

St Peter's and St Gildas' Schools

Staff Code of Conduct Policy

Commitment to equality:

We are committed to providing a positive working environment which is free from prejudice and unlawful discrimination and any form of harassment, bullying or victimisation. We have developed a number of key policies to ensure that the principles of Catholic Social Teaching in relation to human dignity and dignity in work become embedded into every aspect of school life and these policies are reviewed regularly in this regard.

This Policy and Procedure has been approved and adopted by the Governing Body on 15th May 2024 and will be reviewed in May 2025.

Signed by Chair of Governors:



Signed by Headteacher:



Through our actions, we will try to live as Jesus lived

This Code of Conduct is intended as a guide and a help to all school staff. It sets out standards of conduct which staff are expected to follow when within or representing the school. It recognises that staff are in a unique position of influence and must maintain behaviour that sets a good example and as a role model to all of the pupils within the school. This Code is not exhaustive, situations may arise which are not specifically covered in the code. Where this happens, employees are expected to use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school, and its pupils, and seek advice if necessary.

The underlying purpose is to ensure that the school provides a high-quality service to its pupils and stakeholders in accordance with our Aims and Ethos and to promote public confidence in the integrity of the school. It takes in the requirements of the law and attempts to define the required levels of professionalism to ensure the well-being of the school, its staff and its pupils. It has been drafted to comply with School Policies and Procedures.

Compliance with the Code of Conduct

Failure to comply with the code of conduct, and with the associated school policies and required reading, may result in disciplinary action being taken. Where clarification is needed on any aspect of this document this should be sought.

Professional responsibilities and conduct

It is expected that all people working in school will carry out their role in line with the requirements outlined in their job descriptions, professional standards and conditions of service, school policy statements and agreed practice.

Safeguarding of all children

All staff are responsible for the safeguarding and well-being of children. Staff should familiarise themselves with the safeguarding policy and be alert to pupils' wellbeing and of the signs of bullying, physical, sexual, emotional abuse, neglect and all types of harm.

Appropriate relationships with children - Staff should maintain appropriate professional boundaries at all times

- School employees should act in an open and transparent way that does not lead any reasonable person to suspect their actions or intent;
- Staff should avoid behaviour that might be misinterpreted by others in order to protect the children, colleagues, and themselves.

Professional behaviour and appearance

Staff must not misuse or misrepresent their position, qualifications or experience or bring the reputation of the school into disrepute. Such behaviour may lead to disciplinary action. All employees are expected to be always open and honest.

All adults working with children are expected to adopt high standards of personal conduct to maintain the confidence and respect of the public and to provide a role model. Staff should not:

- behave in a manner which would lead others to question their suitability to work with children.
- make, or encourage others to make, unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate others.

Physical contact with pupils

Also see Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding documentation

- As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with pupils. Staff should be mindful of and reinforce comfortable personal space with pupils ensuring that boundaries are clear to children.
- It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, to suggest staff should only touch pupils in emergencies. A distressed child, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.
- Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm.
- Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- Staff, who have to administer first-aid to a pupil, should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. However, no member of staff should hesitate to provide first-aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.
- Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be strictly avoided.
- Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, a report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the headteacher or DSL.
- Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting, or in approved out of school activities, where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school/work environment.

Dress

The choice of clothes for school should ensure that staff appearance is always professional. When choosing what is worn staff should ensure that clothing:

- 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

Probity of records

Staff are expected to maintain pupil tracking and progress records which are accurate. The deliberate falsification of documents is not acceptable.

Financial matters

Financial Regulations for schools - All school employees must comply with the school's/local authority's Financial Regulations. Financial expenditure on behalf of the school should be agreed in advance and is subject to monitoring. Misuse of school finances will be considered as a matter for disciplinary/criminal action.

Discrimination

Staff must always observe the Equality Policy for staff and pupils and treat pupils, parents and other stakeholders in accordance with those policies.

Health and Safety

Staff must take care of their personal hygiene, safety and welfare, and that of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions. All staff must comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety policy and relevant legislation and regulations, and also ensure that pupils do likewise.

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.

Business Practice

Staff must maintain an impeccable standard of integrity in all their professional relationship.

Media

Other than on matters of publicity, only designated staff are authorised to speak or send any communication on behalf of the school to members of the press or broadcast media. This decision is to avoid any embarrassment or unfair pressure on staff.

Copyright

Staff shall observe copyright laws on computer software, audio-visual and printed material.

GDPR - Data Protection

It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure the school's compliance with the GDPR Data Protection Act. Personal data must only be used to assist you to carry out your work; it must not be given to people who have no right to see it. All staff should maintain the security of all computerised databases of information on individuals, whether they are staff, pupils or members of the general public. Staff should refer any queries to the Heads of School

Use of alcohol and illegal drugs

The use of illegal drugs or alcohol during working hours is unacceptable. All employees are expected to attend school in a fit state to work.

Declaration of pecuniary interest

An employee is required to declare any associations with a group or an organisation which could be considered to conflict with the ethos of the school. Employees should also consider carefully whether they need to declare to the school any relationship with any individual(s) which might cause a conflict with school activities. (e.g., a relationship with a Governor, another staff member or a contractor who provides services to the school)

- Failure to make a relevant declaration of interests is a breach of trust, if in doubt seek advice.
- All declarations should be submitted on a school Register of Business Interests form.

Use of school premises, equipment & communication systems

School email, premises and equipment is available only for school-related activities – it should not be used for personal use unless this has been authorised by the Headteacher. Inappropriate or unacceptable use of school communication systems may result in disciplinary action and in serious cases could lead to an employee's dismissal. This list of prohibited use is not exhaustive but includes.

- creating/sending/forwarding any message that would be considered inappropriate or unacceptable.
- committing or implying commitment to any contractual arrangements.
- access to or publication of illegal, offensive, unacceptable or inappropriate or non-work-related material.
- any illegal activities.
- posting confidential information about the school and/or other employees, children, or parents.
- gambling or gaming.
- unauthorised use of school facilities for personal use during employee's working time.

Employees who are unsure if something he/she receives or proposes to do might breach this policy should seek advice from the Headteacher.

The school has the right to monitor emails, phone calls, internet activity or document production (e.g. to detect misuse, protect systems from viruses and to investigate suspected fraud and/or child protection offences).

Personal equipment

Staff must not use their own personal equipment such as mobile phones to take photographs or make recordings of pupils or parents. School cameras are available and should be used for school activities and should remain in school except during pre-planned events.

Social networking websites, social contact and Online Safety

- Staff must ensure they are familiar with and adhere the policy on online e-safety
- Staff should not seek or establish e-relationships with children/parents through social networking sites
- Staff are not recommended to have social media accounts but if they do such social media accounts must have their settings set to maximum privacy so that pupils, parents and carers cannot access any of the views, information or images uploaded.
- Staff are strongly advised, in their own interests, to take steps to ensure that their personal data is protected from anybody who does not have permission to access it.
- This means that adults should:
 - refrain from identifying themselves as working for the school in a way which has the effect of bringing the school into disrepute.
 - not identify other employees or children without their consent.
 - not make any defamatory remarks about the school, its employees, children, parents or any other school community members
 - not disclose data or information about the school, employees or, children that could breach the Data Protection Act 1998, for example, posting photographs or images of children or young people.
 - not allow pupils and parents/carers to access their personal social networking accounts.
 - ensure that personal social networking sites are set as private and pupils are never listed as approved contacts
 - never access the social networking sites of pupils.
 - not give their personal contact details to children including their mobile telephone number
 - not use web-based communication channels to send personal messages to a child/young person
 - Staff should not seek to have social contact with the families of children they work with unless the reason for this contact has been firmly established and agreed with senior leaders.

Failure to comply with the guidelines on staff use of social networking sites may lead to disciplinary action being initiated.

General Playground Expectations

At school we strive to provide a safe and supportive environment for the children. The playground offers children opportunities for play, creativity, enjoyment and learning opportunities. We attach great importance to ensuring that break times and lunchtimes at our school offer children experiences that contribute to their social, physical and emotional health. The playground is a place where children learn to communicate, collaborate and support their peers. It is the place where children learn about respect and become well-mannered and courteous individuals.

We see the playground as an extension of the classroom, staff are expected to be vigilant and should be aware that playground areas are also where supervision is very important to safeguard children from safety risks, anti-social behaviour, isolation and bullying.

Staff supervising in the playground and other non-classroom areas are expected to:

- Supervise/facilitate activities, sports and alternative games;
- Seek out lonely or unhappy children and encourage them to join an activity or
- Be vigilant and look out for children who are lonely/sad, injured or arguing/fighting with their peers.
- Deal with negative behaviour in a fair and consistent manner. Any very serious incident may be referred on to a senior member of staff.
- Intervene if they see a dispute and enforce game rules when necessary.
- Encourage all equipment to be used and put away appropriately.

Throughout break and lunchtimes and after school clubs, staff on duty are responsible for the children's wellbeing. It is important that the children see the staff as excellent role models, with firm but fair boundaries, who set good examples.

Staff supervising in the playground and other non-classroom areas should not be:

- Passive and allow inappropriate behaviour to take place without acting upon it accordingly;
- Have attention significantly distracted through chatting to other members of staff. It is important to keep chat to a minimum whilst on duty so as to be able to focus on the wellbeing of the children.
- Using mobile phones to take photos/videos of children, sending texts or making private calls.

Confidentiality

Staff and the Governing Body come into contact with a significant volume of data and information in relation to pupils, staff, school activities and many other matters. There is an obligation to observe the requirements of the GDPR. Under GDPR Data Protection, staff are required to collect, maintain and dispose of sensitive or personal data in a responsible manner. Use must be made of the school's shredder. Staff should not disclose sensitive information about the school, its employees, children, parents or the local authority to third parties.

- Exceptions would be the necessary disclosure of suspected/alleged abuse of a pupil to Child Protection Officers; discussion with a person accompanying or representing an employee in a formal meeting or disclosure under the Whistleblowing Procedure.
- Where employees are asked for school information outside the school environment, this request should be referred back to the school and/or a meeting arranged in school to discuss the matter.
- All media communication must be directed to the Headteacher.

Copyright

Employees are required to adhere to the guidance on copyright.

Other employment

The school does not seek to preclude staff unreasonably from undertaking additional employment, but staff are required to devote their full time, attention, and abilities to their duties during working hours and to act in the best interests of the school at all times. Accordingly, they must not, without the written consent of the Head/Governing Body, undertake any employment or engagement which might interfere with the performance of their duties or conflict with the interests of the school. It follows that, regardless of whether you are employed on a full-time or fractional contract, you are required to notify the Head/Governing Body of any employment or engagement which you intend to undertake whilst in the employment of the School. (Including any such employment or engagement which commenced before employment began with the school).

GENERAL POINTS

- ◆ Staff should display the highest possible standards of professional behaviour that is required in an educational establishment (see also Appendix 1 and Appendix 2)
- ◆ Staff should seek to co-operate with their colleagues, providing support, help and guidance as required by them and their line manager, and enable effective communication throughout the school.
- ◆ Staff should avoid words and deeds that might bring the school into disrepute or might undermine colleagues in the perception of others (staff/pupils/parents/community).
- ◆ Staff should retain professional independent objectivity and not promote dogma or political bias to others in their working activities.
- ◆ Staff should be aware of and should follow School policies systems and procedures. They should normally communicate through the line management structure and should ensure pupils do likewise.
- ◆ Continuing professional development and support shall be provided by the school and, where appropriate and agreed, will be based on the objectives of the School Development Plan. Periodically, employees will be required to attend certain training activities.
- ◆ Staff must obtain permission from the Organisation Group/SLT before taking pupils off the school premises.
- ◆ Staff must obtain permission from the SLT / line manager before arranging for any visitors to come into the school.
- ◆ Staff must obtain permission from the Budget Holder before incurring any expenditure on behalf of the school.
- ◆ Staff should attend their place of work punctually in accordance with their conditions of service and at the times agreed with their line manager. Those unable to avoid being late must inform the Cover Organisers/ SLT as soon as they can. If a member of staff is unable to attend their work they must notify them so that alternative cover arrangements may be made.

APPENDIX 1 PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR

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

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
- maintaining high professional standards in all matters with pupils, staff, parents, visitors and external agencies
- effectively co-operating and liaising with colleagues, ensuring courtesy, respect, dependability, discretion and confidentiality as appropriate
- acting in a friendly manner to pupils but ensuring professional boundaries are not blurred or actions are not overfamiliar
- endeavouring to assist the school achieve its whole school objectives – in particular, by adopting a positive attitude representing the school positively and promoting the achievement of quality and equality
- respect for School property
- maintaining the image of the School through standards of dress, general courtesy, correct communications, 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 (i.e. not adversely exhausted from personal social activities, etc.)
- being familiar with job requirements (e.g. 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/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

APPENDIX 2 UNACCEPTABLE CONDUCT

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

- Any form of physical/verbal violence towards pupils or staff
- Physical violence, actual or threatened towards other staff or visitors to the school
- Sexual offences, sexual insults or gender, sexual orientation discrimination against pupils, other staff or visitors to the school
- Racial offences, racial insults or racial discrimination against pupils, other staff or visitors to the school
- Inappropriate use of unconstructive derogatory comments/critics about colleagues
- Misuse of social media
- Theft of School monies or property and of monies or property of colleagues or visitors to the School. Removal from school premises of property which is not normally taken away without the express authority of the Head/Governing Body or of the owner of the property may be regarded as gross misconduct
- Deliberate falsification of documents such as time sheets, bonus sheets, subsistence and expense claims for the purpose of gain
- Acceptance of bribes or other corrupt financial practices
- Wilful damage of School property or of property belonging to other staff or visitors to the School
- Wilful disregard of safety rules or policies affecting the safety of pupils, other staff or visitors to the School
- Any wilful act which could result in actionable negligence for compensation against the School
- Refusal to comply with reasonable instructions given by staff with a supervisory responsibility
- Gross neglect of duties and responsibilities
- Unauthorised absence from work. Being untruthful and/or engaging in deception in matters of importance within the School community
- Deliberate breaches of confidentiality particularly on sensitive matters
- Being incapable by reason of alcohol or drugs (not prescribed for a health problem) from fulfilling duties and responsibilities of employment
- Conduct which substantially brings the name of the School into disrepute or which seriously undermines confidence in the employee
- Unsatisfactory timekeeping without permission or failure to notify the Headteacher when absent
- Neglect of safety rules and procedures-some offences of wilful neglect may be regarded as gross misconduct
- Breaches of confidentiality-deliberate breaches on sensitive matters maybe regarded as gross misconduct
- Failure to comply with reasonable work-related requirements or lack of care in fulfilling the duties of the post
- Behaviour towards other employees, pupils, and visitors which gives justifiable offence. Certain behaviour giving rise to offence may be regarded as gross misconduct
- Acting in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as rude, impolite, contemptuous, or lacking appropriate professional demeanour-in certain circumstances such behaviour may be regarded as gross misconduct



FEDERATION OF
St Peter's and St Gildas'
INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS

