made by the Headteacher which will be signed, timed, and dated. **(Low-Level Concern Log- Appendix 2- G Drive- All staff- Behaviour- Low-level concern log (Staff concern))**

Responding to low-level concerns

Where a low-level concern has been raised this will be taken seriously and dealt with promptly. The Headteacher will:

- Speak to the person reporting the concern to gather all the relevant information
- Speak to the individual about the concern raised to ascertain their response, unless advised not to do so by the LADO or police (HR Legal advice from ARAG may also need to be taken - 0117 933 0687, Policy Number - 202604).

The accused individual MUST have the opportunity to respond to allegations.

Where necessary, further investigation will be carried out to gather all relevant information. This may involve speaking to any potential witnesses. The information reported and gathered will then be reviewed to determine whether the behaviour:

- is consistent with the school's Code of Conduct: no further action will be required
- constitutes a low-level concern: no further action is required, or additional training/guidance/support may be required to rectify the behaviour via normal day to day management processes. The employee should understand that failure to improve or a repeat of the behaviour may lead to further action being taken, e.g. via the Staff Disciplinary Procedure and Resolving Grievances Procedure, the Allegation Management Policy or and the Whistleblowing Policy
- is serious enough to consult with or refer to the LADO: a referral should be made to the LADO and HR Legal advice from ARAG may also need to be taken - 0117 933 0687, Policy Number - 202604.

Allegations procedure within the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Allegations Management Policy will be followed:

- when considered with any other low-level concerns that have previously been raised about the same individual, should be reclassified as an allegation and referred to the LADO or Police: a referral should be made to the LADO and HR Legal advice from ARAG may also need to be taken - 0117 933 0687, Policy Number - 202604.

When considered with any other low-level concerns that have previously been made, records will be made of:

- all internal conversations including any relevant witnesses
- all external conversations, e.g. with the LADO
- the decision and the rationale for it
- any action taken.

Can the reporting person remain anonymous?

The person bringing forward the concern will be named in the written record. Where they request to remain anonymous, this will be respected as far as possible. However, there may be circumstances where this is not possible, e.g. where a fair disciplinary investigation is needed or where a later criminal investigation is required. Where a Subject Access Request is made information may be redacted to withhold third party data however this request must be recorded.

Should staff report concerns about themselves (i.e. self-report)?

It may be the case that a person finds themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, or might appear compromising to others; or they may have behaved in a manner which on reflection they consider falls below the standard set out in the Staff Code of Conduct. In these circumstances they should self-report. This will enable a potentially difficult situation to be addressed at an early opportunity if necessary.

Where behaviour is consistent with the Staff Code of Conduct

Feedback will be given to both parties to explain why the behaviour was consistent with the Staff Code of Conduct.

Should the low-level concerns file be reviewed?

The records will be reviewed periodically, and whenever a new low-level concern is added, it will be reviewed to enable identification of potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, and referred to the LADO, if required. A record of these reviews will be retained. The review will allow the Headteacher to identify any wider cultural issues within the school. These will then be addressed by extra training to prevent recurrence and the revision of appropriate policies.

References

Low-Level concerns will not be included in references unless a low-level concern, or group of concerns, has met the threshold for referral to the LADO and found to be substantiated.

What is the role of the Governors?

The Headteacher will regularly inform the Governors about the implementation of the Low-Level Concerns policy including any evidence of its effectiveness, e.g. with relevant data. The Governor's review may also include an anonymised sample to ensure that these concerns have been handled appropriately.

21 Other Employment

Staff should not engage in other employment, whether with or not with, pupils and parents from Windrush Valley School without the prior written consent of the Headteacher.

Amanda Douglas

Headteacher

February 2025

APPENDIX 1



Permission to use a personal device for photographs and videos form

I agree to:

- Use my mobile phone only to take photographs/video of pupils engaged in school activities for educational or promotional purposes
- Not take photographs of pupils in the Early Years on a personal device
- Send any photographs/video of pupils engaged in school activities to:
G drive- All Staff- Class photos, within 1 working day of them being taken
- Delete the photographs/video from all folders on my mobile phone immediately after sending them to the G drive.
- Have the photographs/video on my mobile phone randomly spot checked by the Headteacher for the purposes of checking for any inappropriate images of school pupils

I accept that I may be subject to disciplinary action if found to be abusing this agreement.

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Signed | |
| Print Name | |
| Dated: | |
| Headteacher Approval | |
| Dated: | |
| Devices authorised to use: | |



LOW-LEVEL CONCERN LOG

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|-------|--|
| Reporting person | | | |
| Reporting to | | | |
| Date of concern | | | |
| Time of concern | | | |
| Persons involved | | | |
| Details of the low-level concern | | | |
| Signed | | Dated | |