

Uplands Primary School

Code of Conduct



Date renewed: September 2023

Date for review: September 2024

Purpose

This Code of Conduct aims to establish a set of principles which underpin the expected conduct of staff at Uplands Primary School with the intention of encouraging staff to achieve the highest standards of conduct at work and of minimising the risk of improper conduct occurring.

The school requires that all staff have read and comply with the Code of Conduct. Where clarification is needed on any aspect of this document, this should be sought from the Headteacher.

Breach or failure to observe the provisions of this document may lead to action being taken under the school disciplinary procedure a copy of which can be found on the school network. This document is available to all staff on the website as well as being provided on induction to all new members of staff. It needs to be read and refreshed each year. All staff need to sign to say they have read, understood and will abide by it.

The Code of Conduct is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of conduct and behaviour and in circumstances where guidance does not exist, individuals are expected to use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils.

This code of conduct needs to be read in conjunction with other policies/documents such as:

- Child Protection policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 Part A

Scope

The Code of Conduct applies to:

- 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.

References to 'staff' throughout the Code of Conduct refer to all of the above groups.

Any links within this document to other documents are for ease of use and do not form part of this Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct exists in addition to Hampshire County Council's Local Government Code of Conduct.

Professional Standards at work

Staff are expected to demonstrate the highest possible standards of personal and professional conduct and behaviour and consistently act with honesty and integrity. The school expects staff to treat each other, pupils, parents and the wider school community with dignity and respect at all times. Furthermore, staff must have regard for the ethos and values of the school as well as its policies and procedures and act in accordance with these at all times, including in their dealings with those who come into contact with the school e.g. visitors.

Staff must act in accordance with their duty of care to pupils and ensure that the safety and welfare of the children and young people at the school are accorded the highest priority. In this and other ways staff should always maintain standards of conduct and behaviour which sustain their professional standing and that of the school.

Safeguarding

Teachers are reminded of, and are expected to uphold, their wider responsibilities as set out in the Teachers' Standards, KCSIE 2023 and the school's safeguarding policies, including an understanding of, and acting within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

Uplands Primary School recognises its statutory and moral duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and understands that staff play a vital role in meeting these responsibilities. Staff must be aware of their individual safeguarding responsibilities, including to provide a safe environment in which children can learn, to be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect, to identify children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm and to take appropriate action in such cases to prevent concerns from escalating.

All members of staff must be aware of the school's systems for supporting child safeguarding, including the role of the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

In this school the DSLs and DDSLs are:

- **Christina Dalingwater Acting Headteacher**
- **Alison Bagley Assistant Headteacher**
- **Hannah Cottam Acting Assistant Headteacher**
- **Sheryl Vincent ELSA**

Staff have a professional duty to report concerns about the welfare of a child. Any such concerns must be raised without delay to the school's DSL. In the event that none of the above are available, staff should make a referral through an Interagency Referral Form (IRAF). There should be no delay in reporting a concern if there is risk of immediate serious harm to a child. Staff are reminded of their duty to report safeguarding concerns about staff. Any concerns or allegations must be raised without delay to the school's DSL, the LADO or Chair of Governors. Low- level concerns must be raised as in the policy at the end of this document.

Staff should be familiar with the school's child protection policy, which is available to all staff in the staffroom and on the website. All staff will receive appropriate child protection training and will be provided with guidance on child safeguarding as part of their induction to the school.

In accordance with the statutory guidance published by the Department for Education '[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)' (2023) all staff are required to read Part One '[Safeguarding information for all staff](#)' and will be provided with a copy as part of their induction to the school. The full document is available from www.gov.uk

Further information is found in the guidance document '[The avoidance of unnecessary contact and allegations](#)' and in '[Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and](#)

young people in education settings' (May 2019) provided by the Safer Recruitment Consortium. Both documents are in the staffroom.

Appropriate behaviour with Pupils

Individuals who work or volunteer in a school environment are in a position of trust. Staff should be mindful of the need to maintain professional boundaries 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 that would not lead any reasonable person to question their actions or intent. Staff should think carefully about their conduct so that misinterpretations are minimised.

Staff must avoid unnecessary physical contact with children. Where physical contact is essential, e.g. for safety reasons, the pupil's permission must be gained for that contact wherever possible. If physical contact is made to remove a pupil from a dangerous situation or an object from a pupil to prevent either harm to themselves or others, then this should be recorded and reported to the Headteacher. In cases where accidental physical contact was made, it should be reported to the Headteacher. In all cases staff should act in accordance with the school's restrictive physical intervention policy which can be found on the website.

Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a pupil, child or young person whether inside or outside of work is unacceptable. Staff are reminded that under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is a criminal 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. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 defines a child as everyone under the age of 18.

Special Schools will often work with pupils and vulnerable adults over the age of 18. The principles within the Code of Conduct applies to all under the care of the school.

Relationships with Parents

Staff are expected to interact with parents in a polite and respectful manner and recognise parents' entitlement to express any concerns they may have about their child's learning, safety or wellbeing. Staff should avoid discussing school matters with parents outside school if approached and should instead refer the parent to the normal school communication channels.

Use of IT

Social networking sites offer the opportunity for communication with children, young people and their parents outside normal professional boundaries. School staff must take care to protect their privacy and protect themselves from risk of allegations in relation to inappropriate relationships and cyberbullying. Staff must not have any unauthorised contact or accept 'friend' requests through social media with any pupil (including former pupils and/or those who attend other schools) unless they are family members. Staff must exercise caution when having contact online through social media with parents so as not to compromise the school's reputation or school information.

Please refer to the school's acceptable use of ICT policy which can be found on the website and Social Media policy which can be found on the website for further guidance on acceptable and unacceptable use of IT, social media and mobile phones. Internal e-mail and internet systems must be used only in accordance with the school's acceptable use of ICT policy which can be found on the website.

Confidentiality

Staff must ensure that they do not disclose confidential information to anyone who does not have the right to receive it. Where information is disclosed this should be in line with the principles of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2016 and the Data Protection Act 2018. Equally, staff should not prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law. If there is doubt about whether or not to share information, advice must be sought from an appropriate senior member of staff.

Information obtained during the course of an individual's work should never be used for personal gain or benefit, nor should it be passed onto others who might use it in such a way.

Dress and appearance

An individual's dress and appearance is a matter of personal choice; however, staff should ensure that they dress appropriately, decently and safely for a school environment and for the role they undertake, as well as setting a good example to both pupils and visitors.

Staff should have particular regard to the health and safety risks involved with certain lessons i.e. physical education/food technology and the need to dress appropriately and safely when undertaking these activities, such as wearing appropriate footwear, removing jewellery etc. All teaching staff have been provided with a school PE top and should role model changing into PE kits.

The school recognises the diversity of cultures and religions of its staff and will take a sensitive approach when this affects dress and uniform requirements. However, priority will be given to health and safety, security and other similar considerations of other staff, pupils and the school.

Equality

The Governing Body of the school is committed to equality for all in the appointment, development, training and promotion of staff, and in all dealings with pupils and parents of the school. It also recognises that all members of staff have the right to work in a safe environment without fear of discrimination, harassment or abuse.

All pupils, colleagues, parents, members of the public and wider school community have the right to be treated with fairness and equality and must not be discriminated against. The school expects staff to uphold these principles.

Conduct outside of school

Care must be taken by staff to avoid any conflict of interest between activities undertaken outside school and responsibilities within school. In no case should actions or activities undertaken outside of work (including but not limited to relationships and social media contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults) bring the school into disrepute.

Staff must disclose any misconduct or alleged misconduct made against them, including any incidents arising from alternative or additional employment outside of this school. Disclosure must be made to the Headteacher without delay, after which consideration will be given to the relevance or otherwise of the misconduct to their role in the school.

Teachers are reminded that the Teachers' Standards, and specifically Part Two: Personal and Professional Conduct, set out their responsibilities in relation to upholding public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school.

Conflict of interests

Staff should consider carefully whether they need to declare to the school any relationship with an individual where this might cause a conflict with the school's activities, for example, a relationship with a Governor, another staff member or a contractor who provides services to the school. Where such a declaration is necessary this should be made to the Headteacher.

Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided it does not conflict with the interests of the school nor be at a level which may contravene the Working Time Regulations or affect an individual's performance at work.

Raising concerns and whistleblowing

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (as amended) gives protection to people who disclose reasonable concerns about serious misconduct or malpractice at work. This is sometimes known as Whistleblowing. The Governing Body of the school will treat all matters of malpractice very seriously and allegations about such matters will be dealt with quickly and with appropriate confidentiality.

Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibilities in bringing matters of concern to the attention of senior leadership in the school. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

A clear procedure is provided for staff to raise issues with the purpose of assisting in reducing the risk of serious concerns being mishandled, whether by the individual or by the school. Please refer to the school's Procedure for Protected Disclosures ("Whistleblowing") for further information which can be found on our website. Our child protection policy also outlines our procedures to deal with allegations against staff. Copies of this can be found on our website and in the staffroom.

In accordance with KCSIE 2023, staff need to pass any low-level concerns (LLCs) regarding staff conduct around children to the DSL (Headteacher). Staff will be informed of this at induction and through regular safeguarding updates throughout the year. **Further details can be found in the low-level concern policy in Appendix 1.**

Health and Safety

Staff must adhere to the school's Health and Safety policy and should ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and others in the school environment safe. Please refer to the school's Health and Safety policy for further information which can be found on our website. Any initial concerns can be reported to or discussed with the Site Manager and Headteacher.

Gifts and resources

There may be occasions where children or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff, for example as an end of year 'thank-you', and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value or to suggest to pupils that gifts would be appropriate or desired. Money should never be accepted as a gift.

It is not acceptable for staff to give gifts to pupils and any rewards given to children must be given in agreement with the declared reward practice of the school. Details of our reward system can be found in our behaviour policy.

Staff should not solicit or accept any gift, hospitality or other reward from external parties which influences the way in which they carry out their duties or leads the giver to expect preferential treatment.

The use of school resources, property and equipment is for school-related activities only, except where otherwise agreed.

All members of staff must use any public or school funds entrusted or handled by them in a responsible and lawful manner.

Appendix 1.



Uplands Primary School

Low-level Concerns (LLCs) policy

Rationale

At Uplands, we put the welfare and safeguarding of all our pupils at the forefront of all we do. We believe that all those who work with children must always behave appropriately and that early identification and prompt and effective management of concerns regarding adults is crucial to effective safeguarding. The purpose of our low-level concerns policy is to ensure that we create and embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which the clear values and expected behaviour set out in our code of conduct are lived and monitored. This policy, alongside the culture of our school, will support staff to be able to raise any concerns no matter how small.

This policy sits alongside our child protection policy, safeguarding policy and our code of conduct. We have referred to *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023* and *Developing and implementing a low-level concerns policy: A guide for organisations which work with children (Farrer and co)*.

Scope of the policy

This policy applies to ALL adults who may come into contact with pupils at Uplands including:

- all members of staff, including leadership, 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.

What is a low-level concern?

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the adult's behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold for a referral as set out in section 4 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023*. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' – that an adult may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with an organisation's staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and
- does not meet the allegation threshold, or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO – but may merit consulting with and seeking advice from the LADO, and on a no-names basis if necessary.

Examples may include:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or, using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language

Staff do not need to be able to determine in each case whether their concern is a low-level concern, or if it is not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO, or whether it meets the threshold of an

allegation. Once staff share what they believe to be a low- level concern, that determination should be made by the Headteacher.

If there is any doubt about the level at which behaviour needs to be addressed, LADO advice will be taken by the Headteacher.

Sharing concerns

If a member of staff has a concern, then they will need to be passed onto the Headteacher (DSL) within 24 hours. In her absence, she can be contacted via telephone. Should this not be possible then concerns must be passed to one of the Assistant Headteachers. They will then inform the Headteacher as soon as possible.

If the concern is regarding the behaviour of the Headteacher, then staff will need to contact the Chair of Governors. Her number can be located on the staffroom wall.

If a concern relates to a contractor or supply teacher, the school will pass on the concern to their employer.

Self- referring

Occasionally, a member of staff may find themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, or might appear compromising to others. Equally, a member of staff may, for whatever reason, have behaved in a manner which, on reflection, they consider falls below the standard set out in the staff code of conduct. Self-reporting in these circumstances can be positive for a number of reasons: it is self- protective, in that it enables a potentially difficult issue to be addressed at the earliest opportunity; it demonstrates awareness of the expected behavioural standards and self-awareness as to the individual's own actions or how they could be perceived; and, crucially, it is an important means of maintaining a culture where everyone aspires to the highest standards of conduct and behaviour. Staff can speak to the Headteacher if they feel they need to self-refer.

Reporting concerns

Staff can speak verbally to the Headteacher but must then follow up in writing a summary of their concerns which should be signed and dated. The Headteacher must also write up a record of any conversation and sign/date it.

What should be included in a record?

- Name and role of the person recording the concern
- Date, time and signature
- Context in which the concern arose
- Accurate and concise details which should if appropriate be chronological

All records will be stored in a locked cabinet in the Headteacher's office and retained for at least as long as the individual remains in our school.

Dealing with concerns

Once the concern has been received, the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors if the concern relates to the Headteacher) will:

1. Speak to the person who raised the concern (unless it has been raised anonymously), regardless of whether a written summary has yet been provided.
2. Speak to any potential witnesses (unless advised not to do so by the LADO/other relevant external agencies, where they have been contacted).
3. Speak to the individual about whom the low-level concern has been raised (unless advised not to do so by the LADO/other relevant external agencies, where they have been contacted).
4. Review the information and determine whether the behaviour:
 - is entirely consistent with their staff code of conduct
 - constitutes a low-level concern.
 - is not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO – but may merit consulting with and seeking advice from the LADO, and on a no names basis if necessary.
 - when considered with any other low-level concerns that have previously been raised about the same individual, could now meet the threshold of an allegation and should be referred to the LADO/ other relevant external agencies.
 - in and of itself meets the threshold of an allegation and should be referred to the LADO/other relevant external agencies.
5. Where they are in any doubt whatsoever, seek advice from the LADO - on a no-names basis if necessary;
6. Make appropriate records of:
 - all internal conversations – including with the person who initially shared the low-level concern (where this has been possible), the adult about whom the concern has been shared (subject to the above), and any relevant witnesses (subject to the above);
 - all external conversations – for example, with the LADO/other external agencies (where they have been contacted, and either on a no-names or names basis);
 - their determination
 - the rationale for their decision
 - any action taken.

Any investigation of low-level concerns will be conducted discreetly and on a need-to-know basis.

If it is determined that the reported behaviour is consistent with expected behaviour in the school Code of Conduct then the Headteacher will inform the individuals concerned as soon as possible. No further action will be taken.

Further action

If it is determined that the behaviour constitutes as low-level concern most low-level concerns by their very nature are likely to be minor. Some will not give rise to any ongoing concern and, accordingly, will not require any further action.

Most will be resolved through a conversation with the individual. Any such conversation will include being clear with the individual as to why their behaviour is concerning, problematic or inappropriate, what change is required in their behaviour, enquiring what, if any, support they might need in order to achieve and maintain that, and being clear about the consequences if they fail to reach the required standard or repeat the behaviour in question. Ongoing and

transparent monitoring of the individual's behaviour may be appropriate. An action plan which is agreed with the individual, and regularly reviewed with them, may also be appropriate.

Some low-level concerns may also raise issues of misconduct or poor performance. The Headteacher should also consider whether this is the case – by referring to disciplinary and/or capability procedures and taking advice from the LADO on a named or no-names basis where necessary. If the Headteacher considers that the organisations disciplinary or capability procedure may be triggered, they will refer the matter to EPS. Any such referral should be made by the Headteacher having received the low-level concern and not by individual staff members.

However, if it is determined that the behaviour:

- whilst not sufficiently serious to consider a referral to the LADO nonetheless merits consulting with and seeking advice from the LADO, and on a no-names basis if necessary, then action (if/as necessary) should be taken in accordance with the LADO's advice; or
- when considered with any other low-level concerns that have previously been shared about the same individual, could now meet the threshold of an allegation, or in and of itself meets the threshold of an allegation, then it should be referred to the LADO.

Following an investigation, it may be necessary to review policies, perceptions and training to ensure that individuals in school have the support and guidance needed to prevent low-level concerns in the future.

When staff move on

When asked to provide references for staff, we will adhere to the expectations in KCSIE.

KCSIE 2023 states that:

- Where a low-level concern (or group of concerns) has met the threshold for referral to the LADO and found to be substantiated, it should be referred to in a reference
- Low level concerns (or a group of concerns) which have not met the threshold for referral to the LADO which relate only to safeguarding should not be included in references unless they relate to issues which would normally be included in a reference, for example, misconduct or poor performance.

Monitoring concerns.

The Headteacher will review the concerns passed throughout the term and as a minimum termly. Any patterns in behaviour or repeated referrals about an individual will result in a referral to the LADO.

The Headteacher will inform the Governing body regarding the implementation of the policy. The Governing body should review an anonymised sample of low-level concerns to ensure that these concerns have been responded to appropriately and in accordance with this policy.

This policy will be reviewed annually as part of our Code of Conduct Policy.