



# **Code of Conduct for Teaching and Support Staff**

**To be reviewed January 2019**

# **North Walsall Primary Academy**

## **Code of Conduct for Teaching and Support Staff**

### **I. Overview**

North Walsall Primary Academy seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment, which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for students in their care. Our values are set out in the Statement of Values.

This document should clarify what is expected in terms of professional behaviour; it gives clear advice about what constitutes illegal behaviour and what might be considered as misconduct. It also describes safe practice and which behaviours should be avoided.

**If a member of staff does not follow this code of conduct this may lead to disciplinary procedures.**

There may be times when professional judgements are made in situations not covered by this document, or which directly contravene the guidance given by their employer. It is expected that in these circumstances staff will always advise their senior colleagues of their justification for any such action already taken or proposed.

### **II. Core Principles**

- The welfare of pupils is paramount.
- Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- Staff should work, and be seen to work in an open and transparent way.
- Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from their line manager or another senior member of staff over any incident, which may give rise to concern
- Records should be made of any such incident and of decisions made/further actions agreed.
- Staff should apply the same professional standards in keeping with the School's Equality Policy.

- All staff should know the name of their designated person for child protection (Head Teacher, Deputy Teacher or safeguarding team), be familiar with child protection arrangements and understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect students.
- Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.

## **Safe Working Practices for the Protection of Students and Staff at North Walsall Primary Academy**

### **1. Introduction**

This guidance has been produced to help all staff whatever their position, roles, or responsibilities establish the safest possible learning and working environments. The aims are to safeguard young people and reduce the risk of staff being falsely accused of improper or unprofessional conduct.

***This means that these guidelines:*** settings  education working environment for staff and guidance about *position, roles, or responsibilities.*

### **2. Duty of Care**

Teachers and other staff are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority; manage risk; use resources; and protect students from discrimination and avoidable harm.

***This means that staff should:***

All staff, whether paid or voluntary, have a duty to keep young people safe and to protect them from physical and emotional harm. This duty is in part exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between staff and students and behaviour by staff that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement.

- *understand the responsibilities, which are part of their employment or role, and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached*
- *always act, and be seen to act, in the child's best interests*
- *avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions*
- *take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour*

There are legitimate high expectations about the nature of the professional involvement of staff in the lives of students. When individuals accept a role that involves working with children and young people, they need to understand and acknowledge the responsibilities and trust inherent in that role.

***This means that NWPA should:***

Employers have a duty of care towards their employees which requires them to provide a safe

- *ensure that safeguarding procedures are in place and reviewed*
- *ensure that systems are in place for concerns to be raised*

- *ensure that adults are not placed in situations which render them particularly vulnerable*

safe working practices.

### **3. Exercise of Professional Judgement**

This guidance cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for staff. It does highlight however, behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable. There will be occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or take action in the best interests of the students which could contravene this guidance or where no guidance exists. Individuals are expected to make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the children in their charge and in so doing, will be seen to be acting reasonably.

**4. Power and Positions of Trust** All adults working with pupils in education settings are in positions of trust in relation to the young people in their care. A relationship between a member of staff and a pupil cannot be a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people; staff have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.

Staff should always maintain appropriate professionalism and wherever possible, they should avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others, and report and record any incident with this potential.

### **5. Confidentiality**

Members of staff may have access to confidential information about students in order to undertake their every day responsibilities. In some circumstances staff may be given additional highly sensitive or private information. They should never use confidential or personal information about a student or his family for their own, or others'

advantage. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the student.

Confidential information about students should ***This means that where no specific guidance exists staff should:***

- *discuss the circumstances that informed their action, or their proposed action, with a senior colleague. This will help to ensure that the safest practices are employed and reduce the risk of actions being misinterpreted*

***This means that staff should not:***

- *always discuss any misunderstanding,*
- *use their position to gain access to accidents or threats with senior information for their own advantage leader and/or a students' or family's detriment*
- *use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine students*

***This means that staff:***

- *are expected to treat information they receive about students in a discreet and confidential manner*
- *in any doubt about sharing information they hold or which has been requested of them should seek advice from a senior member of staff*
- *need to be cautious when passing information to others about a student.*
- *Need to know to whom any concerns or allegations should be reported*

never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need to know basis. In circumstances where the student's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.

There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a student, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a duty to pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated child protection responsibilities.

If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from a senior member of staff. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to senior leadership.

Adults need to be aware that although it is important to listen to and support students, they must not promise confidentiality or request students to do the same under any circumstances.

Additionally concerns and allegations about adults should be treated as confidential and passed to a senior leader without delay.

## **6. Propriety and Behaviour**

All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of pupils. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to

maintain the confidence and respect of their peers, students and the public in general.

An individual's behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, should not compromise her/his position within the work setting so it is important to exercise due care and attention when outside of the school environment.

Membership of organisations whose goals are in conflict with the values and equality policies of the school is not acceptable.

## **7. Dress and Appearance**

***This means that staff should not:***

- ***behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with students or act as a role model.***

***Staff must:***

- *Be aware that their behaviour in their personal lives may impact upon their work with pupils.*

***This means that staff should ensure their appearance and clothing:***

- *promotes a positive and professional image, including ensuring that for male staff facial hair is either well shaved or Staff should consider the manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role. We require pupils to be smart in their uniform. Smart and professional appearance is expected at all times for staff. Staff*

should ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake.

Those who dress or appear in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate (which might include tattoos or piercings) could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegation. Appropriate personal presentation is expected of staff.

Jewellery should not be ostentatious; a maximum of two pairs of plain small stud or fine sleeper earrings will be acceptable.

### **8. Personal Living Space**

No pupil should be in or invited into, the home of an adult who works with them, unless the reason for this has been firmly established and agreed with parents and senior leaders or the home has been designated by the organisation or regulatory body as a work place e.g. childminders, foster carers.

### **9. Communication with pupils**

**(including the use of technology)** Communication between pupils and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites, social networking sites, online gaming and blogs. Adults should not share any personal information with a student. They should not request, or respond to, any personal information from the student, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. Adults should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny

Adults should also be circumspect in their communications with students so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming.

***This means that staff should:***

- *be vigilant in maintaining their privacy and mindful of the need to avoid placing themselves in vulnerable situations*
- *be mindful of the need to maintain professional boundaries*

***This means that staff should:***

- *only give their personal contact details to pupils, including their mobile telephone number, for professional reasons and with the knowledge of their line manager*
- *communicate with pupils in an appropriate and professional manner, making sure that parents have given permission for this form of communication to be used*
- *only make contact with pupils for professional reasons*
- *not use internet or web-based communication channels to send personal messages to a pupil*
- *not to have images of pupils stored on personal cameras, devices or home computers.*
- *not make images of pupils available on the internet, other than through the school network/website, without permission from parents and senior teachers*

They should not give their personal contact details to pupils including e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers, unless the need to do so is agreed with senior leadership and parents. E-mail or text communications between an adult and a pupil outside agreed protocols may lead to disciplinary and/or criminal investigations. This also includes communications through internet based web sites, such as social networking, instant messaging or gaming.

Be aware that actions that bring the school into disrepute could lead to disciplinary procedures being taken.

### **10.Social Networking Sites and Online Gaming**

NWPA's staff may use social networking sites for personal use. However, the school requires that profile and photos of the member of staff are 'locked down' as private so that pupils or parents do not have access to your personal data or images.

Staff must deny current or recent pupils access to your profile so you do not put yourself in a vulnerable position.

Staff should be aware that they leave themselves open to a charge of professional misconduct if images of a member of staff in a compromising situation are made available on a public profile by anyone.

If a pupil does gain access to the profile of a member of staff by fraudulent means (impersonation or hacking) senior leadership should be informed immediately.

Where relationships exist between staff and those who are also parents at the school, or personal friends who are parents at the school, social networking is acceptable but caution must be exercised so that professional standards are maintained and staff do not compromise themselves or the school.

As soon as a member of staff becomes aware that they are in an online game with a student of NWPA, the member of staff should cease

#### ***This means that staff should:***

- *Lock down their profile to ensure that data and images are not freely available. Seek advice if you are unsure how to do this.*
- *Do not permit current and recent pupils or parents to have access to your profile.*
- *Ensure all your passwords are kept strong and secure*

- *Be aware that images of others should be protected and be treated as carefully as you would your own*

to play against that student and should not enter any games containing that player as part of the group.

Under no circumstances should staff seek out pupils and/or share their own gamer tags/ID with students, or use school equipment to play online games.

**11. Physical Education and other activities which require physical contact.** Some staff, for example, those who teach PE and games, or who offer music tuition, will on occasions have to initiate physical contact with pupils in order to support a pupil so they can perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument or assist them with an exercise. This should be done with the student's agreement.

Contact under these circumstances should be for the minimum time necessary to complete the activity and take place in an open environment (see section 19, one-to-one situations, below). Staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the pupil.

### **12. Pupils in Distress**

There may be occasions when a distressed pupil needs comfort and 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.

Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance she should seek further advice from a senior leader.

### **13. Behaviour Management**

All pupils have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Staff should not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a pupil. The use of humour can help to defuse a situation. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards students is not acceptable in any situation.

### **14. Care, Control and Physical Intervention**

Staff may legitimately intervene to prevent a pupil from committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property, engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and

#### ***This means that staff should:***

- *consider alternatives, where it is anticipated that a pupil might misinterpret any such contact, perhaps involving another member of staff, or a less vulnerable pupil in the demonstration.*
- *always explain to a pupil the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take unless their safety is at immediate risk*

#### ***This means that staff should:***

- *consider the way in which they offer comfort to a distressed pupil*
- *always tell a colleague when and how they offered comfort to a distressed pupil*
- *record situations which may give rise to concern.*

#### ***This means that staff should:***

- *not use force as a form of punishment*
- *try to defuse situations before they escalate*
- *keep parents informed of any sanctions □  
adhere to NWPA's Behaviour policy.*

#### ***This means that staff should:***

- *always seek to defuse situations*
- *always use minimum force for the shortest period necessary.*

discipline. Staff should have regard to the health and safety of themselves and others.

Under no circumstances should physical force be used as a form of punishment. The use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence.

In all cases where physical intervention is deemed necessary, the incident and subsequent actions should be documented and reported.

**15. One to One Situations** Staff working in one to one situations with children and young people are more vulnerable to allegations. Teachers and others should recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure the safety and security needs of both staff and pupils are met.

Pre-arranged meetings with pupils away from the school premises should not be permitted unless approval is obtained from their parent and the Headmaster or other senior colleague with delegated authority.

### **16. Transporting Children**

In certain situations, for example out of school activities, staff or volunteers may agree to transport children. A designated member of staff should be appointed to plan and provide oversight of all transporting arrangements and respond to any difficulties that may arise.

Wherever possible and practicable it is advisable that transport is undertaken other than in private vehicles, with at least one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort. The driver must also have appropriate insurance.

Staff should ensure that their behaviour is safe and that the transport arrangements and the vehicle

***This means that staff should:***

- *avoid meetings with pupils in remote, secluded areas of the school*
- *ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in one to one situations*
- *inform other staff of the meeting beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by*
- *avoid use of 'engaged' or equivalent signs wherever possible. Such signs may create an opportunity for secrecy or the interpretation of secrecy*
- *always report any situation where a child becomes distressed or angry to a senior colleague*
- *consider the needs and circumstances of the child/children involved.*

### ***This means that staff should***

- *plan and agree arrangements with all parties in advance, responding sensitively and flexibly to disagreements*
- *ensure that they are alone with a child for the minimum time possible*
- *be aware that the safety and welfare of the child is their responsibility until this is safely passed over to a parent/carer*
- *report the nature of the journey, the route and expected time of arrival in accordance with agreed procedures*

meet all legal requirements. They should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.

### **17. Extra-curricular activities**

Staff should take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal

atmosphere of a residential setting or after-school activity.

During school activities that take place off the school site or out of school hours, a more relaxed discipline or informal dress and language code may be acceptable. However, staff remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour cannot be interpreted as seeking to establish an inappropriate relationship or friendship.

Where out of school activities include overnight stays, careful consideration needs to be given to sleeping arrangements. Pupils, staff and parents should be informed of these prior to the start of the trip.

Health and Safety arrangements require members of staff to keep colleagues/employers aware of their whereabouts, especially when involved in an out of school activity.

#### **18. First Aid and Administration of Medication**

The school has an administration of medication policy, which must be adhered to at all times.

#### **19. Intimate Care**

All children have a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of an intimate nature is required (for example assisting with toileting or removing wet/soiled clothing). A care plan should be drawn up and agreed with parents for all children who require intimate care on a regular basis.

Children should be encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their own personal care as is practicable.

#### ***This means that staff should:***

- *always have another adult present in out of school activities, unless otherwise agreed with senior staff in the school*
- *undertake a risk assessments*
- *have parental consent to the activity*

- *ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times.*

#### ***This means that staff should:***

- *make other staff aware of the task being undertaken*
- *explain to the child what is happening*
- *consult with colleagues where any variation from agreed procedure/care plan is necessary*
- *record the justification for any variations to the agreed procedure/care plan and share this information with parents.*

When assistance is required, staff should ensure that another appropriate adult is in the vicinity and is aware of the task to be undertaken.

Additional vulnerabilities that may arise from a physical disability should be considered with regard to individual teaching and care plans for each child. As with all arrangements for intimate care needs, agreements between the child, their parents and the organisation must be negotiated, agreed and recorded.

## 20. Curriculum

Many areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit, or of an otherwise sensitive nature. Care should be taken to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the learning outcomes identified by the lesson plan. This plan should highlight particular areas of risk and sensitivity.

## 21. Photography, Videos and other Creative Arts

Many school activities involve recording images. These may be undertaken as part of the curriculum, out of school activities, for publicity, or to celebrate achievement.

Staff need to be aware of the potential for these aspects of teaching to be misused for pornographic or 'grooming' purposes. Careful consideration should be given as to how these activities are organised and undertaken.

Using images of children for the school's publicity purposes has already had the consent of parents through the Home-School Agreement. Images should not be displayed on other websites, in publications or in a public place without additional consent.

### ***This means that staff should:***

- *have clear written lesson plans.*

### ***This means that staff should not:***

- *enter into or encourage inappropriate or offensive discussion about sexual activity.*

### ***This means that staff should:***

- *be clear about the purpose of the activity and about what will happen to the photographs when the lesson/activity is concluded*
- *ensure that a senior member of staff is aware that the photography/image equipment is being used and for what purpose.*
- *ensure that all images are available for scrutiny in order to screen for acceptability*
- *be able to justify images of children in their possession*
- *avoid making images in one to one situations.*

### ***This means that staff should not:***

- *have images of students stored on personal cameras, devices or home computers*
- *make images of students available on the internet, other than through the school network/website with permission from parents and senior teachers.*

## 22. Internet Use

NWPA has a clear policy about access to and the use of the Internet. Please refer to the acceptable use of Internet policy for further guidance.

Under no circumstances should adults in the school access inappropriate images. Accessing child pornography or indecent images of children on the internet, and making, storing or disseminating such material, is illegal and, if proven, will invariably lead to the individual being barred from work with children and young people.

Using school equipment to access inappropriate or indecent material, including adult pornography, would normally lead to disciplinary action, particularly if as a result pupils might be exposed to inappropriate or indecent material.

### **23. Whistleblowing**

Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. Please refer to the school Whistle Blowing Policy

Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior leadership and/or relevant external agencies. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

promptly recorded and reported to senior staff.

Early discussion with a parent could avoid any

- *should be familiar with NWPA's*

Members of staff should feel able to discuss with their line manager any difficulties or problems.  *should take responsibility for recording* that may affect their relationship with students so *any incident, and passing on that* that appropriate support can be provided or action *information where they have concerns* can be taken.

### **24. Sharing Concerns and Recording Incidents**

All staff should be aware of the school's child protection procedures, including procedures for dealing with allegations against staff. Staff who are the subject of allegations are advised to contact their professional association.

In the event of an incident occurring, which may result in an action being misinterpreted and/or an allegation being made against a member of staff, the relevant information should be clearly and ***This means that staff should:***

- *report any behaviour by colleagues that raises concern.*

***This means that staff:*** misunderstanding.

*Protection procedures* their line manager any

*about any matter pertaining to the welfare of an individual in the school or*

*workplace. – See Safeguarding Policy for further information*