

Professional Conduct Policy



Normand Croft Community School

An International Family of Learners

Agreed and adopted by: Finance and Resources

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Policy revisions :



Professional Conduct Policy – This policy works in conjunction with and alongside all our other policies.

In particular, this policy should be read in conjunction with

- **Staff Handbook**
- **Safeguarding and Child Protection policy**
- **Low level concern policy**
- **Mental health and wellbeing policy**
- **Appraisal policy**
- **Capability policy**
- **Staff disciplinary policy and procedure**
- **Grievance policy**
- **Whistleblowing policy**

All staff are expected to follow the staff professional conduct policy. Failure to do so may lead to a letter of management guidance or disciplinary action, which in some circumstances, may include dismissal.

1. Introduction

- a. At Normand Croft Community School, we see ourselves as a 'Family of International Learners' and believe in creating a whole school culture that is safe and inclusive. Our Professional Conduct Policy was written after consultation with all members of staff and is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school staff are expected to observe. School staff are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that models the highest possible standards for all the children within the school. As a member of our school community, each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside of working hours.
- b. Our shared values and our three whole school expectations (rules); be safe, be kind, be the best that you can be underpin the aims of this policy to develop a happy, friendly, secure and well-disciplined atmosphere and to encourage a caring, respectful and trusting relationship between all children and adults. This code of conduct sets out the key principles for the creation and maintenance of a safe, positive and professional school culture.
- c. All staff employed under Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Employment have a statutory obligation to adhere to the 'Teachers' Standards 2012' and in relation to this policy, Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct.

2. Our Code of Conduct

- a. ***All staff are expected to follow the school's policies and procedures:***

- i. pupils and staff are expected to work together to build a school whose relationships are characterised by mutual and appropriate respect
- ii. act in accordance with the spirit and detail of the school's policies
- iii. praise and building on the positive should always come first. Where firmness/reminders of our expectations is necessary, this should be exercised calmly, and staff should avoid shouting at pupils/colleagues unless there is an immediate health and safety risk. The school behaviour policy and associated documents establish expectations and approved sanctions.
- iv. all new staff will be issued with a copy of these policies, and any behaviour concerns should be dealt with in line with them.
- v. where a member of staff is having difficulties managing pupil behaviour, they should discuss this matter with the Deputy Head Teacher, Senior Lead for Inclusion and SENDCo at the earliest opportunity.

b. All staff are expected to demonstrate our shared values of excellence, responsibility and respect, independence, determination, unity and trust and a growth mindset:

- i. at Normand Croft Community School, shared values are central to the way we work with each other and with children. It is essential that staff model values in their working lives.
- ii. all staff are responsible for modelling these values to others including staff and parents as well as pupils.
- iii. these are the six key values we have selected to focus on: excellence, responsibility & respect, determination, independence, unity and trust.
- iv. please take every opportunity to promote these in your classrooms and in your interactions with children in all aspects of school life:
- v. relationships between all staff should be characterised by our shared values and support our values led curriculum; this means valuing all contributions, acknowledging difference, demonstrating a growth mindset and working together to build a climate of continuous improvement
- vi. courtesy, empathy, consideration, professionalism, humour, resilience, and actively seeking to work as a 'team player' are all important elements of being an effective member of the staff team at Normand Croft.
- vii. every member of staff has a responsibility to behave in such a way as to not cause upset or offence to others; support the caring, child-centred ethos in our school
- viii. when there may be differences of opinion or challenge and where differences occur, they should be dealt with calmly, professionally and fairly by all staff
- ix. all staff are expected to take full responsibility for their own behaviour and actions.
- x. all staff, irrespective of job role, should be polite, helpful and professional towards each other, our families, our local community and service users

c. All staff are expected to behave professionally:

- i. all staff, irrespective of job role, should be polite, helpful and professional towards each other.
- ii. all staff should carry out tasks to the best of their ability, taking pride in their work.

- iii. all staff need to be aware that they are representing our school when they attend internal and external events e.g. professional development meetings, visits to places of interest, other schools etc.
- iv. all staff are expected to be punctual and well-prepared.
- v. it is expected that non-teaching staff arrive 5 minutes before their official start time so that they can start their contracted hours promptly.
- vi. teaching staff should arrive no later than 8.30 a.m. and leave no earlier than 4.00 p.m. occasionally, there may be reasons where this is not possible, in which case you must make arrangements with your line manager
- vii. all staff are expected to follow the school's communication processes e.g. ensure events are in the school diary; diary dates are noted; class teams communicate effectively with one another about timetable changes etc.
- viii. all absence should be genuine and staff are expected to complete the relevant absence forms and give these to the school business manager along with any fitness for work certificates, within 5 days of returning to work; failure to do so may result in the absence being unpaid
- ix. following absence, return to work meetings will take place
- x. the school does not concern itself with the private lives of its staff unless they affect its effective operation or its reputation
- xi. members of staff who are relatives or who have a close personal relationship should not normally have a supervisory, assessing or authorising relationship with each other
- xii. employees must inform their line manager if they have a close personal relationship with another employee or a client or customer of the school that could be considered by colleagues, pupils or others, as impacting on the way they conduct themselves at work.
- xiii. staff are expected to dress appropriately and professionally; distressed, faded denim or overly casual clothes do not reflect our shared value of excellence
- xiv. all staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risk to themselves and others.
- xv. staff must not use social media with pupils or former pupils or parents
- xvi. staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute.

d. Conduct outside of work

- i. staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community. Any such conduct could lead to dismissal. In particular, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable and could lead to dismissal.
- ii. staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others
staff must not use social media e.g. with pupils, parents or former pupils and parents
staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute.
It is recommended that adults ensure that all possible privacy settings are activated to prevent pupils from making contact on personal profiles and to prevent pupils from

accessing photo albums or other personal information which may appear on social networking sites.

adults are personally responsible for what they communicate on social media and must bear in mind that what is published might be read by staff, pupils, parents and carers, the general public, future employers and friends and family for a long time.

Adults must ensure that their online profiles are consistent with the professional image expected by us and must not post material that damages the reputation of the School, or which causes concern about their suitability to work with children and young people.

Those who post material that may be considered inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or, in the case of an employee, allegations of misconduct that may be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure. Even where it is made clear that the writer's views on such topics do not represent those of the School, such comments are inappropriate.

It is acknowledged that adults may have genuine friendships and social contact with parents or carers of pupils, independent of the professional relationship. Adults should, however: – Inform senior management of any relationship with a parent/carer where this extends beyond the usual parent/carer/professional relationship – Advise senior management of any regular social contact they have with a pupil or parent/carer, which could give rise to concern – Inform senior management of any requests or arrangements where parents/carers wish to use their services outside of the workplace e.g., babysitting, tutoring – Always approve any planned social contact with pupils or parents/carers with senior colleagues, for example, when it is part of a reward scheme – If a parent/carer seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the adult should exercise their professional judgment and should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny 8.7. Some employees may, as part of their professional role, be required to support a parent or carer. If that person comes to depend upon the employee or seeks support outside of their professional role this should be discussed with senior management and, where necessary, referrals made to the appropriate support agency.

- iii. staff must only use their school email account when communicating electronically with parents and colleagues.
- iv. staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school and is not to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance.
- v. all members of staff must declare any business interests outside of school that may be connected either to the supply of goods / services to the school or be rewarded through association with the school.

e. All staff are expected to exercise confidentiality:

- i. all staff are expected to exercise due confidentiality towards matters that are either discussed or overheard
- ii. where staff have access to confidential information about pupils or their parents or carers, staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil/student
- iii. behaviour and safeguarding incidents involving children should be treated confidentially so as to protect the dignity and privacy of the child and to avoid children becoming stigmatised

- iv. staff have an obligation to share with their line manager or the Head Teacher, any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a pupil
- v. staff must never promise a pupil confidentiality however, reassurance should be given that the information will be treated sensitively
- vi. all staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential (e.g. where a pupil/student is bullied by another pupil/student/member of staff), this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate school procedure. It must not be discussed outside the school, including with the pupil's/student's parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the school except with a member of staff with the appropriate role and authority to deal with the matter.
- vii. gossip, rumours and making assumptions are unhelpful and detrimental to a positive culture and will be challenged
- viii. employees with a job description that includes intimate care duties will have appropriate training and written guidance including a written care plan for any pupil who could be expected to require intimate care.
- ix. staff should adhere to the school's intimate and personal care including nappy changing policies. No other adult should be involved in intimate care duties except in an emergency and any changes to the intimate care plan should be made in writing and without delay, even if the change in arrangements is temporary.
- x. a signed record should be kept of all intimate and personal care tasks undertaken and, where these have been carried out in another room, include times left and returned. Employees should not assist with personal or intimate care tasks that the pupil is able to undertake independently.

f. All staff are expected to seek to establish positive relationship with parents:

- i. staff should aim to create a welcoming and positive relationship with parents whilst maintaining professional boundaries
- ii. all parental concerns should be treated seriously and dealt with promptly
- iii. all staff should remain calm and listen to parents' concerns and at all times should seek to de-escalate situations and resolve problems
- iv. if necessary, a member of staff may politely call a meeting to an end
- v. if you need to have a sensitive or difficult conversation with a parent, ensure that you offer to talk to the parent where you will not be overheard – (the 'goldfish bowl' is ideal) and make sure that you remain calm and assertive
- vi. if you would like support from a colleague or SLT you just need to ask. 99.9 % of the time parents just want to be listened to and what can seem like a big issue can usually be resolved quickly and amicably once both parties are able to listen and discuss things calmly
- vii. staff should be mindful of the implications of sharing your birthday with children and should not accept birthday gifts from families
- viii. it is against the law for public servants to take bribes
- ix. adults 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 children or parents/carers wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to adults 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.

g. All staff should be aware of what physical contact with pupils is appropriate:

- i. we do not operate a 'no touch policy' as we recognise there are times when it is necessary and appropriate for staff to have physical contact
- ii. we take into account the following advice
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444051/Use_of_reasonable_force_advice_Reviewed_July_2015.pdf
- iii. staff are allowed to comfort a child who is hurt/distressed in a manner appropriate to the age of the child. This may include holding a child's hand, placing a hand on or around a child's shoulder or accepting a hug.
- iv. adults should not initiate any physical contact unnecessarily
- v. we do not offer or encourage kisses from children including our youngest as this is not appropriate in a school setting.
- vi. adults should avoid being in a room alone with a child where the door is closed.
- vii. if you need to talk to a child, either leave a door open and position yourself within sight of the door, or ask another adult to be present.
- viii. staff should only exercise physical restraint as a last resort to prevent injury to a child/ren, themselves or damage to property
- ix. children should not be picked up (unless being medically handled)
- x. where a child needs to be positively handled because there is a risk of injury or a child is behaving in an unsafe way we have members of staff who are trained in positive handling.

h. All staff should be aware that a child or colleague may develop infatuations and crushes

- i. a child or colleague may develop an infatuation with an adult who works with them.
- ii. an adult, who becomes aware (may receive a report, overhear something, or otherwise notice any sign, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant) that a child or colleague has become or maybe becoming infatuated with them or a colleague, must report this without delay to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Head Teacher so that appropriate action can be taken to avoid any hurt, distress, or embarrassment
- iii. the situation will be taken seriously, and the adult should be careful to ensure that no encouragement of any kind is given to the child or colleague.
- iv. it should also be recognised that careless and insensitive reactions may provoke false accusations
- v. examples of situations that must be reported are given below:
 - where an adult is concerned that they might be developing a relationship or colleague with a child which could have the potential to represent an abuse of trust
 - where an adult is concerned that a child or colleague is becoming attracted to them or that there is a developing attachment or dependency
 - where an adult is concerned that actions or words have been misunderstood or misconstrued by a child or colleague such that an abuse of trust might be wrongly suspected by others
 - where an adult is concerned about the apparent development of a relationship by another adult or receives information about such a relationship

i. All staff need to be aware of the policy and procedures for Safeguarding and Child Protection:

- i. all staff are expected to demonstrate a working knowledge and understanding of our safeguarding and child protection policy and know the procedures for dealing with and reporting concerns.
- ii. all staff need to have a working knowledge of Part 1 & Appendix A of the current Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance
- iii. all staff have a duty to look out for signs of physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect of pupils in the light of a child's behaviour.
- iv. it is the responsibility of all staff to ensure they are aware of individual pupil's medical needs; this includes knowing which children have allergies and ensuring that they are not put at risk. We have a no nuts policy which includes the staffroom.
- v. if a child is injured and needs hospital treatment a member of the Senior Leadership Team must be informed.
- vi. staff must pass any concerns on to the Designated or Deputy Safeguarding Leads
- vii. avoid involving yourself too closely with any issues: always pass concerns on to the senior Lead for Inclusion who is able to advise, signpost services and offer support to families.
- viii. personal gifts must not be given to children or their families/carers. this could be misinterpreted as a gesture either to bribe or groom. it might be perceived that a 'favour' of some kind is expected in return
- ix. any reward given to a child, should be consistent with the School's behaviour or rewards policy, recorded, and not based on favouritism.
- x. care should be taken when selecting children for specific activities, jobs, privileges and when children are excluded from an activity in order to avoid perceptions of favouritism or injustice - methods of selection and exclusion should be subject to clear, fair, and agreed criteria.

j. All staff need to exploit the potential of the curriculum to develop a proactive approach to behaviour and child protection issues:

- i. all staff are expected to take a proactive approach towards both child protection and behaviour policies, through the creation of a positive environment where all children are respected
- ii. this includes not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- iii. some areas of the curriculum can include or raise a subject matter which is sexually explicit, of a political, cultural, religious or otherwise sensitive nature.
- iv. the curriculum can sometimes include or lead to an unplanned discussion about the subject matter of a sexually explicit, political, cultural, religious or otherwise sensitive nature
- v. responding to children's questions can require careful judgement and adults must take guidance in these circumstances from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- vi. adults must not enter into or encourage inappropriate discussion about sexual, political or religious activity or behaviour or, discussions that may offend or harm others

- vii. adults should take care to protect children from the risk of radicalisation and should act in accordance with the advice given under Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE and accordingly must not express any prejudicial views or attempt to influence or impose their personal values, attitudes or beliefs on children
- viii. the expression of extremist views by staff will not be tolerated and should be reported to the Head Teacher or Chair of Governors who will contact the relevant authorities if necessary.

k. All staff are expected to treat resources responsibly, and exercise due financial care:

- i. all staff have a responsibility to look after the resources of the school; this includes not wasting resources unnecessarily (including physical resources and those such as heat/electricity); following the principles of 'reduce, re-use, recycle' where appropriate;
- ii. all staff have a responsibility to keep the school environment (classrooms, resources, offices and shared spaces, staff room) safe, organised, tidy and clean and actively follow the principles of 'reduce, re-use recycle'
- iii. all staff are expected to turn off computers, lights, shut doors and windows before leaving at the end of the school day
- iv. staff must ensure that they use the public funds entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner, ensuring value for money for the school community
- v. staff must make all purchases in line with the school's financial procedures, if in doubt they should seek advice from the School Business Manager as to the appropriate procedure to follow
- vi. all money handled should be clearly labelled and sent as soon as practical to the school office.
- vii. all staff are expected to actively teach children to treat resources responsibly and to set up routines to ensure children are able and willing to do this.

l. All staff need to be aware of how to record/report concerns ("whistleblowing").

- i. where staff have any concerns about another member of staff, these should be reported immediately to the Head Teacher.
- ii. where the concern is about the Head Teacher, it should be reported directly to the Chair of Governors.
- iii. all concerns will be investigated thoroughly and confidentially, and appropriate action taken.
- iv. all adults must report concerns and incidents in accordance with the guidance set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE and/or the Managing Allegations of Abuse Against Staff and Volunteers Policy.
- v. in the event of an allegation being made, or an incident being witnessed, the relevant information should be immediately recorded and reported to the Head Teacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead, as appropriate
- vi. if any concerns are raised via a third party, the Head Teacher, or Designated Safeguarding Lead should collect as much evidence as possible
- vii. where low-level concerns are raised the Head Teacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead should speak to the individual involved and any witnesses and consider the matter under the Disciplinary Procedure which may result in informal or formal action
- viii. an employee who fails to bring a matter of concern to the attention of senior leadership and/or the relevant agencies will be subject to disciplinary action.

m. All staff are expected to take care of their physical and mental wellbeing, including knowing how to access counselling and support – see Mental health and wellbeing policy

- i. all staff are encouraged to look after their physical and mental wellbeing - this includes managing time effectively and being self-aware in order to maintain a healthy work-life balance
- ii. we take issues of work related stress seriously, and look to provide appropriate support and help in these cases
- iii. we have a mental health/wellbeing section in the Professional Development Library located in the staff room
- iv. staff needing support are encouraged to discuss issues and concerns with their line manager in the first instance or with the Co Head Teacher or Senior Lead for Inclusion who are mental health first aiders
- v. support can be provided internally by the mental health first aiders who are available to listen to any member of staff who has concerns about their physical or mental wellbeing or externally through the Occupational Health Service or other signposted support groups.
- vi. the Education Support Partnership offers a free and confidential helpline 24/7 on **08000 562561** where trained counsellors will listen without judgement and will help you think through the problems you are facing, whether personal or professional, to find a way forwards and feel better.

The following websites offer helpful support and guidance:

<https://www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk/helping-you>

<https://www.actionforhappiness.org>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/>

<https://www.headspace.com/>

4. Conclusion

All staff are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. By adhering to this professional conduct policy, staff can be assured they are playing their part in safeguarding pupils and protecting themselves and each other

I have read the staff professional conduct policy, handbook and related policies and understand that I am responsible for ensuring the policies are implemented effectively. I will ask my line manager for clarification if necessary.

Name:

Date:

Signature: