



pathfield
SCHOOL

Inspiring interaction

Staff Code of Conduct

DCC Model Policy for Schools and Academies

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Adopted by Governors Date	Full Governing Body
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Pathfield School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

This policy will support, promote and be applied with due regard to the requirements of the

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Introduction

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour which are to be observed in Pathfield School and what behaviour is and is not acceptable. Regard should be given to the disciplinary rules set out in the Pathfield School Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. **This Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with *Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2022)* and *Guidance for Safer Working Practices for Those Working With Children and Young People in Education Settings (October 2015)*.**

Every person working in our school is a role model and in a position of influence and must demonstrate behaviour that sets a good example to all those who come into contact with our school, especially the young people who attend the school. As a member of a school community, everybody has an individual responsibility to maintain their own reputation and the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside working hours.

The Governing Body of Pathfield School is committed to creating and maintaining an environment in which all those working in or coming into contact with the school are treated fairly, with dignity and respect and where unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated.

This Code of Conduct applies to all employees. Casual and self-employed workers, agency staff and volunteers working in the school are also expected to observe the standards of behaviour set out in this document. For the purpose of this policy, the term 'you' is used to apply to all of these groups.

In addition to this Code of Conduct, all teaching staff have an obligation to adhere to the 'Teachers' Standards' and particularly in relation to this policy, Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct.

This policy is provided following consultation with trade unions/professional associations.

1. Compliance

All employees should confirm that they have read, understood, and agree to comply with this Code of Conduct. Pathfield School staff declare their confirmation of having read this Code of Conduct (as well as all other key Child Protection and Safeguarding policies and documents) via the Pathfield School **Child Protection Online Management System** (CPOMs).

2. Disciplinary Action

Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in further action being taken, as set out in the Disciplinary Policy.

3. Conduct Outside of Work

- 3.1 Criminal offences of any sort, particularly those that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct, may be regarded as unacceptable and dealt with under the school's Disciplinary Policy.
- 3.2 Behaviour or activities that have the potential to make you unsuitable for the role you perform at the school will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy.

- 3.3 You should not engage in conduct outside work which could damage the reputation and standing of the school, your own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.

4. Setting an Example

- 4.1 You should set good examples of behaviour and demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same. A non-exhaustive example set of standards can be found in Appendix 1.
- 4.2 It is unlawful to discriminate, harass or victimise someone because they have or are perceived to have a protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010 or are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.
- 4.3 You should not use inappropriate, foul or offensive language to, or in front of, any member of the school community, which includes but is not limited to, pupils, parents/carers, colleagues, governors, visitors to the school.
- 4.4 You should not put yourself at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

5. Safeguarding Pupils

- 5.1 You have a duty to safeguard pupils from physical, sexual, emotional and/or verbal abuse and neglect. This includes a duty to report concerns about a pupil or colleague to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for Child Protection.

You must:

- 5.2 Make yourself aware of who the school's current DSL is. This information is available on notice boards in the staffroom and around the school as well as on the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- 5.3 Take reasonable care of pupils under your supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.
- 5.4 Read and become familiar with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Whistleblowing Policy.
- 5.5 Read and become familiar with the DfE Statutory Guidance Document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education – September 2022'.

You must not:

- 5.6 Promise a pupil that you will not act on information that you are told by them.
- 5.7 If given information by a parent/carer or other person which would reasonably cause concern for a young person's safety or wellbeing, agree to keep that information confidential. In these circumstances, you must advise the person that you may be obliged to report what they are telling you.

6. Familial / Social Relationships with Pupils

- 6.1 You should declare any familial or social relationship that you may have with pupils outside of school. This may include mutual membership of social groups, tutoring, or family/friendship connections. You should not assume that the school is aware of any such connections. A declaration form is available at Appendix 2 of this document for declaration of such relationships. Where you have such connections with a pupil, you must maintain your professionalism during any contact and not act in any way which may bring yourself or the school into disrepute.
- 6.2 Be aware that physical relationships with pupils, regardless of their age, are strictly forbidden and may lead to a criminal conviction. This may also apply to former pupils and advice must be sought before commencing any such relationship.
- 6.3 You should not behave in a way that may be perceived as sarcastic, nor should you make jokes at the expense of pupils, embarrass or humiliate pupils, discriminate against or favour pupils.

7. Professional Relationships with Colleagues

- 7.1 You must strive to create a positive working environment and behave in a manner which ensures and promotes acceptable behaviour. Examples of acceptable behaviour and unacceptable behaviour can be found in Appendix 1.
- 7.2 You should promote harmonious and professional relationships with all colleagues. It is understood that, at times, differences of opinions can occur and at such times it is expected that you will attempt to resolve matters informally in the first instance unless you feel unable to do so in which case you should refer the matter to your manager.

8. Honesty and Integrity

- 8.1 Without fear of recrimination, you can report any impropriety or breach of procedures using the process laid out within the Pathfield School Whistleblowing Policy.
- 8.2 Maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in your work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.
- 8.3 You may be guilty of an offence of bribery under the Bribery Act 2010 if you offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or if you request, agree or accept, or receive a bribe from another person. If you believe that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act, you should refer your concerns to the attention of the Headteacher / Chair of Governors.
- 8.4 Make known to the Headteacher / Chair of Governors all financial and non-financial interests that could bring you into conflict with the school's interests.
- 8.5 Make any personal relationships with contractors, or potential contractors known to the Headteacher / Governing Body.
- 8.6 Do not accept gifts or hospitality from suppliers or associates of the school, with the exception of 'one off' token gifts from parents or at times such as Christmas or end of

the school year. Personal gifts from any member of staff to pupils are potentially inappropriate and could be misinterpreted and may lead to disciplinary action. Any intention to provide gifts to pupils must be authorised by a senior leader. A record will be kept of all gifts received.

- 8.7 You should advise the Headteacher / Chair of Governors if you have a personal relationship with someone applying to work at the school, so that you are not involved in that recruitment process.

9. Additional Employment Outside of School

- 9.1 You may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school and/or is not to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect your work performance in the school. You must seek the consent of the Headteacher / Governing Body should you wish to take up other employment outside the school. This includes tutoring work.

10. ICT Use

- 10.1 Exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to yourself and others. Regard should be always given to the school's Online Safety Policy, both inside and outside of work.
- 10.2 Only take photographs / still images or video footage of pupils using approved school equipment, for purposes authorised by the school and where parental consent has been given. The resultant files from such recording or taking of photographs must be stored in accordance with the school's procedures on school equipment.
- 10.3 You must not use school equipment to access or save any inappropriate material, including but not limited to pornographic, sexual or sexually explicit material.
- 10.4 Do not share your personal IT equipment, for example smartphone, iPad/tablet with a pupil unless with prior permission of the Headteacher and/or where this is agreed as part of lesson planning or educational provision.
- 10.5 Do not access any personal material stored on your computer, smartphone, tablet in the presence of pupils.

11. Social Media

- 11.1 Be aware that anything you post online, either at work or outside of work, may be shared and/or viewed by those outside of your control and can potentially affect your reputation and/or the reputation of the school and is ultimately your responsibility.
- 11.2 You should exercise caution in your use of social media and/or any other web-based presence that you may have, your language and conduct on such sites, including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts established by others.
- 11.3 You should report to the Headteacher if you have any concerns in regard to social media, either via contact you have received, or material you have seen or been party to.

- 11.4 As a member of the school and wider education community, you should exercise caution in posting comments about or relating to other schools and/or persons connected to other schools.
- 11.5 Only contact pupils via school authorised mechanisms. At no time should personal telephone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with pupils.
- 11.6 Do not engage in any inappropriate use of social media sites which may bring yourself, the school, or the school community into disrepute. To this end, you should ensure that you adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles you may have.
- 11.7 Do not 'befriend' or accept 'friend requests', or invitations to 'like' or comment on pages or similar, from pupils or parents/carers of the school, other than in exceptional circumstances for staff who may have family members who are pupils or where there is a genuine relationship, such as family and/or close family friends.
- 11.8 It is not advisable to identify yourself as an employee of the school on any social network other than with prior permission of the Headteacher.
- 11.9 You should not respond to comments posted about the school or any persons connected to the school on any social media or online platform. In these circumstances you should bring such comments to the attention of the Headteacher.

12. Confidentiality

- 12.1 It is contrary to the General Data Protection Regulations to reveal confidential information about pupils or their parents/carers except to colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil.
- 12.2 You should not discuss any action or incident which you have witnessed during the course of your duties, and which needs to remain confidential, with parent/carers or members of the community outside of school, for example a pupil behaviour incident. In these circumstances, disclosure to colleagues should be where you have authorisation to do so and on a 'need to know' basis.
- 12.3 If you are in any doubt as to whether to share information you have become aware of, you must consult the Headteacher or the school's Data Protection Officer.

13. Dress and Appearance

- 13.1 You must dress in a manner that is appropriate to a professional role, and which, promotes a professional image. Clothing with political or other contentious or offensive slogans is not permitted.

POLICY HISTORY

Policy Date	Summary of change	Contact	Version / Implementation Date
January 2016	New Policy	HR ONE	27 November 2013
July 2022	General update including reformat. New section specifically relating to Social Media and inclusion of reference to tutoring in s.9	HR ONE	July 2022

Appendix 1

Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviour

Examples of Acceptable Behaviour

People behave acceptably when they:

- Afford dignity, trust and respect for everyone and themselves;
- Have awareness of the effects of their behaviour on others and only make reasonable and manageable demands;
- Communicate honestly and openly, clearly stating what they need and expect of others;
- Provide and are receptive to honest feedback based on evidence; and
- Challenge discriminatory language and behaviour in an appropriate way.

Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour:

- Using aggressive language, threatening, ridiculing, ignoring people or repeatedly shouting;
- Telephoning people at home unnecessarily (for example, demanding work when the person is absent due to sickness or ill health);
- Focusing only on weaknesses;
- Bringing up details of someone's private life inappropriately;
- Leaving impossibly long lists of tasks and making unreasonable demands;
- Criticising people or maliciously gossiping about them in their absence;
- Ridiculing or demeaning someone – picking on them or setting them up to fail;
- Comments or jokes, about distinctive peoples and nationalities;
- Frequent comments about aspects of physical appearance or using forms of address that are demeaning;
- Threatening or implying, without reason, that, as a colleague, you will cause the person to lose his/her job or fail to get a promotion or suffer some other form of career difficulty or financial disadvantage;
- Coercing someone to join the harassment/bullying of another person;
- Excluding or marginalising someone or refusing to engage with them appropriately.

This list is not exhaustive. It is simply a guide to help individuals consider their own and others behaviour and gain understanding of what behaviours are unacceptable in the workplace.

Standards Expected of Employees

The standards expected of all employees include but are not limited to:

- Maintaining standards of behaviour in keeping with the interests and standing of the school. This includes behaviour outside of working hours and in any form that is visible to the public, including social networking or any other electronic medium
- Devoting full attention while at work to the duties of their position and in doing so acting with responsibility, good judgement and in good faith
- Carrying out any reasonable instructions given by those with authority to do so
- Not divulging to any unauthorised person or making personal use of confidential information connected with the school, either intentionally or through negligent behaviour
- Observing the rules, regulations and instructions adopted by the school
- Following appropriate safeguarding procedures

- Participating fully in any investigation into alleged incidents and/or allegations including attending meetings as directed
- Using electronic communications appropriately
- Ensuring that information brought to light as a result of any investigation is treated with discretion
- Carrying out their role consistently with any standards set by their appropriate professional body
- Taking steps to address any unacceptable behaviour
- Treating colleagues and third parties with dignity and respect.

In addition to the above, the expectations of those employed in management roles are to:

- Ensure the standards expected from all employees are role-modelled, monitored and managed effectively
- Effectively manage all applicable statutory and non-statutory obligations
- Appropriately manage all alleged incidents and/or allegations.

This list is not exhaustive.

Appendix 2

Relationships with pupils outside of work declaration

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby members of staff are known to pupils outside of work. Examples include membership of sports clubs, family connections, or private tutoring.

You must declare any relationship outside of school that you have with pupils.

You are not required to declare that you know pupils through either living in the same area as the school or where your own child(ren) attends the school and is in a friendship group with particular pupils although you should make the Headteacher aware of this informally.

Employee's Name	Pupil Name	Relationship

I can confirm that I am fully aware of the code of conduct relating to contact out of school with pupils in line with this policy.

If I am tutoring a pupil outside of school I am aware that the following must be adhered to:-

- I do not, at any point, teach the child in question as part of my daily timetable - this is a stipulation of such tutoring
- I emphasise to parents that this is done completely independently of the school
- No monies come through the school at any point, informally (e.g. via the child) or formally
- No private tutoring is to take place on the school premises

I confirm that if these circumstances change at any time I will complete a new form to ensure the school are aware of any relationships.

Signed

Date

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Headteacher.

Appendix 3

Raising concerns about a staff member, supply teacher, volunteer, or contractor

If you have concerns about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, volunteer, or contractor), or an allegation is made about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor) posing a risk of harm to children, speak to the Headteacher as soon as possible. If the concerns/allegations are about the headteacher, speak to the Chair of Governors.

The Headteacher / Chair of Governors will decide whether the harm threshold as set out in KCSiE 2022 (see below) has been met. Where this is the case, the Whistleblowing Policy will be followed.

Allegations that may meet the threshold of harm include where it is alleged that anyone working in the school, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors 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 – this includes behaviour taking place both inside and outside of school*

If the Headteacher / Chair of Governors is in any doubt as to whether a concern meets the harm threshold, they will consult the local authority designated officer (LADO).

Where concerns do not meet the harm threshold, the Headteacher / Chair of Governors will follow the procedure for Low Level Concerns as set out in this document.

Low Level Concerns: Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold

This procedure applies to all concerns (including allegations) about members of staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors, which do not meet the harm threshold set out above.

Concerns may arise through, for example:

- Suspicion
- Complaint
- Safeguarding concern or allegation from another member of staff
- Disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside the school
- Pre-employment vetting checks

Pathfield School recognise the importance of responding to and dealing with any concerns in a timely manner to safeguard the Pathfield School welfare of children.

Definition of low-level concerns

The term 'low-level' concern is any concern – no matter how small – that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and
- Does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the designated officer at the local authority

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- Being overly friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- Humiliating pupils

Sharing low-level concerns

Pathfield School recognise the importance of creating a culture of openness, trust and transparency to encourage all staff to confidentially share low-level concerns so that they can be addressed appropriately.

Pathfield School will create this culture by:

- Ensuring staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others
- Empowering staff to share any low-level concerns as per the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Empowering staff to self-refer
- Addressing unprofessional behaviour and supporting the individual to correct it at an early stage
- Providing a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised
- Helping to identify any weaknesses in the school's safeguarding system

Responding to low-level concerns

If the concern is raised via a third party, the Headteacher will collect evidence where necessary by speaking:

- Directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously
- To the individual involved and any witnesses

The Headteacher will use the information collected to categorise the type of behaviour and determine any further action, in line with the school's Staff Code of Conduct. The

Headteacher will be the ultimate decision-maker in respect of all low-level concerns, though they may wish to collaborate with the DSL.

Record keeping

All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing. In addition to details of the concern raised, records will include the context in which the concern arose, any action taken and the rationale for decisions and action taken.

Records will be:

- Kept confidential, held securely, and comply with the DPA 2018 and UK GDPR
- Reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, Pathfield School will decide on a course of action, either through our disciplinary procedures or, where a pattern of behaviour moves from a concern to meeting the harms threshold as described in section 1 of this appendix, Pathfield School will refer it to the designated officer at the local authority
- Retained at least until the individual leaves employment at the school

Where a low-level concern relates to a supply teacher or contractor, Pathfield School will notify the individual's employer, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

References

Pathfield School will not include low-level concerns in references unless:

- The concern (or group of concerns) has met the threshold for referral to the designated officer at the local authority and is found to be substantiated; and/or
- The concern (or group of concerns) relates to issues which would ordinarily be included in a reference, such as misconduct or poor performance