



Staff Code of Conduct

Date:	September 2023
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Last reviewed on:	May 2022 (3 yearly)
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Next review due by:	September 2026
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Owner:	Director of Operations
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Staff Code of Conduct

Introduction, aims, scope and principles

This policy sets out clear guidance on standards of behaviour expected from all staff within Everychild Partnership Trust. 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.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our trust and schools are an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect. Many principles in this Code of Conduct are based on Teachers' Standards.

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 Trustees & Local Committee Members
- Casual workers
- Temporary and supply staff, either from agencies or engaged directly
- Student placements, including those undertaking initial teacher training and apprentices.

Everychild Partnership Trust 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 Trust's disciplinary policy.

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 will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the pupils and the Trust.

Staff have an influential position in the trust and schools, and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

Legislation and guidance

In line with the statutory guidance ['Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2023 \(KCSIE\)](#), [Teacher Standards 2011](#), [Children Acts 1989](#) and [2004](#) and the [Education Act 2002](#), we should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover acceptable use of technologies, staff / pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and Articles of Association.

General obligations

Staff set an example to pupils. They will:

- Demonstrate the highest possible standards of personal and professional conduct and behaviour and consistently act with honesty and integrity. Everychild Partnership Trust expects staff to treat each other, pupils, parents and the wider community with dignity and respect at all times.
- Act in accordance with their duty of care to pupils and ensure that the safety and welfare of pupils are accorded the highest priority.
- Show fairness in their treatment of children and avoid behaviours such as embarrassing or humiliating pupils, making jokes at the expense of pupils, discriminating against or favouring pupils and sarcasm.
- Show tolerance of, respect the rights of others and should uphold the fundamental British values including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Have regard for the ethos and values of the Trust and must not do or say anything, which may bring the school or Trust into disrepute, please refer to Everychild Partnership Trust's Disciplinary Policy. 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 Trust's and school's policies and procedures at all times.
- Ensure they are up to date with information and should check emails, SIMS/Pupil Asset information, pigeonholes and briefing notices daily to ensure they are aware of situations and events that will affect them. Class Teachers must ensure that notices in registers are read out to students.
- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality.
- Express personal beliefs in a way that will not overly influence pupils, and will not exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within.
- Adhere to the Teachers' Standards.

Dress code

Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner. Each school will provide guidelines to staff on induction.

Outfits will not be overly revealing. We ask that offensive tattoos be covered up.

Clothes will not display any offensive or political slogans.

Smoking, alcohol, e-cigarettes and other substances

Everychild Partnership Trust sites are non-smoking sites. Staff must not smoke or use e-cigarettes on trust or school premises or outside the gates. Any member of staff wishing to smoke or use an e-cigarette must leave the grounds.

Staff must not smoke or use an e-cigarette whilst working with or supervising pupils offsite.

Staff must not consume or be under the influence of illicit drugs or other illegal substances on or near school premises.

Staff duty of care towards pupils on trips and visits is paramount and should never be compromised. Staff are not permitted to drink alcohol in school, including whilst on day or residential trips.

Staff and Pupil relationships

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 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 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 seeks 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 or sexual relationships with pupils/students and should not engage in any sexual activity with a pupil. Sexual activity does not just involve physical contact including penetrative and non-penetrative acts.

Working Together to Safeguard Children defines sexual abuse as ... *'forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)'.*

Staff should be mindful of section 16 of [The Sexual Offences Act 2003](#).

Staff must not make sexual remarks to a pupil, discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of, pupils or discuss a pupil's sexual relationships in an inappropriate setting or context.

Contact with pupils should be through Trust and School authorised mechanisms SIMS and Pupil Asset. 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. If contacted via an inappropriate route the member of staff must inform the Head teacher immediately.

Staff must not accept friend invitations or become friends with any pupil of an Everychild Partnership Trust school on any social media platform. Staff should also refrain from following the Twitter or other similar social media accounts of pupils or their parents. Staff must read the Online Safety Policy carefully and follow all advice and guidance contained within it.

Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so.

Parents as employees should ensure that they uphold boundaries between the two roles and that their behaviour does not constitute a conflict of interest, including maintaining a level of confidentiality.

While we are aware many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to pupils are not acceptable unless

of a token variety and given to a whole class or group of children. Please refer to the Gifts and Hospitality Policy for further guidance.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, this should be reported to their line manager or the head teacher.

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 your line manager or Head Teacher.

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 a pupil, 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 might 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 that 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 or an instrument or to assist them with an exercise. Contact under these circumstances should be 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.

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 your line manager, recorded and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the child's file.

Staff should refer to the Physical Intervention & Intimate Care Policies.

Child in Distress

There may be occasions when a pupil/student 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.

Such incidents should always be recorded and shared with your line manager. If you have a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance you should seek further advice from your line manager.

Showers and changing

Pupils are entitled to respect and privacy whilst they are changing or showering after PE, Games or swimming. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard young people, meet health and safety requirements and to ensure that bullying does not take place. The supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the pupils and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

Staff should be vigilant about their own behaviour and announce their intention of entering a changing room. Staff must not change or shower in the same place as children.

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/student 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 a colleague should be made aware of this and asked to remain vigilant.

Transporting pupils

Staff should follow our separate Trust's Transporting Pupils Policy.

Online Safety

Staff should follow the Trust's Online Safety Policy for staff and the Acceptable Use Policy at all times and have regard for the School's Online Safety Policy for pupils.

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites that may bring themselves, the Trust or the School community into disrepute. Staff should adopt the highest security settings on any personal profiles they have and not use their full name, as pupils may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead, and set public profiles to private.

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 when using dating websites where staff could encounter students.

Staff must not make contact with pupils, must not accept or initiate friend requests nor follow pupil accounts on any social media platform. Staff must not communicate with pupils via social media, websites, instant messenger accounts or text message. The only acceptable method of contact is via the use of a trust or school email account 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, Everychild Partnership Trust 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.

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. The Bluetooth functionality of a mobile phone should be switched off at all times and may not be used to send images or files to other mobile phones. Personal mobile phones and personal devices are not permitted to be used in certain areas within the school site such as changing rooms and toilets.

Mobile phones and personally owned mobile devices brought in to school are the responsibility of the device owner. Everychild Partnership Trust accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of personally owned mobile phones or mobile devices.

Photography, video and images of children

Many school activities involve recording images as part of the curriculum, extra school activities, publicity or to celebrate an achievement. In accordance with The [Data Protection Act 1998](#) & the new [Data Protection Act 2018](#), the image of a pupil is personal data. Therefore, it is a requirement under the Act for consent to be obtained from the parent or guardian of a pupil for any images made. It is also important to take into account 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 or 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 or video footage when the lesson or activity is concluded.

Photographs or video footage of pupils should only be taken using trust or school equipment for purposes authorised, should be stored securely and only on trust or school equipment.

Staff should ensure that a member of the Senior Leadership Team is aware of the proposed use of photographic or video equipment and that this is recorded in lesson plans. All photographs and video footage should be available for scrutiny and staff should be able to justify all images or 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 might feel threatened by its use in a teaching environment.

Confidentiality

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the trust, school, staff, pupils and their parents or carers.

This information will never be:

- Disclosed to anyone without the relevant authority
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child is at risk of harm.

Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil or their 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 trust or school, including with the pupil's parent or carer, nor with colleagues within the trust or 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 the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead any information which gives rise to concern about the welfare or safety of a pupil or that might suggest a pupil is in need or at risk of significant harm. Staff should pass on information immediately in accordance with the trust'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 services for further guidance on information sharing. If you are in any doubt about whether to share you should seek guidance from a member of the senior leadership team.

Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the Trust and only approved staff should communicate to the media about the trust or school.

Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing 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. Staff should refer to Trust's Whistleblowing Policy for further guidance. This is particularly important where the welfare of pupils may be at risk.

Links with other policies

This policy links with our policies on:

- Staff Disciplinary procedures, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct. It also sets out examples of what we will deem as misconduct and gross misconduct
- Staff Grievance Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Gifts and Hospitality Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Transporting Pupils Policy

Compliance

All staff must sign to confirm they have read, understood and agree to comply with this policy. A copy of the signed and dated form will be retained on the staff member's file.



Staff Code of Conduct

Confirmation of Compliance

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with the Everychild Partnership Trust's Staff Code of Conduct.

Name

Position Held.....

Signed

Date

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the HR Department at the Everychild Partnership Trust Office.