



The Stalyhill Schools' Federation

Staff Code of Conduct Policy

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Code of Conduct

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1.1 Introduction

Stalyhill Schools' Federation is required to set out a Code of Conduct for all employees.

This code of conduct should be read and understood in the context of:

- Your agreed job description
- Any professional standards that apply to your role, e.g. Teachers' Standards
- School policies (including Child Protection and Safeguarding, Health and Safety Principles, Filtering & Monitoring and E: Safety)
- Statutory requirements and regulations that apply to schools – e.g. Keeping Children Safe in Education

1.2 Purpose, scope and principles

A Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the minimum standards of behaviour all school staff are expected to observe, and the Headteacher should notify staff of this code and the expectations therein. This document is provided as a protection to staff so that they are clear about professional boundaries. School staff are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the pupils within the school. This document is provided as a protection to staff as it demonstrates transparency of expectation and seeks to avoid any potential misunderstanding.

1.3 Setting an example

All staff who work in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be used as a model by pupils. All staff must, therefore, demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same. All staff must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct. This Code helps all staff to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable.

1.4 Honesty and integrity

Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.

1.5 Conduct of adults in the workplace

Staff should act with professionalism at all times whilst at work. Employees should ensure that they do not engage in any behaviour or conversations that could be viewed as being discriminatory, offensive or abusive to any other person - child or adult.

Any behaviour that may be deemed to constitute workplace bullying will be dealt with in accordance with Tameside Local Authority's HR policy and procedures.

Whilst it is accepted that there may be times that consensual physical contact between adults may take place in the workplace, for example; giving a colleague a hug, physical contact should never be secretive, for the gratification of an individual, cross a professional boundary or represent a misuse of authority. Adults should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. They should report and record any incident with this potential.

See also Section 3 – Professional relationships

1.6 Conduct outside work

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. In particular, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable. Staff must exercise

caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others (see Acceptable Use Policy).

Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school nor be to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance.

1.7 Disciplinary action

All staff need to recognise that failure to meet the standards of behaviour and conduct outlined in the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

2 Safe working practice

In line with **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024**, concerns or allegations against staff and adults in school will be considered under two categories;

1. Allegations that may meet the harms threshold
2. Concerns that do not meet the harms threshold.

In the case of an allegation being made that may meet the harms threshold, the school will follow the procedures laid out in Part 4, Section 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023. The school will work closely with the LADO (and the police or CSC as necessary) where an adult is believed to have;

- 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 he or she 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.

In the case of concerns that do not meet the harms threshold, or 'low-level concerns', the school will;

- Promote a culture of openness, truth and transparency within the school, which enables concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour to be identified early and ensures that adults working in or on behalf of the school or college are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the ethos and values of the institution;
- Have systems in place to ensure that all concerns raised about all adults working in or on behalf of the school (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately;
- Have systems in place to ensure that all concerns about adults (including allegations that do not meet the harms threshold (see Part Four - Section one and two) are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately.
- Use **CPOMs 'Staff Safe'** as a vehicle for reporting and recording all low-level concerns, ensuring that they are recorded and dealt with in line with the procedures laid out in Part 4, Section 2 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023.

Examples of concerning behaviour by adults in school could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- 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.

This Code of Conduct document outlines these behaviours and actions in more detail and provides a clear set of professional boundaries that staff are expected to act within and are in accordance with the ethos and values of Stalyhill Schools' Federation.

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.

See Appendix 1 – Flow Chart of reporting and managing Low-Level Concerns (LLC)

2.1 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 children safe and to protect them from sexual, physical and emotional harm. Children have a right to be safe and treated with respect and dignity. It follows that trusted adults are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils. Failure to do so may be regarded as professional neglect.

A duty of care 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.

This means that adults 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 own actions and behaviour*
- *report any concerns about a pupil to the Designated Safeguarding Lead*

2.2 Confidentiality

Members of staff and volunteers may have access to confidential information about pupils and families in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities. In some circumstances staff may be given highly sensitive information. They should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil or their family for their own, or others' advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other services). Information must never be used to humiliate, intimidate or embarrass the pupil.

Confidential information about a child or family should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need-to-know basis. In circumstances where the child'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 child, 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 child protection responsibilities. If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential, he or she should speak directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection. All personal information should be shared and stored in line with data protection regulations. Any media or legal enquiries must be passed to a member of the leadership team.

This means that adults should:

- *be clear about when information can be shared and in what circumstances it is appropriate to do so*
- *be clear about how to share and store personal information in line with data protection regulations*
- *treat information they receive about pupils in a discreet and confidential manner*
- *seek advice from a senior member of staff if they are in any doubt about sharing information they hold or which has been requested of them*
- *know who the Designated Safeguarding Leads are for Child Protection*

2.3 Data Protection

Our school aims to ensure that all personal data collected about staff, pupils, parents, governors, visitors and other individuals is collected, stored and processed in accordance with the expected provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) as set out in the Data Protection Bill. All staff that come in to contact with or handle personal data as part of their role in school are expected to complete online Data Protection training. Staff are also issued with the following general guidance and reminders;

- **Personal Data** – The definition of 'personal data' is any information that can identify a living individual. This may be as simple as their initials.
- **iMacs** – Log into all iMacs using your own login user name and password. Ensure you always log out or lock the screen using Ctrl-Alt-Del when leaving the iMac for any length of time.
- **Laptops** – Ensure when using your laptop, you are logged in with your own log in. Close the lid to lock the laptop when you leave it for any length of time.

- Pen Drives – Should not be used to store school information. Staff should instead store work or information on the secure Staff Shared drive on the school server. This information can then be accessed both in school and at home via the VPN. If using a pen drive in exceptional circumstances, personal data must be saved to the encrypted area of the pen drive.
- iPads – Log into staff iPads using own password/PIN code. Close down when not in use.
- Individual Liability – Individual members of staff could have action taken against them if a breach or error can be linked back to them; it is thus more important than ever to look after personal data in your care.
- Homeworking – Data Protection doesn't stop you from taking work home. If you do this however, you should consider the risks and ensure you have done all you can to mitigate those risks, especially when taking work out of the secure school site.
- Special Category – Some data falls into 'special category' data and requires additional reasons to use the data. This includes photographs, videos and CCTV. Please take additional care when using this type of data.
- Emails – All emails sent that contain 'personal data' must be sent with encryption. This can be by Egress software or by using the Microsoft E\$ system.

2.4 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 child or young person 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. Such judgements should always be shared with a senior member of staff who may share with the parent/carer. In undertaking these actions, individuals will be seen to be acting reasonably. Adults should always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably.

This means that where no specific guidance exists adults should:

- *discuss the circumstances that informed their action, or their proposed action, with a senior leader. 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;*
- *record any areas of disagreement about the actions taken and if necessary refer to a higher authority;*
- *record discussions and actions taken with their justifications; and*
- *always alert a senior leader where pupils have tried to engage them in discussions of an inappropriate nature.*

2.5 Power and positions of trust

As a result of their knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, all adults working with children in educational establishments are in positions of trust in relation to the young people in their care. A relationship between a member of staff and a pupil/young person cannot be a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people and staff have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification. Adults should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. They should 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 illegal 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 adults should not:

- use their position to gain access to information for their own advantage and/or a child's or family's detriment*
- use their position to intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce or undermine pupils*
- use their status and standing to form or promote relationships with children, which are of a sexual nature or may become so*

2.6 Propriety and behaviour

All adults have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children and young people. 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. This means that adults should not make sexual remarks to a pupil (including email, text messages, phone or letter), discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of, pupils. The behaviour of an adult's partner or other family members may raise concerns and require careful consideration by an employer as to whether there may be potential risk to pupils in the workplace.

This means that adults should not:

- behave in a manner, which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or act as a role model*
- make (or encourage others to make) unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate, or might be interpreted as such*

This means that adults should:

- be aware that behaviour in their personal lives may impact upon their work with pupils*
- follow any codes deemed appropriate by the school or Local Authority*
- understand that behaviour and actions of their family may raise questions about their suitability to work with pupils*

2.7 Alcohol and substance use

It is deemed unacceptable for any member of staff to be in contact with children when they are under the influence of alcohol or any substance which may impair their actions or reactions. Should an accident or injury occur when a child is being supervised by an adult that has consumed alcohol or taken such a substance, both the adult in question and the school as a whole could be deemed negligible and subject to court proceedings.

This means that adults should not:

- bring alcohol or other substances onto school premises with a view to consuming them during school time*
- consume alcohol during lunchtimes spent at home or off-site if they intend to return to work in the afternoon.*

2.8 Dress and appearance

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, adults should consider the manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role, which may be different to that adopted in their personal life. Adults should ensure that they are dressed appropriately for the tasks and the work they undertake. Those who dress in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations.

This means that adults should wear clothing which:

- *exhibits the importance of the job and is appropriate for the role*
- *is smart and practical*
- *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*
- *is not considered to be discriminatory and is culturally sensitive*

Staff should note:

- *Jeans are not considered acceptable, unless participating in a trip or visit that requires harder wearing clothes (e.g. educational visits).*
- *When leading physical activities and/or PE lessons (including Sports Day), we change into suitable clothing for that lesson (e.g. training shoes and track-suit).*
- *Do not wear excessive amounts of jewellery and understand our own Health and Safety responsibilities.*

2.9 Use of personal living space

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 firmly established and agreed with parents/carers and the Headteacher. It is not appropriate for any school to expect or request that a private living space be used for work with pupils. Under no circumstances should pupils assist with chores or tasks in the home of an adult who works with them. Neither should they be asked to do so by friends or family of that adult.

This means that adults 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*
- *refrain from asking pupils to undertake personal jobs/errands*

2.10 Gifts, rewards and favouritism (please read in conjunction with the school's Gifts and Hospitality policy)

It is against the law for public servants to take bribes. Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.

The giving of gifts or rewards to pupils should be part of an agreed policy for supporting positive behaviour or recognising particular achievements. Where specific gifts are given, it should be discussed with a senior manager. Any gifts should be openly given and not be based on favouritism. Adults need to be aware that the giving of gifts can be misinterpreted by others as a gesture either to bribe or groom a young person.

Staff should exercise care when selecting pupils for events, productions, teams etc. Methods of selection and exclusion should always be subject to clear, agreed criteria.

Care should also be taken to ensure that adults do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead to the giver to expect preferential treatment.

There are occasions when children 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. Similarly, it is inadvisable for staff to give such personal gifts 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.

This means that adults should:

- *ensure that gifts received or given in situations which may be misconstrued are declared*
- *generally, only give gifts to an individual young person as part of an agreed reward system*

- *where giving gifts other than as above, ensure that these are of insignificant value*
- *ensure that selection processes which concern pupils are fair and that wherever practicable these are undertaken and agreed by more than one member of staff*

2.11 Infatuations

Staff need to be aware that it is not uncommon for pupils to be strongly attracted to a member of staff and/or develop a heterosexual or homosexual infatuation. All situations should be responded to sensitively to maintain the dignity of all concerned. Staff should also be aware that such circumstances always carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against staff. This means that adults should report any indications (verbal, written or physical) that suggest a pupil may be infatuated with a member of staff

A member of staff, who becomes aware that a pupil may be infatuated with themselves or a colleague, should discuss this at the earliest opportunity with the Headteacher so that appropriate action can be taken. In this way, steps can be taken to avoid hurt and distress for all concerned.

This means that adults should:

- *report and record any incidents or indications (verbal, written, electronic or physical) that suggest a child or young person may have developed an infatuation with a member of staff*
- *always acknowledge and maintain professional boundaries*

2.12 Communication with pupils (including the use of technology)

It is accepted that the effective use of technology brings benefits to learning. Adults must ensure that they establish and adhere to safe and responsible practices. All adults must adhere to the school's Acceptable Use Policy.

Communication between pupils and adults by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology. Adults should not share personal information with a child or young person. They should not request or respond to, any personal information from a child or young person, 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 be circumspect in their communications with children so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation or their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming. They should not give their personal contact details to pupils, unless the need to do so is agreed with the Headteacher. Email, messaging or use of social media sites between adults and pupils outside agreed protocols may lead to disciplinary and/or criminal investigations.

This means that adults should:

- *read, understand and adhere to the agreed E-safety policy and Acceptable IT Use Agreement*
- *ensure that personal social networking sites are set at private and pupils are never listed as approved contacts*
- *never use or access social networking sites of pupils*
- *not give their personal contact details to pupils*
- *only use equipment provided by the academy to communicate with pupils*
- *only make contact with pupils for professional reasons and in accordance with the agreed policy*
- *recognise that text messaging should only be used as part of an agreed protocol*
- *not use internet or web-based communication to send personal messages to a child*

2.13 Social contact

Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils 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 and be aware that such social contact could be misconstrued as grooming.

There will be occasions when there is social contact between pupils and staff, where, for example, the parent and teacher are part of the same social circle. These contacts however, will be easily recognised and openly acknowledged.

It is recognised that staff can support a parent who may be in particular difficulty. Care needs to be exercised in those situations where the parent comes to depend upon the staff member for support outside their professional role. This situation should be discussed with the Headteacher.

This means that adults should:

- *have no secret social contact with pupils or their parents*
- *consider the appropriateness of their social contact according to their role and nature of their work*
- *always seek approval from senior leadership for any planned social contact with pupils, for example, when it is part of a reward scheme or pastoral care programme*
- *advise senior leadership of any social contact they have with a pupil which may give rise to concern*
- *report and record any situation, which they feel, might compromise the school or their own professional standing*
- *understand that some communications may be called into question and need to be justified*

2.14 Sexual contact

All adults should clearly understand the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their contacts with pupils. Intimate or sexual relationships between children/young people and the adults who work with them will be regarded as a grave breach of trust. Allowing or encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which might lead to a sexual relationship is also unacceptable. Any sexual activity between an adult and child/young person will be regarded as a criminal offence and will always be a matter for disciplinary action.

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, and manipulate that relationship so sexual abuse can take place. Adults should be aware that consistently conferring inappropriate special attention and favour upon a child might be construed as being part of a grooming process and as such will give rise to concerns about their behaviour.

This means that adults should 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, email, social media communication, phone calls, texts, physical contact*
- *make remarks to, or about, a child/young person*
- *discuss their own sexual relationships with or in the presence of pupils*

This means that adults should:

- *ensure that their relationships with pupils clearly take place within the boundaries of a respectful professional relationship*
- *take care that their language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when dealing with adolescent boys and girls*

2.15 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 given their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Appropriate physical contact in schools may occur most often with younger pupils. Staff should use their professional judgment at all times.

If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported to the Headteacher as soon as possible.

Physical contact, which occurs regularly with an individual child or young person, is likely to raise questions unless the justification for this is part of a formally agreed plan (for example in P.E. or relation to pupils with additional need). Any such contact should be the subject of an agreed and open school policy and subject to review. Where feasible, staff should inform the child of their intentions before initiating contact. Staff should listen, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and – so far as is possible – use a level of contact which is acceptable to the child for the minimum time necessary.

Extra caution may be required where it is known that a child has suffered previous abuse or neglect. In the child's view, physical contact might be associated with such experiences and lead to staff being vulnerable to allegations of abuse. It is recognised that many such children are extremely needy and seek out inappropriate physical contact. In such circumstances staff should deter the child sensitively by helping them to understand the importance of personal boundaries. The general culture of 'limited touch' should be adapted, where appropriate, to the individual requirements of each child. Children with special needs may require more physical contact to assist their everyday learning. The arrangements should be understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the child's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny.

This means that adults should:

- *be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described*
- *never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent*
- *always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny*
- *never indulge in horseplay, tickling or fun fights*
- *always encourage children, where possible, to undertake self-care tasks independently*
- *be aware of cultural or religious views about touching and always be sensitive to issues of gender*
- *understand that physical contact in some circumstances can be easily misinterpreted*

2.16 Other activities that require physical contact

Some adults work in specific settings, e.g. sports, drama, outdoor activities or teach specific subjects such as PE or music, which from time to time may necessitate physical contact, e.g. to demonstrate a technique, adjust posture etc. Such activities should be carried out in accordance with existing codes of conduct, regulations and best practice.

Physical contact should only take place where it is essential. It should take place in an open and safe environment. The extent of contact should be made clear to the parent/carer and once agreed, should only take place with the permission of the child/young person. Contact should be relevant to the age or understanding and adults should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally.

Guidance and protocols are provided by national bodies.

This means that adults should:

- *treat children with dignity and respect and avoid contact with intimate parts of the body*
- *always explain to a child the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take*

- *seek consent of parents*
- *consider alternatives*
- *be familiar with and follow recommended guidance and protocols*
- *conduct activities where they can be seen by others*
- *be aware of gender, cultural or religious issues that may need to be considered prior to initiating physical contact*

2.17 Behaviour management

All pupils have a right to be treated with respect and dignity even in those circumstances where they display difficult or challenging behaviour. Adults should not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a child. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards a pupil is not acceptable in any situation. Any sanctions or rewards used should be part of the agreed behaviour management policy. The use of corporal punishment is not acceptable and is unlawful. Where children display difficult or challenging behaviour, adults must follow the school policy and use strategies appropriate to the circumstance and situation. The use of physical intervention can only be justified in exceptional circumstances and must be used as a last resort when other strategies have failed. Where there are ongoing behaviour challenges, the school will draw up a specific behaviour plan which should be followed.

This means that adults should:

- *work within the agreed policy which outlines rewards and sanctions*
- *not use force as a form of punishment*
- *try to defuse situations before they escalate*
- *inform parents of any behaviour management techniques used*

2.18 Use of control and physical intervention

There are circumstances in which adults working with children displaying extreme behaviours can legitimately intervene by using either non-restrictive or restrictive physical interventions. These should be used in line with the DfE guidelines and in line with individual behaviour plans.

The use of physical intervention should, wherever possible, be avoided. It should only be used to manage a child's behaviour if it is necessary to prevent personal injury to the child, other children or an adult, to prevent serious damage to property or in what would reasonably be regarded as exceptional circumstances. When physical intervention is used it should be undertaken in such a way that maintains the safety and dignity of all concerned. Under no circumstances should physical force or intervention be used as a form of punishment. The duty of care which applies to all adults working with children requires that reasonable measures are taken to prevent children being harmed. The use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence. Where there is an anticipated need to use intervention, there should be a policy in place and a specific plan to guide its use.

This means that adults should:

- *adhere to the agreed policy*
- *always seek to defuse situations*
- *always use minimum force for the shortest period necessary*
- *record and report as soon as possible after the event any incident where physical intervention has been used*

2.19 Children and young people in distress

There may be occasions when a distressed child needs comfort and reassurance and this may involve physical contact. Young children, in particular, may need immediate physical comfort. Adults should use their professional judgement to comfort or reassure a child in an age-appropriate way whilst maintaining clear professional boundaries. Where an adult has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance, or is concerned that an action may be misinterpreted, this should be reported and discussed with a senior leader.

This means that adults should:

- *consider the way in which they offer comfort and reassurance to a distressed child and do it in an age-appropriate way*
- *be circumspect in offering reassurance in one to one situations, but always record such actions in these circumstances*
- *never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent*
- *record and report situations which may give rise to concern from either party*
- *not assume that all children seek physical comfort if distressed.*

2.20 Intimate care

All children have a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of an intimate nature is required (for example assisting with toileting or removing wet/soiled clothing). A care plan should be drawn up and agreed with parents for all children who require intimate care on a regular basis. Children should be encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their own personal care as is practicable. When assistance may be required, staff should ensure that another appropriate adult is in the vicinity and is aware of the task to be undertaken. Additional vulnerabilities that may arise from a physical disability or learning difficulty should be considered with regard to individual teaching and care plans for each child. As with all arrangements for intimate care needs, agreements between the child, their parents/carers and the organisation must be negotiated, agreed and recorded. In addition, the views and/or emotional responses of children with special educational needs, regardless of age and ability must be actively sought in regular reviews of these arrangements.

This means that adults should:

- *adhere to the school or Local Authority's intimate care guidelines*
- *make other staff aware of the task being undertaken*
- *explain to the child what is happening*
- *consult with colleagues where any variation from agreed procedure/care plan is necessary*
- *record the justification for any variations to the agreed procedure/care plan and share this information with parents*

2.21 Personal care

Young people are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard young people, satisfy health and safety considerations and ensure that bullying or teasing does not occur. This supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the young people concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment. Staff should ensure they follow agreed guidelines and be mindful of the needs of the pupils.

This means that adults should:

- *avoid any physical contact when children are in a state of undress*
- *avoid any visually intrusive behaviour and where there are changing rooms announce their intention of entering*
- *follow school specific advice for supervising children whilst changing*
- *ensure that children are not changing in front of windows etc. where they could be viewed by the general public or groups of parents.*

This means that adults should not:

- *change in the same place as children*

2.22 First aid and medicine

The school has clear guidance in place to guide the administration of first aid and medicine. These should be followed. Only adults specifically trained to administer medicines to children should do so in school. Class staff should not administer any medicines other than prescribed

asthma inhalers, or in the case of a diabetic, insulin, unless given express permission to do so by the Headteacher. All medicines must come in to school via the school office, where parents will be expected to complete consent forms. Any medicines, including Calpol sachets, throat sprays etc. found in children's bags or pockets must be handed in to the office immediately. In the case of an extreme allergic reaction, the school has a general-use Epi-Pen available. All staff are trained in the use of Epi-pens and defibrillators on an annual basis.

This means that adults should:

- *follow the agreed guidelines in the 'Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions' Policy*
- *comply with necessary reporting arrangements*
- *explain to the child what is happening*
- *always act and be seen to act in the child's best interests*
- *report and record any administration of first aid*
- *direct parents to the office if they bring medicine to be administered in school time*
- *only administer medicine with the express permission of a senior leader*
- *hand in to the office any medicines found in bags or pockets*
- *have regard to any health plan which is in place*
- *know who the Paediatric First-Aiders are in school*
- *know and understand the procedures associated with administering asthma inhalers, Epi-pens, insulin etc.*

2.23 One to one situations

Staff working in one to one situations with children and young people may be more vulnerable to allegations. All staff should recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure the safety and security needs of both staff and pupils are met. Schools need to consider these issues in drawing up their school policies and offer clear training and guidance for the use of any areas of the school which place staff or children in vulnerable situations. This applies to any other activities which involve one to one situations

Senior leaders should undertake a risk assessment in relation to the nature and implications of one to one working. Any arrangements should be reviewed on a regular basis. It may be necessary to amend these to take account of particular pupil needs. This does not mean that working one-to-one is unacceptable; it just requires a proportionate risk assessment.

Meetings with pupils away from the school premises should not be permitted unless approval is obtained from their parent and the Headteacher.

This means that adults should:

- *ensure that when lone working is an integral part of their role, full and appropriate risk assessments have been conducted and agreed*
- *avoid meetings with pupils in remote, secluded areas of school*
- *ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in one to one situations*
- *inform other staff of the meeting beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by*
- *avoid use of 'engaged' or equivalent signs wherever possible. Such signs may create an opportunity for secrecy or the impression of secrecy*
- *always report any situation where a child becomes distressed or angry to a Senior Leader*
- *consider the needs and circumstances of the child/children involved*

2.24 Home visits

All work with parents/carers should, wherever possible, be undertaken in the school. There are, however, occasions, in response to specific situations, where it may be necessary to make home visits. A risk assessment should include an evaluation of any known factors regarding the child, parents and other people living in the household. Risk factors such as hostility, child protection concerns, complaints or grievances can make adults more vulnerable to an allegation. Specific

consideration should be given to visits outside office hours or in remote or secluded locations. Where little or no information is available, visits should not be made alone.

This means that adults should:

- *agree the purpose for any home visit with senior leader, unless it is classified as a routine part of the role*
- *adhere to risk management strategies*
- *make detailed records including times of arrival and departure*
- *ensure that any behaviour which gives rise to a concern is discussed with senior leader*
- *never make a home visit outside agreed working arrangements*

2.25 Transporting children

In certain situations, e.g. 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.

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 for business purposes and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded. All adults whether staff or volunteers should have satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure and barred list check.

This means that adults should:

- *plan and agree arrangements with all parties in advance, responding sensitively and flexibly to disagreements*
- *ensure where possible that they are not alone with a child*
- *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*
- *ensure that appropriate seat restraints are used on all journeys*

2.26 Educational visits and after school activities

Adults should take particular care when supervising pupils on educational visits, where the setting is less formal than the usual setting. Adults remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times and stays within clearly defined professional boundaries.

Where the visit includes overnight stays, careful consideration should be given to sleeping arrangements. Children, young people, adults and parents should be informed of these prior to the start of the visit. In all circumstances, those arranging visits must pay careful attention to ensuring safe staff/child ratios and to the gender mix of staff, especially on overnight stays.

This means that adults should:

- *plan visits in line with the agreed school policy and EVC risk assessment procedures*
- *not go on a visit unless express approval has been given*
- *undertake risk assessments prior to the visits and share with all adults accompanying the visit*
- *have parental consent for every child on the visit*
- *leave a coach register in the school office prior to departure and ensure that children remain on the designated coach for the duration of the visit*
- *never share rooms with a child unless it involves a dormitory situation and the arrangements has been previously discussed with the Headteacher.*

2.27 Photography, video and digital images

To be used in conjunction with the photo permission list.

Many school activities involve recording images. These may be undertaken as part of the curriculum, extra 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. Particular regard needs to be given when they involve young or vulnerable pupils who may be unable to question why or how the activities are taking place. Children who have been previously abused in this way may feel threatened by the use of photography, filming.

Staff should remain sensitive to any children who appear uncomfortable and should recognise the potential for misinterpretation.

Using images of children for publicity purposes requires the age - appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their legal guardians. Images should not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without such consent. The definition of a public place includes areas where visitors to the school have access.

This means that adults 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 senior management is aware that 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*
- only use school equipment (cameras, ipads etc) to take photos or videos of children*

This means that adults must not take, display or distribute images of children unless they have consent to do so. It is recommended that when using a photograph the following guidance should be followed:

- if the photograph is used, avoid naming the pupil*
- if the pupil is named, avoid using their photograph*
- schools should establish whether the image will be retained for further use*
- images should be securely stored and used only by those authorised to do so*
- images should not be taken on personal devices belonging to staff*

2.28 Access to inappropriate images and internet usage

There are no circumstances that will justify adults possessing indecent images of children. Adults who access and possess links to such websites will be viewed as a significant and potential threat to children.

Accessing, making and storing indecent images of children is illegal. This will lead to criminal investigation and the individual being barred from working with children, if proven.

Adults should not use equipment belonging to the school to access adult pornography; neither should personal equipment containing these images or links be brought into the workplace. This will raise serious concerns about the suitability of the adult to continue to work with children.

Adults should ensure that pupils are not exposed to any inappropriate images or web links. Where indecent images of children or other unsuitable material are found, the police and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) should be immediately informed. Adults should not attempt to investigate the matter or evaluate the material themselves, as this may lead to evidence being contaminated which in itself can lead to a criminal prosecution.

This means that adults should:

- adhere to the school's E-safety policy*

- ensure that children are not exposed to unsuitable material
- ensure that any images or films used as teaching tools are age appropriate

2.29 Social Media

Whilst social media can be an excellent tool for professional networking and the sharing of good practice and ideas, staff that work in school should be mindful of their postings and should refrain completely from posting comments about the school, colleagues or children on their personal social media sites. Even comments that may seem harmless such as the posting of quotes etc. can potentially discredit or damage the reputation of a school and breach confidentiality.

This means that adults should:

- consider carefully comments and postings they put onto social media sights
- avoid making comments that can be directly related back to the school, a member of its staff, a child or parent
- avoid posting comments that may be seen as inflammatory or controversial
- ensure that professional confidentiality and integrity is never breached

2.30 Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. The school has a clear and accessible whistleblowing policy. Staff have a responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior leadership and/or relevant external agencies. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

This means that adults should:

- report any behaviour by colleagues that raises concern regardless of source

If the concern relates to a safeguarding or child protection issue that has not been taken seriously or dealt with correctly by the Headteacher, staff may use the NSPCC Whistleblowing advice line on 0800 028 0285.

3 Professional relationships

With children:

Act respectfully towards children at all times, for example:

- Speaking in a calm and objective way, even in the face of challenging circumstances.
- Using a range of vocal volume that is appropriate to the learning activity (we may raise our voices in a controlled way to achieve a desired impact, but we never shout in anger).
- Showing good manners to children and thereby modelling what good manners are.
- Taking seriously what *all* children tell us. Our first response is always to believe what we are told.
- Giving children time to express themselves.
- Considering how we would expect to be spoken to ourselves.
- Pursuing settlements to conflicts between children in a way that is demonstrably fair and listens to all points of view before making a considered judgement.
- We judge children based on the current situation and not on past behaviour.
- Making clear to children why a course of action has been necessary.
- Uphold the school's policies and procedures on Behaviour and Child Protection in our dealings with children. We acknowledge that we are in 'loco parentis' and, as such, have a duty of care for all children in the school.
- Be consistent in the way that we apply rewards and sanctions to the children, so that each individual child knows that they will receive the same treatment from any member of staff.
- Understand that children have a right to be heard.

- Be friendly and supportive to all children, but maintain our professionalism at all times. We acknowledge that some interactions that seek to 'be friends' with children can create ambiguity in the relationship and are unhelpful.
- Protect ourselves and our pupils by making sure that we avoid being alone with individual children, but if it is unavoidable to do so, we ensure that we are in a place where others can see us.
- Use physical contact with children in a careful, sensitive and respectful way. A hand on the shoulder or head is often a good way of engaging with an individual child. However, any physical contact should be avoided when staff members are alone with individual children, except in an emergency. We adopt the principle that parents want their children to be given a certain level of physical reassurance if distressed, hurt or otherwise in need. This is the case for all children, but may be appropriate more frequently for younger children.
- Take responsibility for our actions and are prepared to apologise when we have made mistakes and undertake to learn from those errors.
- When speaking to children, always consider how we would expect to be spoken to ourselves.
- Teach and respond to children as unique individuals.
- Understand our professional responsibility to inform an appropriate person if we believe that a colleague is behaving in a way that compromises the safety or well-being of any child or group of children.

With parents:

- Parents have an entitlement to be informed about their child's learning and well-being. Always seek to involve and engage parents in this process.
- Recognise parents' entitlement to express any concerns they may have about their child's learning, safety or well-being.
- Always seek to work in partnership with parents, using their understanding of their own child to help us to provide the best learning opportunities that we can.
- Recognise that parents' worries and concerns can be extremely emotive and we acknowledge that, at times, we will need to speak to parents when they are upset.
- If you are concerned that a parent may be aggressive or otherwise inappropriate, ask for a colleague (usually a senior leader) to be present.
- In extreme circumstances, the Headteacher may decide that it is safer for a teacher to communicate with a parent through different means or may take over communications with a parent to shield the teacher from additional stress.
- Be honest with parents, without undermining colleagues and respond fairly to their concerns irrespective of their race, religion, culture or social background.
- When speaking to parents, always consider how we would expect to be spoken to ourselves.
- Acknowledge that we are human and will all make mistakes from time to time.
- Take responsibility for actions and be willing to apologise when mistakes have been made and undertake to learn from those errors.
- Protect ourselves by ensuring that we meet with parents in areas of the school that are visible and easily accessible to other staff members, while remembering to be sensitive to the confidential nature of some discussions. Always make sure that colleagues know when and where we are meeting with parents.
- Recognise the right to confidentiality of all members of the school community.

With colleagues:

Act in a professional manner towards colleagues, irrespective of our relative position or job role, for example:

- Speaking politely to one another
- Being flexible and understanding of necessary changes within the school day
- Assuming that the actions of others are carried out in good faith

- Communicating clearly and honestly with colleagues
- Addressing concerns openly and honestly with the person to whom the concern is addressed, whenever possible, without publicly criticising anyone
- Being publicly supportive of colleagues, and dealing with concerns or disagreements privately, with support if necessary
- Share a responsibility to encourage and support our colleagues in their professional development.
- Consider all members of the staff team to have equal value, irrespective of their job, and we treat them accordingly.
- When speaking to colleagues, always consider how we would expect to be spoken to ourselves.
- Concerns raised with managers are dealt with confidentially. If further action is required, the manager has responsibility to inform only the appropriate senior person within the academy.
- Recognise that we are all accountable for our actions and performance and that from time-to-time leaders and managers will need to deliver feedback that is challenging. All individual feedback is given sensitively and constructively and should only be shared with those staff members that need to know (e.g. line manager or mentor).
- Approach issues with colleagues in a way that always seeks to solve potential problems in a positive way.
- Never act in a way that publicly undermines a colleague.
- Take responsibility for actions and be prepared to apologise when you have made mistakes and undertake to learn from those errors.
- Follow our Stalyhill Schools' Federation 'Staff Values'.

4 Keeping children safe in education

Statutory guidance for schools and colleges

Part 1: Information for all school and college staff

September 2024

Summary

Keeping Children Safe in Education is statutory guidance that schools and colleges in England must have regard to it when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

- Governing bodies of maintained schools (including maintained nursery schools) and colleges;
- Proprietors of independent schools (including academies, free schools and alternative provision academies) and non-maintained special schools. In the case of academies, free schools and alternative provision academies, the proprietor will be the academy trust; and
- Management committees of pupil referral units (PRUs) are asked to ensure that **all staff** in their school or college **read** at least Part one and Annex A of the guidance.

At Stalyhill Schools' Federation all staff have been issued with a copy of the 2024 KCSIE either via email or hard copy. It can also be found here;

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6650a1967b792ffff71a83e8/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2024.pdf

All staff are required to sign to say that they have read and understood the document and the signing sheet is held in the Safeguarding file in the Headteacher's office.

All staff new to the school will be given this document as part of their induction pack and will again be required to sign to say they have read and understood its contents

5 Acceptable Use Agreement (Adult) for the Internet, Email and Other Technologies

This applies to teaching and support staff, Governors, visiting professionals, exchange students, visitors and all other adults requesting Internet access.

The computer system is owned by the school and is made available to staff and pupils to further their education and by staff to enhance their professional activities including teaching, training, research, administration and management.

This agreement has been drawn up to protect students, staff and the school. Everyone requiring Internet access will be asked to sign a copy and return it to the Headteacher.

- Access will be made via the authorised account and password, which will not be changed or made available to any other person.
 - Children must be supervised by an adult when using the Internet.
 - Staff should not give their email address to pupils.
 - Mobile phones should not be used to photograph children in school or on school visits.
 - Mobile phones must only be used during break times or before and after school. Arrangements must be made with the Headteacher should you require urgent access to your phone during lesson time.
 - You must not use your mobile phone to contact a child.
 - The school reserves the right to examine or delete any files held on its computer system and monitor any Internet Sites visited and Emails exchanged.
 - Staff are not allowed to use school computers for any form of illegal activity for example downloading Copyright material, introducing viruses, hacking into other computers (Computer Misuse Act 1990: Data Protection Act).
 - The sending of racially abusive or other offensive Email using school facilities is likely to be considered a Criminal Act.
 - Viewing or downloading pornographic, obscene, offensive or any other inappropriate material from any source is forbidden. The storing of such images or text using school equipment is forbidden.
 - Anyone inadvertently accessing inappropriate material by accident should immediately inform the Headteacher, ICT Co-ordinator or ICT Technician and ensure that the incident is recorded.
 - All Internet activity undertaken in teaching hours will be appropriate to staff's professional use or the student's education.
 - Staff signing up to news groups will be vigilant as the number of messages received, due to the size of the mailbox. Newsgroups will only be for educational purposes.
 - Users will not post anonymous messages or forward chain letters.
 - Users are responsible for all Email sent and received, including from newsgroups, and will be vigilant about the risk of virus infection from files attached to Emails.
 - The same professional levels of language and content should be applied to Email as for letters or other media.
 - Staff may access email from their Tameside School Web Mail account or an Email account set up by the staff member (eg. Yahoo, Hotmail etc).
 - It is forbidden to set up Outlook Express using a personal Email account.
-
- You should never provide the school Email address for personal use.
 - Staff may access personal Web Mail accounts outside school hours. Staff who do so are responsible for ensuring that no personal email or passwords for accounts remain stored on the computer.

- Staff laptops are backed up onto the school system. This will include any personal information which is in your documents. These cannot be individually deleted but will eventually be deleted in the natural cycle of the backup procedure.
- Limited use of facilities for personal use is acceptable in certain circumstances, eg. where it would be difficult to organise outside normal working hours. Such use must be restricted to lunchtime, before/after school unless it cannot be avoided. Dealing with personal email in lesson time is never acceptable.
- Users must not wilfully make any changes to computer settings, delete any software or interfere with another persons work files.
- Permission must be obtained from the Headteacher/ IT coordinator before any software is installed or downloaded from the Internet.
- Users should not use the Internet for any activity which could bring the name of School or the Council into disrepute.
- The use of chat lines or rooms is forbidden unless specifically set up as an educational chat room.
- Staff must take all responsible steps to ensure that material brought in from home is virus free.
- Staff are responsible for any School equipment taken off site for both its security and use whilst in their care. Laptops are not insured if left in cars! Where, for example, a digital or video camera is on loan, employees are responsible for removing all personal data.
- School equipment, such as scanners, printers, digital cameras, video cameras should not be used for personal purposes.
- Members of staff are reminded that they should not deliberately seek out inappropriate or offensive materials on the Internet and that they may be subject to criminal proceedings and/or LA's disciplinary procedures should they do so.

Adults should sign a copy of this Acceptable Internet Use Statement and return it to the Headteacher.

Full Name: _____ Post: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Approved: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 1



Sharing Low-Level Concerns

All low-level concerns (LLC) should be shared with the Headteacher – unless they relate to the Headteacher, in which case staff should contact the Chair of Governors via their school email address.

