

Thurlbear CE VA Primary School

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CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND GOVERNORS

INTRODUCTION

This Code of Conduct incorporates the guidance which has been subject to consultation with recognized schools trade unions and formally agreed following the September 2017 JCNC which recommends that this framework be adopted. It sets out standards of conduct which staff are expected to follow when within, or representing the School. This code is not exhaustive but is written to assist staff, governors and volunteers and it is important that staff should take advice and guidance if necessary. Whilst not itself amounting to a disciplinary code, any failure to follow the code set out in this document may, depending upon circumstances, give rise to disciplinary action.

GENERAL

The school's reputation and the trust and confidence of the community in its integrity are of vital importance. It must discharge its day to day responsibilities with openness and honesty. All staff, governors and volunteers should remember their responsibilities to the local community and adopt a courteous, high quality, efficient and impartial approach to all groups and individuals with whom they come into contact in the course of their work.

All staff, governors and volunteers must carry out their duties objectively, professionally, to the best of their ability and in an impartial manner. No-one should be pressured or persuaded to carry out their duties in any other way. Where it is alleged that such an action has taken place, the Head teacher and Chair of Governors will investigate the allegation if requested to do so. There may be occasions when employees, whilst carrying out their duties for the school, may find themselves at odds with national government advice or guidance. In such circumstances, it is particularly important that they are seen to behave with complete objectivity and impartiality, obtaining advice and guidance where appropriate and are entitled to expect to receive the unequivocal support of senior managers in doing so.

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All staff, governors and volunteers should act in accordance with the key principles:

- Ensure that their conduct complies with these standards, the spirit of these standards, the school's policies and the law.
- Ensure that their conduct is never influenced by personal gain.
- Ensure that their conduct could not give any reasonable person cause to question their motives.
- Ensure that they display the highest possible standards of professional behaviour that is required in an educational establishment (see also Appendix 1).
- Ensure that they avoid words and deeds that might bring the School into disrepute or might undermine colleagues in the perception of others.
- Ensure that the Christian values as a church school we be respected whilst respecting other beliefs.

CONFIDENTIALITY & OPENNESS

As staff, governors and volunteers of the school individuals may be privy to information which is confidential and the responsibility to keep this information confidential should be respected.

All staff, governors and volunteers should not use information obtained in the course of their time at the school for personal gain or benefit, nor should they pass it onto others who might use it in such a way. Confidential information belonging to the school should not disclose that information to any person not authorized to receive it unless such material must be law be made available to specific parties eg: in child protection cases to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Police or Social Services and disclosure of financial information to Internal or External Auditors.

All staff, governors and volunteers should have an awareness and high regard for the confidential, sensitive and important nature of their role and will be mindful of this at all times including formal and informal discussions with parents, other members of staff, children and the wider school community. Particular attention should be paid in public areas of the school such as corridors, the playground and the staff room.

PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Staff, governors and volunteers are expected to maintain an impeccable standard of integrity in all their professional relationships. Mutual respect is essential to good school management, however, close personal familiarity between individual governors and employees should be avoided wherever possible as it can be detrimental to the relationship and prove embarrassing for other governors and employees. Close personal relationships between employees and/or governors should not be permitted to influence

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decisions made and must be declared at the earliest opportunity.

Commented [SG1]: So, if anyone was having a relationship, they would have to declare it?

Staff appointments will be made on the basis of merit and in accordance with the school's policies and procedures. Merit is determined on the basis of matching the chosen candidate with job specification and ignoring all other extraneous considerations, eg: close personal relationships with governors or other employees. Employees in the course of their duties should not be involved in the appointment, pay adjustment, approval of expenses, promotion or discipline of partners, relatives or close friends.

Section 16 of The Sexual Offences Act 2003 provides that it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual. Staff, governors and volunteers working within a school would be deemed to be in a position of trust and must conduct themselves in accordance with the statutory requirements of the guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education" (DfE 2023) and must not engage in a staff/pupil relationship that extends beyond the professional requirements of their role in any circumstance. Employees and volunteers at the school are required to adhere to the school's safeguarding and child protection policies (see also Appendix 2).

It should be noted that communicating with pupils who attend the school over social media could be viewed as developing/attempting to develop an inappropriate relationship. As such specific regard should be given to the ICT Acceptable Use & Social Media Policy. As a general rule staff, governors and volunteers should not engage in communication with pupils of the school over Social Media unless explicitly agreed by the school and for the purpose of full-filling their professional duties. Any communication should remain professional in nature. If staff are unsure of the appropriateness of any communication they should discuss this with the Head teacher.

Staff, governors and volunteers must feel able to raise issues of concern and everyone must fully recognise the duty to do so particularly in terms of safeguarding and child protection. A member of staff who, in good faith, "whistle blows" or makes a public interest disclosure will have the protection of the relevant legislation.

Relationships with contractors or potential contractors who are engaged, or may be engaged, to carry out work at the school should be made know and in the case of governors, an interest declared to the Head Teacher or Chair of Governors in accordance with the legal requirements in respect of declaring financial interest.

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SOCIAL MEDIA

Staff Communication with pupils and parents/carers should only be via official school systems and any such communication should be professional in tone and manner. Personal email address/mobile phones and social networking sites should not be used for the above communications. Staff must not engage in ANY on-line activity that may compromise professional responsibilities.

Commented [SG3]: What if they do?

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POLITICAL NEUTRALITY

Staff, governors and volunteers are required to be politically neutral. Under the Education (No 2) Act 1986 the Governing Body and the Head Teacher are required to ensure that where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils, they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views.

PERSONAL INTERESTS

All financial and other interests that could bring about direct conflicts with the school's interests, including membership of any organization not open to the public which requires of members any form of commitment or allegiance and which as secrecy about rules and membership or conduct, must be declared to the Head Teacher and/or Chair of Governors.

OTHER EMPLOYMENT

The Governing Body will not seek to preclude staff unreasonably from undertaking additional employment but you are required to devote your full time, attention and abilities to your duties during your working hours and to act in the best interests of the School at all times. Accordingly any employment or engagement must not, in the view of the Governing Body, be detrimental to the school's interest or directly impact on your ability to fulfill your contractual requirements.

GIFTS & HOSPITALITY

Apart from the exceptions listed below, an employee, governor or volunteer of the school should refuse any personal gift offered by any person or organization who is involved with the school. Offer of hospitality including invitations to functions, meals and site visits if there is a genuine need to impart or receive information or represent the school and/or the community.

The exceptions are:

- Gifts of a token value often given at Christmas time or the end of an academic year.
- Gifts of a promotional nature on the conclusion of any courtesy visit to/by a business or organization of a sort normally given by that firm.

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As well as receiving gifts, staff, volunteers and governors should also be aware of the potential issues in relation to providing gifts to children. The gift could be viewed as unintentionally be viewed as extending or attempting to extend a relationship beyond the professional requirements of the role.

Commented [SG4]: gifts

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The school is committed to ensuring equal opportunities in employment and provision of education. No employee or job applicant should receive less favorable treatment than another because of a protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010 ie; maternity, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. All staff, governors and volunteers must comply with both the spirit and letter of the Equality Act and treat all members of the public and work colleagues with respect and fairness.

Staff, governors and volunteers should note the following acts may be unlawful as well as constituting misconduct liable to disciplinary action (which could in some cases include summary dismissal):

- Discriminating improperly in the course of their employment against members of the public, clients, stakeholders, fellow employees, job applicants or in respect of job transfer or promotion applications, because of a protected characteristic as listed above.
- Instructing, causing or inducing or attempting to induce staff, volunteers and governors to practice unlawful discrimination.
- Verbal or physical harassment of a nature that is offensive to the victim.
- Victimising individuals who have made allegations or complaints of discrimination or harassment or who have provided information about such discrimination or harassment.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The school and the Board of Governors share a legal obligation to protect the health, safety and welfare at work of all its employees and others in the workplace. It should be remembered, however, that Health and Safety is everybody's responsibility.

All staff must comply with the requirements of the School Health and Safety policy and relevant legislation and regulation.

All staff must comply with Health & Safety regulations and use any safety equipment and PPE which is supplied to them.

Fire: Staff must familiarise themselves with the fire precautions, procedures and drill routines. They must regard practice fire drills or building evacuations in a positive manner, and ensure they are perceived by pupils as an essential precaution to prevent risk of injury or fatality.

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POST- EMPLOYMENT

The duty of fidelity which each member of staff and governor owes to the school and which requires them to act in an honest fashion and not in a manner which will harm the school may continue following the end of the employees employment and the governors term of office, eg: the disclosure of confidential information which belongs to the school. Sometimes staff and governors may have access to intellectual property (such as copyright and materials which belong to the school), or have contributed to the creation of that intellectual property during a period of employment/term of office. However, where part or whole of that property belongs to the school it cannot be used by a formal member of staff or governor for any purpose without the agreement of the school as appropriate.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENT

Although this code of conduct highlights overall expectations, staff, volunteers and governors are also expected to be aware of and adhere to other key legislation, professional standards, policies, procedures and guidance in order to effectively carryout their duties. Staff, governors and volunteers are requested to read this Code carefully and consider the issues which it raises.

WHEN IN DOUBT, ASK!

If there is any doubt with regard to the guidelines of this Code, and how to apply it in any particular situation, then please consult with the Head teacher. It is re-emphasised that this Code is intended to be a help and to enable fairness and equity between all staff, governors and volunteers.

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APPENDIX 1

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR

Professional behaviour is a generic term, but within this Code of Conduct includes such aspects as:

- acting in a fair, courteous and mature manner to pupils, colleagues and other stakeholders;
- co-operating and liaising with colleagues, as appropriate, to ensure pupils receive a coherent and comprehensive educational service;
- endeavoring to assist the School achieve its corporate and strategic objectives – in particular, by adopting a positive attitude to marketing and the achievement of quality and equality;
- respect for School property;
- maintaining the image of the School through standards of dress, general courtesy, correct use of School stationery, etc.;
- taking responsibility for the behaviour and conduct of pupils in the classroom and sharing such responsibility elsewhere on the premises;
- being fit for work (ie not adversely influenced by drugs, alcohol, etc.);
- being familiar with job requirements (eg proper preparation, use of suitable methods/systems, maintenance of appropriate/required records, etc), including keeping up-to-date with developments relevant to the job.
- being familiar with communication channels and School procedures applicable to both pupils and staff;
- ensuring all assessments/exams/tests are conducted in a fair and proper (prescribed) manner, and that procedures are strictly followed with respect to confidentiality and security;
- respect for the rights and opinions of others.

This list is not exhaustive but the examples are given as a summary.

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APPENDIX 2

SAFEGUARDING

Where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff the governing body will follow the guidance set out in [Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education](#) published by the DfE . This guidance is about managing allegations that might indicate that a person is unsuitable to continue to work with children in their present position, or in any capacity. It will be used where it is alleged that a member of staff or a volunteer or a governor has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or,
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

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