

## **STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY**

### **Statement**

This policy sets out clear guidance on the standards of behaviour expected from all staff at The Bilbrough Country Classroom. 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.

School staff are in a unique position of trust and influence as role models for students. Therefore, staff must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all students within the school. They also have an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, both inside and outside working hours and work setting.

There are certain categories of information which employees must not disclose. Examples include sensitive information which could damage the interests of the School or its staff or pupils. Staff should seek guidance from their Headteacher on the categories of information that cannot be disclosed.

Employees must avoid using information obtained through their job for personal gain or to be used to the detriment of the school and/or its employees and/or students, or pass such information on to others who might benefit from it or use it to the detriment of the school and/or its employees and/or students.

Staff must not access school systems to gain information that is not directly related to their role or required in the course of their work

### **Personal Interests**

1. It is important that employees are protected from accusations of impropriety. Employees should declare in writing to the Headteacher any financial or non-financial interests which they consider could conflict with the interests of the School or adversely affect the performance of their duties.
2. Employees should also declare to the Headteacher membership of any secret societies. The definition of "secret society" is: "Any club, lodge, chapter, society, trust or regular gathering or meeting which:
  - - is not open to members of the public who are not members and;
  - - includes in the granting of membership a requirement of the member to make a commitment (whether by oath or otherwise) of allegiance and;
  - - includes, whether initially or subsequently, a commitment (whether by oath or otherwise) of secrecy in regard to rules, membership or conduct."

### **Professional Behaviour and Conduct**

1. Staff are expected to demonstrate the highest possible standards of personal and professional conduct and behaviour and consistently act with honesty and integrity. Bilbrough Country Classroom expects staff to treat each other, students, parents and the wider community with dignity and respect at all times.
2. Staff must act in accordance with their duty of care to pupils and ensure that the safety and welfare of pupils are accorded the highest priority.

3. Staff should show fairness in their treatment of each other and the students within the school and avoid behaviours that could be deemed embarrassing or humiliating. This requires that they avoid being sarcastic or making jokes at the expense of others, or discriminating against or favouring certain individuals over others.
4. Staff must have regard for the ethos and values of the school and must not do or say anything which may bring the school into disrepute. 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 school's policies and procedures at all times.
5. Where any element of staff behaviour, impropriety or breach of the policies set out in this document, is causing concern then the individual with the concern should inform the Headteacher. If the concern is with regard to the Headteacher then the Local Governing body should be informed.
6. Employees who work with contractors and other organisations where we operate in partnership should maintain a professional working relationship. Employees who have both a client and contractor responsibility should be aware of the need for accountability and openness.
7. Employees should exercise fairness and impartiality when dealing with customers, suppliers, contractors, sub-contractors and partner organisations. No special favour should be shown to current or recent employees, their partners, close relatives or friends in awarding contracts to businesses run by them or employing them in a senior position.

### **Gifts and Hospitality**

1. Employees should act with caution when accepting or giving gifts or hospitality and always seek approval from their Headteacher. All gifts and hospitality received or given must be declared. Employees who corruptly receive gifts will face disciplinary action. However, there may be occasions where students or parents wish to give a small token of appreciation to staff, for example at religious festivities or at the end of the year. This will be acceptable as long as such gifts do not contravene any element of this document.
2. It is unacceptable to accept gifts on a regular basis or to suggest to students that gifts are appropriate or desired. Money must not be accepted as a gift. If a member of staff is unsure whether to accept a gift they should consult the head teacher.
3. Other than as stated above, staff must not accept gifts or hospitality from pupils, parents, carers, actual or potential contractors or outside suppliers. All such gifts/offers of hospitality should be reported to their line manager and recorded or offered up to a suitable means of disposal.

### **Sponsorship**

When an outside organisation wants to sponsor a school based activity, event, location or publication, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily, the basic conventions concerning acceptance of gifts or hospitality apply.

If the school wants to sponsor an event or service, employees, their partner, spouse or relatives should not benefit directly without full disclosure to the governing body. Similarly, where the school gives sponsorship to a community project via a grant, employees should ensure there is no conflict of interest.

## **Contact with press and media**

1. In the main, the Headteacher is the only people who should have contact with the press or media. No employee should give a view which is contrary to or critical of the school policy. Employees must seek authorisation from the Headteacher prior to speaking to the media.
2. Outside working hours, an employee is entitled to voice their opinion on issues affecting the local community e.g. at a neighbourhood forum. However, employees must avoid any conflict of interest and should not criticise, damage or act in any way against the School, either verbally, or in making or writing a comment against a published article or a post on social media. Employees should also be mindful of any potential impact on the school if they take up or engage in any dispute or complaint with the Council and should avoid such situations where a conflict of interest may occur.

## **Dress and Appearance**

1. Bilbrough Country Classroom recognise that dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, all staff must dress in a manner that is appropriate to a professional role and that promotes a professional image.
2. Staff should dress in a manner that is not offensive, revealing or sexually provocative and in a manner that is absent from political or contentious slogans.
3. Staff should dress safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake.

## **Smoking, alcohol and other substances**

1. Bilbrough Country Classroom is a non-smoking site. Staff must not smoke on school premises or immediately outside school gates. Any member of staff wishing to smoke must leave the school grounds.
2. Staff must not smoke whilst working with or supervising pupils offsite.
3. Staff must not consume or be under the influence of alcohol, illicit drugs or other illegal substances on or near school premises.
4. Staff must refrain from the consumption of alcohol and other substances at school/student events both within the school premises and outside the school setting.

## **Relationships with Students**

1. Staff must maintain professional boundaries with students appropriate to their position and must always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe, not open to misinterpretation 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.
2. 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 staff should exercise their professional judgement in making a response and be aware that such social contact could be misconstrued.
3. Staff must not develop personal or sexual relationships with students and should not engage in any sexual activity with a student. Sexual activity does not just involve physical contact including penetrative and non-penetrative acts.
4. In terms of the safeguarding of children sexual abuse is defined 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).

5. Staff must not make sexual remarks to a student, discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of, students or discuss a pupil's sexual relationships in an inappropriate setting or context.
6. Contact with students should only be through the delivery of what would be considered to be normal school activities. 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 students. If contacted via an inappropriate route the member of staff must inform the Headteacher immediately.
7. Bilbrough Country Classroom staff must not accept friend invitations or become friends with any student on any social media platform. Staff should also refrain from following the Twitter or other similar social media accounts of students or their parents. Staff must read the school's E- Safety policy carefully and follow all advice and guidance contained within it.

### **Infatuations**

1. It is entirely possible that pupils or, sometimes, their parents develop infatuations towards members of staff. All such situations must be responded to sensitively to maintain the dignity of those concerned.
2. 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 an individual or another member of staff must be reported to the line manager in the first instance and the Headteacher as soon as possible.

### **Physical Contact with Pupils**

1. 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 pupils 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.
3. Staff should be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may 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 which 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 students.
4. 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.
5. Physical contact must never be secretive, for the gratification of the adult or represent a misuse of authority.

6. If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported to their line manager, recorded and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the child's file.

### **Child in distress**

1. There may be occasions when a 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.
2. Such incidents should always be recorded and shared with the line manager. If a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance they should seek further advice from their line manager.

### **One to one situations**

1. Staff working individually with students should be aware of the potential vulnerability of students and staff in such situations. Staff should manage these situations with regard to the safety of the student and to themselves.

### **Transporting pupils**

1. In certain circumstances it may be appropriate for staff to transport students offsite, for example sports fixtures, swimming lessons or other out of school activities. A designated member of staff should be appointed to plan and provide oversight of all transport arrangements and to respond to any difficulties that may arise.
2. Staff should ensure that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. Staff should ensure that the driver has the appropriate license for the vehicle, that the vehicle is roadworthy, has a valid MOT certificate and is appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.

### **E-Safety**

1. Staff should follow the schools E-Safety policy at all times.
2. Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school or the school community into disrepute. Staff should adopt the highest security settings on any personal profiles they have.
3. Staff must not make contact with pupils, must not accept or initiate friend requests nor follow student's accounts on any social media platform. Staff must not communicate with students via social media, websites, instant messenger accounts or text message.
4. 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.
5. Bilbrough Country Classroom 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, be to the detriment of the school, its staff and/or pupils or call into question their objectivity.

## **Photography, video and images of children**

1. Many school activities involve recording images as part of the curriculum, extra school activities, publicity or to celebrate an achievement or event. In accordance with The Data Protection Act 1998 and 2003 the image of a student is personal data. Therefore, it is a requirement under the Act for consent to be obtained from the parent/guardian of a student for any images made. It is also important to take into account the wishes of the student, remembering that some students do not wish to have their photograph taken or be filmed.
2. Using images for publicity purposes will require the age-appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their parent/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/video footage when the lesson or activity is concluded.
3. Photographs/stills or video footage of students should only be taken using school equipment for purposes authorised by the school and should be stored securely and only on school equipment.
4. Staff should ensure that a member of the Senior Leadership Team is aware of the proposed use of photographic/video equipment and that this is recorded in lesson plans. All photographs/stills and video footage should be available for scrutiny and staff should be able to justify all images/video footage made.
5. Staff should remain aware of the potential for images of students 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 students who may be unable to question how or why the activities are taking place. Staff should also be mindful that students who have been abused through the use of video or photography may feel threatened by its use in a teaching environment.

## **Confidentiality**

1. Members of staff may have access to confidential information about students, their parents/carers or their siblings. Members of staff may also have access to information relating to HR issues within the school which could also include strategic plans for the school. Staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the given situation, on a need to know basis.
2. Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a member of staff, a student or her/his family for their own, or others' advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other
3. All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a student is being bullied, this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate school procedure. It must not be discussed outside the school, including with the student's parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the school except with a member of staff with the appropriate authority to deal with the matter.
4. Staff have a statutory obligation to share with the head teacher, any information which gives rise to concern about the welfare or safety of a student or that might suggest a student is in need or at risk of significant harm. Staff should pass on information without delay in accordance with Bilbrough Country Classroom safeguarding policy and procedures and this should be recorded. Staff must never promise a student that they will not act on or pass on any information that they are told by the student.

5. If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share any information that they possess, they should seek guidance from the Headteacher.
6. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the Headteacher.

### **Whistleblowing**

1. Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, without fear of repercussion.
2. All school staff have a duty to report any behaviour by a colleague which raises concern. Staff should refer to Bilbrough Country Classrooms whistleblowing policy for further guidance. This is particularly important where the welfare of students may be at risk.