



**Our moral obligation is to help our children become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens, and we believe that this Staff Code of Conduct will help us achieve this goal.**

## **Staff Code of Conduct**

### **Safe Working Practices for the Protection of Pupils and Staff**

Barnham Primary School seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment, which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for the pupils in our care. This document clarifies what is expected in terms of professional behaviour; it gives clear advice about what constitutes illegal behaviour and what might be considered as misconduct. It also describes safe practice and which behaviours should be avoided.

If a member of staff does not follow this code of conduct this may lead to disciplinary procedures. There may be times when professional judgements are made in situations not covered by this document, or which directly contravene the guidance given by their employer. It is expected that in these circumstances staff will always advise their senior colleagues of their justification for any such action already taken or proposed.

### **Core Principles**

- The welfare of our pupils is paramount;
- Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions;
- Staff should work, and be seen to work in an open and transparent way;
- Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from their line manager or another senior member of staff over any incident, which may give rise to concern;
- Records should be made of any such incident and of decisions made/further actions agreed;
- Staff should apply the same professional standards in keeping with the School's Equality Policy;
- All staff should know the name of their Designated Safeguarding Lead, be familiar with child protection arrangements and understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect students.
- Staff should be aware of "low level" concerns as specified in the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. A low level concern does not mean that it is insignificant it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold for formal referral to LADO. 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 should always be reported.
- Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This guidance has been produced to help all staff establish the safest possible learning and working environments. The aims are to safeguard young people and reduce the risk of staff being falsely accused of improper or unprofessional conduct.

#### **This means that these guidelines:**

- apply to all adults working in education settings whatever their position, roles, or responsibilities.





## 2.0 DUTY OF CARE

Teachers and other staff are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority; manage risk; use resources; and protect pupils from discrimination and avoidable harm.

All staff, whether paid or voluntary, have a duty to keep young people safe and to protect them from physical and emotional harm. This duty is in part exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between staff and pupils and behaviour by staff that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement.

There are legitimate high expectations about the nature of the professional involvement of staff in the lives of pupils. When individuals accept a role that involves working with children and young people, they need to understand and acknowledge the responsibilities and trust inherent in that role.

Employers have a duty of care towards their employees, which requires them to provide a safe working environment for staff and guidance about safe working practices.

### **This means that staff should:**

- understand the responsibilities, which are part of their employment or role, and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached;
- always act, and be seen to act, in the child's best interests;
- avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions;
- take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour.

### **This means that Barnham Primary School should:**

- ensure that safeguarding procedures are in place and reviewed;
- ensure that systems are in place for concerns to be raised;
- ensure that adults are not placed in situations which render them particularly vulnerable.

## 3.0 EXERCISE OF PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT

This guidance cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for staff. It does highlight however, behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable. There will be occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or take action in the best interests of the pupils which could contravene this guidance or where no guidance exists. Individuals are expected to make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the children in their charge and in so doing, will be seen to be acting reasonably.

### **This means that where no specific guidance exists staff should:**

- discuss the circumstances that informed their action, with a senior colleague. This will help to ensure that the safest practices are employed and reduce the risk of actions being misinterpreted;
- always discuss any misunderstanding, accidents or threats with a senior leader;
- always record discussions and actions taken with their justifications.

## 4.0 POWER AND POSITIONS OF TRUST





All adults working with pupils in education settings are in positions of trust in relation to the young people in their care.

Staff should always maintain appropriate professionalism and wherever possible, they should avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others, and report and record any incident with this potential. Where a person aged 18 or over is in a position of trust with a child under 18, it is 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.

**This means that staff should not:**

- use their position to gain access to information for their own advantage and/or a pupils' or family's detriment;
- use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine pupils;
- use their status and standing to form or promote a relationship with a pupil, which is of a sexual nature;
- attempt to initiate a relationship with a recent ex-pupil, which is of a sexual nature.

## **5.0 CONFIDENTIALITY**

Members of staff may have access to confidential information about pupils in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities. In some circumstances staff may be given additional highly sensitive or private information. They should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil or his family for their own, or others' advantage. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the pupil.

Confidential information about pupils should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need to know basis. In circumstances where the pupil's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.

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, but only to those with designated safeguarding responsibilities.

If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from a senior member of staff. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the Headteacher.

Adults need to be aware that although it is important to listen to and support pupils, they must not promise confidentiality or request students to do the same under any circumstances.

Additionally concerns and allegations about adults should be treated as confidential and passed to the Headteacher without delay.

**This means that staff:**

- are expected to treat information they receive about students in a discreet and confidential manner;
- in any doubt about sharing information they hold or which has been requested of them should seek advice from a senior member of staff;
- need to be cautious when passing information to others about a pupil;
- need to know to whom any concerns or allegations should be reported.





## 6.0 PROPRIETY AND BEHAVIOUR

All staff 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 peers, pupils and the public in general.

An individual's behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, should not compromise her/his position within the work setting so it is important to exercise due care and attention when outside of the school environment.

Membership of organisations whose goals are in conflict with the values and equality policies of the school is not acceptable.

### **This means that staff should not:**

- behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with pupils or act as a role model;
- drink alcohol with current pupils in public or private places, nor purchase alcohol for pupils. There may be exceptional circumstances where a member of staff may be personal friends with a parent which mean that normal social life will bring the pupil into social contact with a member of staff.
- drink alcohol when supervising pupils or on school trips. This applies even when there are no pupils present, as the member of staff may be called to act if an emergency occur;
- make inappropriate remarks to a student (including email, text messages, phone or letter etc);
- discuss their own sexual relationships with or in the presence of pupils;
- make (or encourage others to make) unprofessional personal comments in any form of communication (e-mail, conversations or social networking comments).

### **Staff must:**

Be aware that their behaviour in their personal lives may impact upon their work with pupils.

## 7.0 DRESS AND APPEARANCE

Staff should consider the manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role. Staff should ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake.

### **This means that staff should ensure their appearance and clothing:**

- promotes a positive and professional image;
- is appropriate to their role;
- is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative;
- does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding;
- is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans.

## 8.0 INFATUATIONS

Staff need to be aware that it is not uncommon for pupils to develop an infatuation.

### **This means that staff should:**





- report to senior colleagues any indications (verbal, written or physical) that suggest a pupil may be infatuated with a member of staff;
- be mindful if they are alone in a room with a pupil. Leave the door open if you have to.

## **9.0 PERSONAL LIVING SPACE**

No pupil should be in or invited into, the home of an adult who works with them, unless the reason for this has been firmly established and agreed with parents and senior leaders or the home has been designated by the organisation or regulatory body as a work place eg childminders, foster carers.

### **This means that staff should:**

- be vigilant in maintaining their privacy and mindful of the need to avoid placing themselves in vulnerable situations;
- be mindful of the need to maintain professional boundaries.

## **10.0 COMMUNICATIONS WITH STUDENTS (Including the use of Technology)**

Communication between pupils and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites, social networking sites, online gaming and blogs. Adults must be mindful of sharing any personal information with a pupil. They should not request, or respond to, any personal information from the student, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. Adults should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.

Adults should also be circumspect in their communications with pupils so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming. They should not give their personal contact details to students including personal e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers, unless the need to do so is agreed with senior leadership and parents. E-mail or text communications between an adult and a pupil outside agreed protocols may lead to disciplinary and/or criminal investigations. This also includes communications through internet based web sites, such as social networking, instant messaging or gaming.

Communication with ex-pupils who are over 18 is left to staff discretion. Please be conscious of the fact that ex-students may be in contact with current pupils.

Be aware that actions that bring the school into disrepute could lead to disciplinary procedures being taken.

### **This means that staff must:**

- not give their personal contact details to pupils, including their mobile telephone number, for professional reasons,
- communicate with pupils in an appropriate and professional manner, making sure that parents have given permission for this form of communication to be used;
- only make contact with pupils for professional reasons;
- not use internet or web-based communication channels to send personal messages to a pupil;
- not to have images of pupils stored on personal cameras, devices or home computers;





- not make images of pupils available on the internet, other than through the school network/website, without permission from parents and senior teacher;
- be cautious in their contact with ex-pupils, as there is still a professional relationship and there may be contact with current pupils.

### **11.0 SOCIAL CONTACT**

Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils, or their families, for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. Even if a young person seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise her/his professional judgement in making a response but should always discuss this with a senior leader. Staff must be aware that social contact, in certain situations, could be misconstrued as grooming.

Staff must not give their personal details such as their home or personal e-mail address; social network sites, gamer tags or web pages to pupils. If pupils do become aware of your gamer tag you must change it.

#### **This means that staff should:**

- have no secret social contact with pupils;
- consider the appropriateness of the social contact according to their role and nature of their work;
- always approve any planned social contact with senior colleagues, for example when it is part of a reward scheme or pastoral care programme;
- advise senior leadership of any regular social contact they have with a pupil or parent which may give rise to concern;
- report and record any situation, which they feel, might compromise the school or their own professional standing.

### **12.0 SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AND ONLINE GAMING**

Barnham Primary School staff may use social networking sites for personal use. However, the school requires that profile and photos of the member of staff are 'locked down' as private so that pupils or parents do not have access to your personal data or images.

Staff must deny current pupils or previous year's leavers, until the age of 21, access to your profile so you do not put yourself in a vulnerable position.

Staff should be aware that they leave themselves open to a charge of professional misconduct if images of a member of staff in a compromising situation are made available on a public profile by anyone.

If a pupil does gain access to the profile of a member of staff by fraudulent means (impersonation or hacking) senior leadership should be informed immediately.

Where relationships exist between staff and those who are also parents at the school, or personal friends who are parents at the school, social networking is acceptable but caution must be exercised so that professional standards are maintained and staff do not compromise themselves or the school.

As soon as a member of staff becomes aware that they are in an online game with a pupil of Barnham Primary School, the member of staff should cease to play against that pupil and should not enter any games containing that player as part of the group.





Under no circumstances should staff seek out pupils and/or share their own gamer tags/ID with pupils, or use school equipment to play online games.

**This means that staff should:**

- lock down their profile to ensure that data and images are not freely available. Seek advice if you are unsure how to do this;
- not permit current and recent pupils or parents to have access to your profile;
- ensure all your passwords are kept strong and secure;
- Be aware that images of others should be protected and be treated as carefully as you would your own.

### **13.0 PHYSICAL CONTACT**

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.

A 'no touch' approach is impractical for most staff and may in some circumstances be inappropriate. When physical contact is made with pupils this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate.

Staff should use their professional judgement at all times about the appropriateness of any physical contact.

Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be made clear to senior staff.

Physical contact, which occurs regularly with an individual pupil, is likely to raise questions unless the justification for this is part of a formally agreed plan (for example in relation to students with SEN or physical disabilities). Any such contact should be the subject of an agreed and open school policy and subject to review.

**This means that staff should:**

- be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the pupil, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described;
- never touch a pupil in a way which may be considered indecent;
- always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny.

**This means that Barnham Primary School should:**

- ensure they have a system in place for recording serious incidents and the means by which information about incidents and outcomes can be easily accessed by senior leadership;
- provide staff, on a "need to know" basis, with relevant information about vulnerable pupils in their care.

### **14.0 TRANSPORTING CHILDREN**





In certain situations, for example out of school activities, staff or volunteers may agree to transport children. A designated member of staff should be appointed to plan and provide oversight of all transporting arrangements and respond to any difficulties that may arise.

Wherever possible and practicable it is advisable that transport is undertaken other than in private vehicles, with at least one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort. The driver must also have appropriate insurance.

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

**This means that staff should:**

- plan and agree arrangements with all parties in advance, responding sensitively and flexibly to disagreements;
- ensure that they are never alone with a child in a vehicle; unless in an emergency situation which has been authorised by the Headteacher.
- be aware that the safety and welfare of the child is their responsibility until this is safely passed over to a parent/carer;
- report the nature of the journey, the route and expected time of arrival in accordance with agreed procedures;
- ensure that their behaviour and all arrangements ensure vehicle, passenger and driver safety;
- take into account any specific needs that the child may have.

## **15.0 EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Staff should take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere of a residential setting or after-school activity. During school activities that take place off the school site or out of school hours, a more relaxed discipline or informal dress and language code may be acceptable. However, staff remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour cannot be interpreted as seeking to establish an inappropriate relationship or friendship.

Where out of school activities include overnight stays, careful consideration needs to be given to sleeping arrangements. Health and Safety arrangements require members of staff to keep colleagues/employers aware of their whereabouts, especially when involved in an out of school activity.

**This means that staff should:**

- always have another adult present in out of school activities, unless otherwise agreed with senior staff in the school;
- undertake a risk assessment;
- have parental consent to the activity;
- ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times.

## **16.0 PHOTOGRAPHY, VIDEOS AND OTHER CREATIVE ARTS**

Many school activities involve recording images. These may be undertaken as part of the curriculum, out of school activities, for publicity, or to celebrate achievement. Staff need to be aware of the potential for







these aspects of teaching to be misused for pornographic or 'grooming' purposes. Careful consideration should be given as to how these activities are organised and undertaken.

Using images of children for the school's publicity purposes has already had the consent of parents through the Home-School Agreement. Images should not be displayed on other websites, in publications or in a public place without additional consent.

**This means that staff should:**

- be clear about the purpose of the activity and about what will happen to the photographs 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 images are available for scrutiny in order to screen for acceptability;
- be able to justify images of children in their possession;
- avoid making images in one to one situations.

**This means that staff should not:**

- have images of pupils stored on personal cameras, devices or home computers;
- make images of pupils available on the internet, other than through the school network/website with permission from parents and senior teachers.

