

Highfield CE Primary School

Staff Code of Conduct 2025



Highfield
C.E Primary School

Approved by: The Governing Body **Date:** May 2025

Last reviewed on: May 2025

Next review due by: May 2026

This policy sets out clear guidance on the standards of behaviour expected from all staff at Highfield CE Primary School.

The principles underlying the guidance aim to encourage staff to achieve the highest possible standards of conduct and minimise the risk of inappropriate conduct occurring.

School staff are in a unique position of trust and influence as role models for pupils/students. Therefore, staff must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all pupils/students within the school. Staff also have an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, both inside and outside working hours and work setting.

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers in the school regardless of their position, role or responsibility. References to 'staff' throughout the policy relate to all of the following groups:

- All members of staff including teaching and support staff
- Volunteers, including governors
- Casual workers
- Temporary and supply staff, either from agencies or engaged directly
- Student placements, including those undertaking initial teacher training and apprentices.
- Highfield CE Primary School requires that all staff have read and agree to comply with this policy.

Breach or failure to observe this policy will result in action being taken under the school disciplinary procedures including, but not limited to, dismissal.

This code of conduct is not an exhaustive list of acceptable and unacceptable standards of behaviour. In situations where guidance does not exist in this policy staff are expected to exercise their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the pupils and the school.

Professional Behaviour and Conduct

Staff are expected to demonstrate the highest possible standards of personal and professional conduct and behaviour and consistently act with honesty and integrity. Highfield CE Primary School expects staff to treat each other, pupils, parents and the wider community with dignity and respect at all times. This includes being mindful of the use of language especially words that are offensive to others due to their personal faith or conduct (such as blasphemous terminology). Staff should be equally mindful of language that may be racist or sexist in its nature and cause offence linked to the protected characteristics.

Staff must act in accordance with their duty of care to pupils and ensure that the safety and welfare of pupils are accorded the highest priority. Staff should show fairness in their treatment of children and avoid behaviours such as embarrassing or humiliating pupils and staff, making jokes at the expense of pupils or staff discriminating against or favouring pupils or staff and sarcasm. Swearing at children or staff is never acceptable.

Staff must have regard for the ethos and values of the school and must not do or say anything which may bring the school or governing body into disrepute. Care should be taken by staff to avoid any conflict of interest between activities undertaken outside school and responsibilities within school. Staff should act in accordance with the school's policies and procedures at all times.

Reputational Damage and Non-Transferable Risks:

School staff are in a unique position of trust and influence as role models for pupils. Therefore, staff must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all pupils within the school. Staff also have an individual responsibility to maintain their personal reputation and the reputation of the school, both inside and outside working hours and work settings.

This responsibility extends to interactions in both physical and digital environments, including social media and other online platforms, where comments, posts, or behaviour can impact perceptions of professionalism and integrity. Staff should exercise care and judgment in their personal conduct to ensure it aligns with the values and expectations of the school community. Reputational risks are non-transferable, meaning they cannot be mitigated through insurance or delegation. The actions of staff directly reflect on the school, and reputational damage can have long-lasting, irreversible consequences. Once trust is eroded, rebuilding the school's reputation can be challenging, affecting not only the staff member involved but also the school's relationships with students, parents, and the wider community.

It is imperative for staff to understand that their actions—whether intentional or inadvertent—carry personal accountability and direct consequences for the school. Consistently demonstrating exemplary conduct is essential to safeguarding the school's standing and fostering an environment of respect and trust.

Dress and Appearance

Highfield CE Primary School recognises that dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, all staff must dress in a manner that is appropriate to a professional role and that promotes a professional image. Staff should dress in a manner that is not offensive, revealing or sexually provocative and in a manner that is absent from political or contentious slogans. Staff should dress safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake. PE or sports wear should only be worn on the days that an adult is teaching PE. Trainers should not be worn as general footwear beyond PE days. On days that are deemed “non school uniform” or for offsite visits, staff are free to wear casual clothing that is appropriate to the theme or the activity that they are undertaking.

Smoking, Alcohol and Other Substances

Highfield CE Primary School is a non-smoking site. Staff must not smoke on school premises or outside school gates. Any member of staff wishing to smoke must leave the school grounds. Staff must not smoke whilst working with or supervising pupils' offsite. Staff must not consume or be under the influence of alcohol, illicit drugs or other illegal substances on or near school premises when pupils are present. Staff must refrain from the consumption of alcohol and other substances at school events where pupils are present (i.e. Leaving parties, day and residential school trips) both within the school premises and outside the school setting.

Relationships with Pupils/Students/Colleagues

Staff must maintain professional boundaries with pupils appropriate to their position and must always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably. Staff should act in an open and transparent way towards pupils (as well as colleagues) that would not lead any reasonable person to question their actions or intent. Staff should think carefully about their conduct towards both pupils and colleagues so that misinterpretations are minimised.

Staff must not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. If a young person or their parents

seek to establish social contact you should exercise your professional judgement in making a response and be aware that such social contact could be misconstrued. Staff must not develop personal relationships with pupils or their parents/guardians that are known to them solely through their professional life.

Contact with pupils

Contact with pupils should be through Highfield CE Primary School's authorised mechanisms i.e. school email addresses, parentmail, home/school books. Personal phone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via all social media platforms should not be used and staff should not share their home address with pupils or their parents.

The exception to this would be:

- if a member of staff has a child at the school and is contacting the parent re play date
- if a member of staff is offering or accessing outdoor services e.g. private tuition agreements,
- babysitting or Hairdressing appointments, personal contacts can be exchanged by mutual agreement.

These should not then be used to discuss professional matters in school. If contacted via an inappropriate route the member of staff must inform the Headteacher immediately.

Social Media

Highfield CE Primary school staff must not accept friend invitations or become friends with any pupil or parents/guardians of Highfield CE Primary School on any social media platform unless they know them personally and not through their professional life. Staff should also refrain from following pupils or their parents on any social media accounts. Staff must read the school's e-safety policy carefully and follow all advice and guidance contained within it.

We understand that some staff may have additional jobs outside of their work in school. Some of these jobs may be connected to the school eg running an after school club or leading a school-based tuition group. Other work may be unrelated and has been agreed on a private basis with an individual or an organisation. In respect of private tuition in a staff or the child's home, it is recommended that staff do not tutor children they are already teaching in their professional role due to a potential conflict of interest.

Wherever possible, virtual tutoring should be considered to minimise the risk of any potential safeguarding or professional boundaries issues. Staff are advised to inform and seek guidance from the Headteacher if they have or are considering entering into a private tutoring arrangement with a family from the school. Staff remain fully responsible for managing their own taxes, contracts, qualifications, and the administration of any such additional duties undertaken in a personal capacity, ensuring that these do not conflict with their professional responsibilities to the school.

Communications with Children Outside of School Hours

Staff are expected to maintain professional boundaries when communicating with pupils. Communication with children outside of school hours should be kept to a minimum and only occur when necessary for school-related matters. Any contact should occur via official school communication channels (e.g., school email, learning platforms), and staff should avoid personal contact through social media or personal mobile devices. If communication outside of school

hours is required, staff must ensure it is appropriate, transparent, and consistent with the school's values and safeguarding policies.

Storage of Personal Items and Medicines

Staff are responsible for ensuring their personal items and medicines are stored securely and out of the reach of pupils. Personal items, including valuables, should be stored in personal lockers or other secure locations, not left unattended in public areas. Medicines brought onto school premises should be kept in a designated secure area, away from students, unless they are required for use by a pupil and are part of an agreed medical plan. All personal medications should be stored in line with the school's policies on administering medication.

Infatuations

It is not unusual for pupils or, sometimes, their parents to develop infatuations towards members of staff. All such situations must be responded to sensitively to maintain the dignity of those concerned. Staff should also be aware that such circumstances carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against staff. Any indications of an infatuation towards yourself or another member of staff must be reported to the Headteacher.

Gifts/Hospitality

Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift/offer of hospitality that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. However, there may be occasions where pupils or parents wish to give a small token of appreciation to staff, for example at religious festivities or at the end of the year. It is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or to suggest to pupils that gifts are appropriate or desired. Money must not be accepted as a gift unless this has been organised through the school for a specific official event e.g. a member of staff leaving. If you are unsure whether to accept a gift you should consult the Head Teacher. Staff must not accept significant gifts of monetary value or hospitality from pupils, parents, carers, actual or potential contractors or outside suppliers. All such gifts/offers of hospitality should be reported to the Head Teacher and recorded. Parents may choose to organise end-of-year collections for class teachers and support staff as a gesture of appreciation. This is permitted as it is considered a one-off thank-you at the end of the academic year and does not constitute a regular or expected practice. This is in alignment with the SCC LA Gift and Hospitality Policy.

Physical Contact with Pupils

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 it should be in response to their needs at that time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Where feasible, staff should seek the child's permission 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.

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. Staff should therefore, use their professional judgement at all times. Staff 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. Staff should 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. Staff must not engage in rough play, tickling or fun fights with pupils. Extra caution should be exercised where a child is known to have suffered previous abuse or neglect. Such experiences may sometimes make a child exceptionally needy and demanding of physical contact and staff should respond sensitively by deterring the child through helping them to understand the importance of personal boundaries. Staff supervising PE and games or providing musical tuition should demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument on another member of staff if possible. However, they may be required to initiate physical contact with pupils to support a child to perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument or to assist them with an exercise. Contact under these circumstances should be done wherever possible with the pupil's agreement, for the minimum time necessary and in an open environment. Staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the pupil/student. Physical contact must never be secretive, for the gratification of the adult or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported to the Head Teacher, recorded and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the child's file.

Child in distress

There may be occasions when a pupil is in distress and in need of comfort as a reassurance. This may include age appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation. Wherever possible, other adults should be present and able to view how the child is being comforted, to avoid any misinterpretation. If you have a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance you should seek further advice from the Head Teacher.

Changing

Pupils are entitled to respect whilst they are changing before or after PE/games. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard young people and meet health and safety requirements. The supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the pupils and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment. Adults should be aware of reducing the exposure of pupils by closing curtains in classrooms and changing away from external windows that may be viewable from outside of the school.

Staff should be vigilant about their own behaviour when helping younger or vulnerable children change in and out of clothes for PE and other activities.

One to one situations

Staff working individually with pupils should be aware of the potential vulnerability of pupils and staff in such situations. Staff should manage these situations with regard to the safety of the pupil and to themselves. Individual work with pupils should not be undertaken in isolated areas or rooms where there is no external viewing panel. Where it is necessary to close doors for reasons of confidentiality or to meet the specific needs of a child, a colleague should be made aware of this and asked to remain vigilant.

Transporting pupils

In certain circumstances it may be appropriate for staff to transport pupils' offsite, for example sports fixtures, outings or other out of school activities. The Headteacher must oversee the plan

and provide oversight of all transport arrangements and to respond to any difficulties that may arise. Staff should not transport individual children unaccompanied as this could be misconstrued and open to allegations.

The Headteacher should ensure that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. Staff should ensure that the driver has the appropriate license for the vehicle, that the vehicle is roadworthy, has a valid MOT certificate and is appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.

Staff should ensure that the driver is not distracted while the vehicle is in motion for any reason other than an emergency and should also ensure all passengers are wearing correctly fastened seatbelts.

Prior to transporting pupils offsite consent must be obtained from pupil parent/guardian and staff should be aware that the safety and welfare of the pupils is their responsibility until this is safely passed back to their parent/carer.

E-Safety

Staff should follow Highfield CE Primary School's E-Safety policy for staff and the Acceptable Use Policy at all times and have regard for Highfield CE Primary School's E-Safety policy for pupils.

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school or the school community into disrepute. Staff should adopt the highest security settings on any personal profiles they have.

Staff should remain mindful of their digital footprint and exercise caution in all their use of social media or any other web-based presence they have. This includes written content, videos or photographs and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts or following certain individuals or groups. Staff should exercise care (in respect of details on a bio and any photos shared) when using dating websites where staff could encounter ex students or members of the school community.

Staff must not make contact with pupils, must not accept or initiate friend requests nor follow pupils' or their guardians' accounts on any social media platform. Staff must not communicate with pupils or their guardians via social media, websites, instant messenger accounts or text message. The only acceptable method of contact is via the use of school email accounts or telephone equipment.

Staff should not make contact with pupils' family members, accept or initiate friend requests or follow pupils' family member's account on any social media platform.

However, Highfield CE Primary School acknowledges that staff who are also parents may wish to make contact with other parents, who are friends, over social media. Staff must exercise caution and professional judgement in these circumstances and should not have any contact with pupils' family members via social media if that contact is likely to constitute a conflict of interest or call into question their objectivity. Social media should never be used to comment on the school in a negative way and the school should not be named as a part of a bio on any social media site.

Mobile phones and personally-owned devices may not be used during lessons or formal school time. They should be switched off (or silent) at all times other than during the designated lunchtime period when they can be used in adult only spaces. The adult spaces in both school

sites are defined as the office areas, staff rooms and outside of the school boundaries. The Bluetooth functionality of a mobile phone should be switched off during school time and may not be used to send images or files to other mobile phones. Mobile phones and personal devices are not permitted to be used in certain areas within the school site such as class rooms, central areas and pupil toilets.

Mobile phones and personally-owned mobile devices brought in to school are the responsibility of the device owner. Highfield CE Primary School accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of personally-owned mobile phones or mobile devices. (See mobile phone policy)

Photography, video and images of children

Many school activities involve recording images as part of the curriculum, extra school activities, and publicity or to celebrate an achievement. In accordance with The Data Protection Act 1998 the image of a pupil is personal data. Therefore, it is a requirement under the Act for consent to be obtained from the parent/guardian of a pupil for any images made. It is also important to consider the wishes of the pupil, remembering that some pupils do not wish to have their photograph taken or be filmed.

Using images for publicity purposes will require the age-appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their parent/guardian. Images should not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without their consent. Staff should also be clear about the purpose of the activity and what will happen to the photographs/images/video footage when the lesson or activity is concluded.

Photographs/stills or video footage of pupils should only be taken using school equipment for purposes authorised by the school and should be stored securely and only on school equipment. All photographs/stills and video footage should be available for scrutiny and staff should be able to justify all images/video footage made.

Staff should remain aware of the potential for images of pupils to be misused to create indecent images of children and/or for grooming purposes. Therefore, careful consideration should be given to how activities which are being filmed or photographed are organised and undertaken. Particular care should be given when filming or photographing young or vulnerable pupils who may be unable to question how or why the activities are taking place. Staff should also be mindful that pupils who have been abused through the use of video or photography may feel threatened by its use in a teaching environment.

Confidentiality

Members of staff may have access to confidential information about pupils, their parents/carers or their siblings. Staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil on a need to know basis.

Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil 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 pupil.

All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a pupil is bullied by another pupil, this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate school procedure. It must not be discussed outside the school, including

with the pupil's parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the school except by a senior member of staff with the appropriate authority to deal with the matter.

Staff have a statutory obligation to share with Highfield CE Primary School's Designated Safeguarding Leads (Rosie Walford, Carl Iszatt, Rachael Bond and Georgia Collins) any information which gives rise to concern about the welfare or safety of a pupil/student or that might suggest a pupil/student is in need or at risk of significant harm. Staff should pass on information without delay in accordance with Highfield CE Primary School's safeguarding policy and procedures and this should be recorded. Staff must never promise a pupil that they will not act on or pass on any information that they are told by the pupil.

Staff should refer to the Department of Education's document Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services³ for further guidance on information sharing. If you are in any doubt about whether to share you should seek guidance from the DSL. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the Headteacher and only approved staff and Governors should communicate to the media about the school.

Whistleblowing/Speaking Out (see whistleblowing policy)

Whistleblowing/Speaking Out is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, without fear of repercussion. All school staff have a duty to report any behaviour by a colleague which raises concern. There is a separate Whistleblowing policy that relates to this in school.

Low-Level Concerns

Low-level concerns are behaviours by staff that do not meet the threshold for allegations or serious misconduct but may still be inconsistent with the school's expectations of conduct.

These may include, but are not limited to:

- Inappropriate language or tone with pupils or colleagues.
- Minor breaches of professional boundaries, such as oversharing personal information.
- Actions that could be perceived as favouritism toward specific pupils.
- Failing to maintain a professional demeanour in interactions with parents or visitors.

Low-level concerns are not necessarily indicative of misconduct but must be addressed to maintain a safe, respectful, and professional culture.

Recording Low-Level Concerns

All low-level concerns must be recorded on **StaffSafe** promptly to ensure transparency and accountability. Records should include:

1. The date and details of the concern.
2. Who raised the concern (if applicable).
3. Any context or relevant background information.
4. Actions taken in response to the concern.

All records of low-level concerns will be handled confidentially and securely in line with data protection laws. Staff involved will be informed and supported appropriately throughout the process.

Low-level concerns will be addressed constructively, focusing on professional development and reinforcing our school's safeguarding and professional standards. Repeated low-level concerns may result in further investigation and action in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedures.

By recording and addressing low-level concerns, we promote an open culture where all staff feel confident to raise issues and contribute to a safe and nurturing environment for our pupils. This approach aligns with our commitment to safeguarding, professional conduct, and the well-being of our entire school community.

Compliance

All staff must complete the e sign within our Parago system to ensure that they have read, understood and agree to comply with this policy.