

POLICY

Policy number	PS05 Appendix to school Behaviour Policy
Policy name	Staff Code of Conduct
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Owner	Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

1. Introduction

Portfield School is committed to ensuring the school community behaves in a way that incorporates the Charities Core Values. This policy details the code of conduct for staff. It is intended to be used as guidance.

Home School Agreement – also details the agreement between the school, family and students.

2. Staff Code of Conduct

Portfield School is committed to achieving positive academic, social, emotional, economic and safeguarding outcomes for its students. We are equally committed to the protection and welfare of our staff. Our duty to safeguard students is paramount and is just as important as our determination to make all our teaching and learning outstanding. We need to ensure that students and staff are safe. Safeguarding involves not only health and safety issues, but establishing a culture that prevents any kind of abuse of students being perpetrated either in school or elsewhere.

The achievement of positive outcomes for our students necessitates the need to ensure that all adults working with children are competent, confident and safe to do so. As such, all staff at Portfield School, are expected to comply with the following Code of Conduct. Teaching staff are furthermore expected to conduct themselves within the guidance of the 'personal and professional conduct' section of the Teachers' Standards. Deviation from the aforementioned codes of conduct and practice may lead to disciplinary action being taken where appropriate.

(Teachers' standards 2013, GOV.UK – DfE, see pages 5 and 14)

3. Principles

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- Staff should understand their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of students
- Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions
- Staff should work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way
- Staff should acknowledge that deliberately invented/malicious allegations are extremely rare and that all concerns should be reported and recorded via Behaviour Watch and in person to any member of the Senior Leadership Team or Chair of Governors.
- Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from their line manager if they have acted in a way which may give rise to concern
- Staff should apply the same professional standards regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and sexual orientation
- Staff should not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or any substance, including prescribed medication, which may affect their ability to care for children
- Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in disciplinary action being taken against them, criminal action and/or other proceedings including barring by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) from working in regulated activity, or for acts of serious misconduct prohibition from teaching by the National College of Teaching & Leadership (NCTL).
- Staff and managers should continually monitor and review practice to ensure this guidance is followed.
- Staff should be aware of and understand their establishment's child protection policy, arrangements for managing allegations against staff, whistle blowing procedure and their Local Safeguarding Children Board LSCB procedures.

4. Responsibilities

Staff are accountable for the way in which they: exercise authority; manage risk; use resources; and safeguard children.

All staff have a responsibility to keep students safe and to protect them from abuse (sexual, physical and emotional), neglect and safeguarding concerns. Students have a right to be safe and to be treated with respect and dignity. It follows that trusted adults are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure their safety and well-being. Failure to do so may be regarded as professional misconduct.

All policies should be observed by all staff. It is the responsibility of staff to familiarise themselves with these. Some policies will require staff to acknowledge they have read them. Copies are found on the school website and the public Autism Wessex Drive.

5. Making professional judgements

There will be rare occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or take action in the best interest of a student 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 students in their charge and, in so doing, will be seen to be acting reasonably. These judgements should always be recorded and shared with a manager.

Staff should discuss the circumstances that informed their action, or their proposed action, with their manager or, where appropriate, the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead. This will help to ensure that the safest practices are employed and reduce the risk of actions being misinterpreted.

All discussions should be recorded and any areas of disagreement and, if necessary refer to another agency Ofsted/other regulatory body. All recordings of such discussions will be made directly onto Behaviour Watch.

Staff should always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably.

6. Power and positions of trust and authority

The relationship between a person working with a child/ren is one in which the adult has a position of power or influence. It is vital for staff to understand this power; that the relationship cannot be one between equals and the responsibility they must exercise as a consequence.

The potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable students means that adults have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.

7. Confidentiality

The storing and processing of personal information is governed by the Data Protection Act 1998 GM31.

Staff are expected to treat any information they may receive about students in a discreet and confidential manner.

Staff may have access to confidential information about students and their families which must be kept confidential at all times and only shared when legally permissible to do so and in the interest of the child. Records should only be shared with those who have a legitimate professional need to see them.

Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a student or her/his family for their own, or others advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other organisations). Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the child. Confidential information should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need-to-know basis. In circumstances where the student'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 student, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a responsibility to pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated safeguarding responsibilities.

If a child – or their parent/carer – makes a disclosure regarding abuse or neglect, the member of staff should follow the school's procedures. The adult should not promise confidentiality to a child or parent, but should give reassurance that the information will be treated sensitively.

If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed onto the Senior Management Team.

8. Standards of behaviour

All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain confidence and respect of the general public and those with whom they work.

There may be times where an individual's actions in their personal life come under scrutiny from the community, the media or public authorities, including with regard to their own children, or children or adults in the community. Staff should be aware that their behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, could compromise their position within the work setting in relation to the protection of children, loss of trust and confidence, or bringing the employer into disrepute. Such behaviour may also result in -, prohibition from teaching by the NCTL, a bar from engaging in regulated activity, or action by another relevant regulatory body.

9. Dress and appearance

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression and some individuals will wish to exercise their own cultural customs. However staff should select a manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role and which may be necessarily different to that adopted in their personal life. Staff should ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake.

Both male and female staff must not wear clothing which is overly tight or revealing. Those who dress or appear in a manner which could be viewed as offensive or inappropriate will render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegation.

Portfield School has available 'staff' uniform, which comprises of a polo t-shirt and hooded jackets (various colours including white, navy blue and pale blue) that have the Portfield School logo on. This is encouraged but not compulsory.

10. Gifts, rewards, favouritism and exclusion

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.

There are occasions when students or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff e.g. at Christmas or as a thank-you and this is usually acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.

Similarly, it is inadvisable to give such personal gifts to students or their families. This could be interpreted as a gesture either to bribe or groom. It might also be perceived that a 'favour' of some kind is expected in return.

Any reward given to a student should be in accordance with agreed practice, consistent with the Portfield School Positive Behaviour Policy, recorded and not based on favouritism.

Adults should exercise care when selecting children for specific activities, jobs or privileges in order to avoid perceptions of favouritism or injustice. Similar care should be exercised when students are excluded from an activity. Methods of selection and exclusion should always be subject to clear, fair, agreed criteria.

11. Infatuations

All staff need to recognise that it is not uncommon for students to be strongly attracted to a member of staff and/or develop a 'crush' or infatuation. They should make every effort to ensure that their own behaviour cannot be brought into question, does not appear to encourage this and be aware that such infatuations may carry a risk of their words or actions being misinterpreted.

Any member of staff who receives a report, overhears something, or otherwise notices any sign, however small or seemingly insignificant, that a young person has become or may be becoming infatuated with either themselves or a colleague, should immediately report this to the Head Teacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team (including the Senior Teachers). In this way appropriate early intervention can be taken which can prevent escalation and avoid hurt, embarrassment or distress for those concerned.

The Senior Leadership Team should give careful thought to those circumstances where the staff member, student and their parents/carers should be spoken to and should ensure a plan to manage the situation is put in place. This plan should respond sensitively to the child and staff member and maintain the dignity of all. This plan should involve all parties, be robust and regularly monitored and reviewed.

12. Social contact outside of the workplace

It is acknowledged that staff may have genuine friendships and social contact with parents of students, independent of the professional relationship. Staff should, however, also be aware that professionals who sexually harm children often seek to establish relationships and contact outside of the workplace with both the child and their parents, in order to 'groom' the adult and the child and/or create opportunities for sexual abuse.

It is also important to recognise that social contact may provide opportunities for other types of grooming such as for the purpose of sexual exploitation or radicalisation. Staff should recognise that some types of social contact with students or their families could be perceived as harmful or exerting inappropriate influence on children, and may bring the setting into disrepute (e.g. attending a political protest, circulating propaganda).

If a student or parent seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise her/his professional judgement. This also applies to social contacts made through outside interests or the staff member's own family.

Staff are not permitted to communicate with young people via social media such as Facebook or similar under any circumstances. Where a staff member has concerns that a colleague may be breaching this rule, they must report this immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Head Teachers.

Some staff may, as part of their professional role, be required to support a parent or carer. If that person comes to depend upon the staff member 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.

13. Communication with children (including the use of technology)

In order to make best use of the many educational and social benefits of new and emerging technologies, students need opportunities to use and explore the digital world. E-safety risks are posed more by behaviours and values than the technology itself.

Staff should ensure that they establish safe and responsible online behaviours, working to local and national guidelines and acceptable use policies which detail how new and emerging technologies may be used (E-safety Policy).

Communication with children both in the 'real' world and through web based and telecommunication interactions should take place within explicit professional boundaries. This includes the use of computers, tablets, phones, texts, e-mails, instant messages, social media such as Facebook and Twitter, chat-rooms, forums, blogs, websites, gaming sites, digital cameras, videos, web-cams and other hand held devices. (Given the ever changing world of technology it should be noted that this list gives examples only and is not exhaustive.)

Staff should not request or respond to any personal information from children other than which may be necessary in their professional role. They should ensure that their communications are open and transparent and avoid any communication which could be interpreted as 'grooming behaviour'.

Staff should not give their personal contact details to children for example, e-mail address, home or mobile telephone numbers, details of web based identities. If children locate these by any other means and attempt to contact or correspond with the staff member, the adult should not respond and must report the matter to their manager. The child should be firmly and politely informed that this is not acceptable.

14. Media

Only designated persons are entitled to communicate with the press, radio or television companies.

15. Mobile phones

Mobile phones should be switched off or silent at all times. Staff should only use their mobile phones for personal calls or messages during personal time in private away from the eyes of the students. Staff should never store parent's or student's telephone numbers on their mobile phone. Staff should not use their mobile phone or other mobile device as a camera or video /audio recorder to record sound or images of students. Mobile phones must be stored away when staff are working directly with a student – in some circumstances, class teachers will authorise staff keeping their mobile phones on them, staff will need to complete a BYOD form.

16. Physical contact

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with children. However, it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role and in relation to the student's individual needs and any agreed guidance.

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one student, in one set of circumstances, may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. Possible exceptions using professional judgement might be greetings or congratulations such as handshakes; the guiding of a student to where they need to be or a hug in an appropriate situation

Any physical contact should be in response to the child's needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. There should never be any physical contact when students are getting changed or showering and respect and privacy must be shown to them at this time.

Adults should use their professional judgement at all times. Physical contact should never be secretive, for the gratification of the adult or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action by them or a colleague could be misinterpreted, or if an action is observed which is possibly abusive the incident and circumstances should be immediately reported to the manager and recorded. Where appropriate, the manager should consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer (the LADO).

Extra caution may be required where it is known that a child has suffered previous abuse or neglect. Staff need to be aware that the child may associate physical contact with such experiences. They also should recognise that these students may seek out inappropriate physical contact. In such circumstances staff should deter the child sensitively and help them to understand the importance of personal boundaries.

A general culture of 'safe touch' should be adopted, where appropriate, to the individual requirements of each child. Students with disabilities 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 student's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny.

17. Intimate / personal care

Arrangements for intimate and personal care should be open and transparent and accompanied by recording systems.

Students should be encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their own personal care as is possible and practicable. When assistance is required, this should normally be undertaken by one member of staff. However, they should try to ensure that another appropriate adult is in the vicinity who is aware of the task to be undertaken and that, wherever possible, they are visible and/or audible.

Intimate or personal care procedures should not involve more than one member of staff unless the student's care plan specifies the reason for this.

A signed record should be kept of all intimate and personal care tasks undertaken and, where these have been carried out in another room, should include times left and returned.

Any vulnerability, including those that may arise from a physical or learning difficulty should be considered when formulating the individual student's green guidance. The views of parents, carers and the student, regardless of their age and understanding, should be actively sought in formulating the plan and in the necessary regular reviews of these arrangements.

Students are entitled to respect and privacy at all times and especially when in a state of undress, including, for example, when changing, toileting and showering.

There needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard students, 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.

18. Behaviour management

Corporal punishment and smacking is unlawful in all schools and early years settings. Staff cannot use force as a form of punishment and should always try to defuse situations before they escalate.

Staff should not use any form of degrading or humiliating treatment to punish a child. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards children is completely unacceptable.

Where students display difficult or challenging behaviour, staff should follow Portfield School's Behaviour Support Policy using strategies appropriate to the circumstance and situation.

Where a student has specific needs in respect of particularly challenging behaviour, a red plan, including assessment of risk, should be drawn up and agreed by all staff involved.

Staff should refer to national and local policy for guidance regarding Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) and be aware the legislation on these strategies is complex and staff should take extreme care to avoid any practice that could be viewed as unlawful, a breach of the student's human rights and/or false imprisonment.

19. The use of control and physical intervention

Staff should adhere to Portfield School's Positive Behaviour Support Policy and guidelines for physical intervention. Staff should seek to defuse situations and avoid the use of physical intervention wherever possible. When physical intervention is necessary, staff should only use minimum force and for the shortest time needed.

Physical force should not be used as a form of punishment under any circumstances. The use of unwarranted or disproportionate physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence.

Where a student has specific needs in respect of particularly challenging behaviour, a red plan, including assessment of risk, should be drawn up and agreed by all parties. The Portfield School's Positive Behaviour Policy includes clear guidance about the use of isolation and seclusion.

20. Sexual conduct

Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a student is unacceptable. It is an offence for a member of staff in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity with a student under 18 years of age.

'Working Together to Safeguard Children', defines sexual abuse as "forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware.

The following are examples of sexual or intimate contact: sexual acts, requests for/suggestion of sexual acts, physical contact with could be constructed as being of a sexual nature, sexually suggestive conversation, kissing or stroking, bathing or assisting to bathe, sending sexually suggestive images or communication via phone.

21. One to one situations

Staff working in one to one situations with students at Portfield School, including visiting staff from external organisations can be more vulnerable to allegations or complaints.

A risk assessment in relation to the specific nature and implications of one to one work should always be undertaken. Each assessment will take into account the individual needs of each student and should be reviewed regularly.

Arranging to meet with students from the school or setting away from the work premises should not be permitted unless the necessity for this is clear and approval is obtained from the Senior Leadership Team, the student and their parents/carers.

22. Home visits

Staff are not permitted to visit the home of a student unless pre-arranged and the Head Teacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead are informed. A risk assessment should be undertaken prior to any planned home visit taking place.

23. Transporting students

Staff should not travel alone with students unless in an emergency or where the child is at risk. Staff should not offer lifts to students.

If staff are expected to use their own vehicles for transporting students they should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy, appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded, seat belts are worn.

24. Educational visits

Staff organising educational visits must conduct risk assessments and adhere to Health and Safety advice and guidelines. Staff must remain professional at all times, staff should not smoke and no alcohol should be consumed on educational visits.

Where out of school or a setting activities include overnight stays, careful consideration needs to be given to sleeping arrangements. Students, adults and parents should be informed of these prior to the start of the trip.

25. First aid and medication

First aid must only be administered by a trained member of staff. Staff will always act and be seen to act in the student's best interest. Parents should be informed when any first aid has been administered.

Circumstances where a student needs medication regularly will be recorded and obtained permission from parent/carer. Medication must only be administered by a trained member of staff. Staff will adhere to Portfield School policies for health and safety and medical conditions.

26. Photography, videos and other images

Under no circumstances should staff be expected or allowed to use their personal equipment or take images of students at or on behalf of the school or setting. This covers a wide range of devices which can be used for taking/recording images such as cameras, mobile phones, tablets, webcams.

Staff should be clear about the purpose of recording images. Informed written consent from parent/carers is sought and those students whose images cannot be used are recorded.

27. Exposure to inappropriate images

Staff should take extreme care to ensure students are not exposed through any medium to inappropriate or indecent images.

There are no circumstances that will justify adults: making, downloading, possessing or distributing indecent images or pseudo-images of children (child abuse images). Accessing these images, whether using the settings or personal equipment, on or off the premises, or making, storing or disseminating such material is illegal.

If indecent images of children are discovered at the establishment or on the school or setting's equipment an immediate referral should be made to the DSL, LADO and the police contacted if relevant. The images/equipment should be secured and there should be no attempt to view or delete the images as this could jeopardise necessary criminal action. If the images are of children known to the school, a referral should also be made to children's social care in line with local arrangements.

28. Curriculum

Many areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit, or of an otherwise sensitive nature. The curriculum can sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussion about subject matter of a sexually explicit or otherwise sensitive nature. Responding to students' questions can require careful judgement. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of any sex education provided (but not from the teaching of reproduction/human growth under the science curriculum).

29. Whistle blowing

Whistle blowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. Portfield School has a clear and accessible Whistle Blowing Policy that meets the terms of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. In accordance with the Portfield School Whistle Blowing Policy, staff should report any behaviour by colleagues that raises concern to either the Head Teacher or to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, as appropriate.

30. Sharing concerns and recording incidents

In the event of an allegation being made, by any person, or incident being witnessed, the relevant information should be immediately recorded and reported to the Head Teachers Senior Leadership Team or Designated Safeguarding Lead as appropriate.

Members of staff should feel able to discuss with their line manager any difficulties or problems that may affect their relationship with or behaviour towards students, so that appropriate support can be provided and/or action can be taken.

Staff must ensure they have read and understood the Child Protection Policy.

I have read and agree to comply with the Portifled School Code of Conduct

Signed:

Print Name:

Date:

Policy Written: January 2017

Ratified by Governors: