

# Staff code of conduct



**Approved by:** Head Teacher

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## Contents

1. Aims, scope and principles .....	
2. Legislation and guidance .....	
3. General obligations .....	
4. Safeguarding .....	
5. Staff/pupil relationships .....	
6. Communication and social media .....	
7. Acceptable use of technology .....	
8. Confidentiality .....	
9. Honesty and integrity .....	
10. Dress code.....	
11. Conduct outside of work.....	
12. Monitoring arrangements .....	
13. Links with other policies .....	

## 1. Aims, scope and principles

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

Many of the principles in this code of conduct are based on the [Teachers' Standards](#). And the NEU standards for teaching assistants [TA Standards only.pdf \(neu.org.uk\)](#)

School staff have an influential position in the school, and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour, characterized by mutual and appropriate respect.

We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards and Teaching assistants standards.

We expect all support staff, governors and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

At Ronald Tree Nursery School we believe in a whole school culture which is safe and inclusive.

Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in our staff disciplinary procedures.

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

We are required to set out a staff code of conduct under regulation 7 of [The School Staffing \(England\) Regulations 2009](#).

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance '[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)', 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.

### 3. General obligations

Staff are to set an example to pupils and their families. They will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school
- Treat pupils and others with dignity and respect
- Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- 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
- Come to work under the influence of alcohol or any other substance which might affect their judgement or behaviour
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within
- Adhere to:

Early Years Practitioner Standards [Early years practitioner / Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education](#)

Teachers' standards [Teachers' standards - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Teaching assistants' standards [TA Standards only.pdf \(neu.org.uk\)](#)

### 4. Safeguarding

It is essential that all staff attend regular training in Child Protection and safeguarding issues, and know the procedures for dealing with and reporting concerns.

All staff have a duty to safeguard the children from:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- neglect

The duty to safeguard pupils/students includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil/student to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection.

The school's Designated Safeguarding Lead is Deb Thwaites. If she is not on the premises speak to another member of the Safeguarding team: Christine Whitney or Mel Perkins

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect.

Staff will familiarise themselves with our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures, and the Prevent initiative, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child. This can be found on the school website and new staff will be directed to this during their induction.

#### 4.1 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that anyone working in the school, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or

- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place inside or outside of school

We will deal with any such allegation quickly and in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be the headteacher, or the chair of governors where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation.

## 4.2 Low-level concerns about members of staff

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harm threshold, is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt'. For example, this may include:

- Being over-friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on a personal device
- Engaging in 1-to-1 activities where they can't easily be seen
- Humiliating pupils

Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy. We also encourage staff to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage staff to report it.

All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way.

Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed, and the staff member supported to correct it, at an early stage.

This creates and embeds a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff, while minimising the risk of abuse.

Reporting and responding to low-level concerns is covered in more detail in our child protection and safeguarding policy. This is available on our school website:

[Ronald Tree Nursery School - Child Protection, Safeguarding and Whistleblowing](#)

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

## 4.3 Whistle-blowing

Whistle-blowing reports wrongdoing that it is "in the public interest" to report. Examples linked to safeguarding include:

- Pupils' or staff's health and safety being put in danger
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement
- Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest

Staff are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. Their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and their confidentiality will be respected.

Staff should consider the examples above when deciding whether their concern is of a whistle-blowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or school procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

Staff should report their concern to the headteacher. If the concern is about the headteacher or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the chair of the governing board.

Concerns should be made in writing wherever possible. They should include names of those committing wrongdoing, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter.

## 5. Staff/pupil relationships

Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils and their families 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.

If staff members and pupils must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

- This takes place in a public place that others can access
- Others can see in to the room
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

Staff are allowed to comfort a child who is hurt/distressed in a manner appropriate to the age of the child. Holding children's hands is generally appropriate. However, adults should not initiate any physical contact unnecessarily, and there should be clear boundaries:

- Children should not be picked up. (unless medically necessary or being restrained)
- Children should not sit on an adult's lap.
- Staff should not initiate hugs with children, however, if a child initiates a hug for comfort or security, the benefit of physical touch to support emotional regulation should be considered and responded to appropriately
- Adults should avoid being in a room alone with a child where the door is closed. If you need to talk to a child, either leave a door open and position yourself within sight of the door, or ask another adult to be present.

Staff should avoid contact with pupils and their families outside of school hours if possible.

It is an offence under the sexual offences Act 2003 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.

Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes social media profiles.

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 should only be collaborative group gifts which will be agreed on with line managers beforehand.

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 headteacher.

## 6. Communication and social media

School staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils and their families. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should 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 not attempt to contact pupils or their parents via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship. They will not make any efforts to find pupils' or parents' social media profiles.

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at the school without their consent.

Staff should be aware of the school's e-safety policy:

[Northamptonshire County Council E-safety Policy \(ronaldtreenursery.co.uk\)](http://ronaldtreenursery.co.uk)

## 7. Acceptable use of technology

Staff will not use technology in school to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.

Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school equipment for personal use, in school hours or in front of pupils. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.

Mobile phones will be kept in the staff room or lockers away from the classroom. In certain circumstances – for example when waiting for a call back from doctors or schools, staff may request to keep their phones on their person and leave the room when a call comes through.

Smart watches that do not have cameras may be worn, but notifications should be turned off and messages are not to be read or responded to during working hours unless urgent.

We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system.

## **8. Confidentiality**

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

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.

## **9. Honesty and integrity**

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities.

Staff will not accept bribes. Gifts that are worth more than £25 must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register. See the Bribery Act Policy for further details.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the school about their qualifications and professional experience is correct. Staff should be honest in all dealings with the Head Teacher, including reasons for absence.

## **10. Dress code**

Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner. Outfits will not be overly revealing, and should be appropriate for working with young children.

Clothes (or visible tattoos) will not display any offensive or political images/slogans.

## **11. Conduct outside of work**

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school, or the Early Years profession into disrepute. This covers relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school on social media.

Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school nor be to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance. Any such work should be reported to the head teacher in advance.

## **12. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed every two years, but can be revised as needed.

## **13. 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 procedures
- Safeguarding and child protection
- E-safety and acceptable use policy
- Staff Well-Being policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Staff special leave, well-being days and working from home procedures
- Staff Handbook

All of these policies alongside many others can be found on the staff area of the school website.

In the case of any ambiguity between policies, the statutory Code of Conduct and any NNC HR policies take precedence in decision making.

All staff should have a log-in to the staff area and should use this to support their professional knowledge.