SVPS Staff Code of Conduct Policy

2024-2025

Governor Committee Responsible:	P & P	Staff Lead	Mr. G. Mills
Status	Advisory	Review Cycle	Annual
Last Review	September 2024	Next Review Date	September 2025

Designation	Name	Date	Signature
Chair of P & P	Mr. R. Ellis	03.09.24	
Head Teacher	Mr. G. Mills	03.09.24	

FOREWORD

The public is entitled to have trust and confidence in the integrity of Swindon Village Primary School, its staff, governors and volunteers. The conduct of all must therefore be of the highest standard. This Code of Conduct has been prepared to help employees and volunteers on issues of conduct by providing a framework of guidelines.

All adults working at Swindon Village Primary must act with utmost good faith with regard to the business of the School, and do all in their power to promote the School's interests and not do anything which may adversely affect the school's reputation.

Staff should be aware that a failure to comply with the following Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including dismissal.

This code of conduct should be read in conjunction with:

- Teacher Standards
- Latest Keeping Children Safe in Education September/Safer Working Practice/Latest Working Together to Safeguard Children
- GCC Conduct Policy

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.

We recognise that School staff have an influential position in the school, and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour. We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards. We expect all support staff, governors and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in the local authority 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. EXPECTATIONS

Employees are expected to:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
  - Members of teaching staff should arrive in school by **8.20am** and be ready to welcome children into school from 8:45am.
  - Teachers should remain on site until all their children are dismissed to home/afterschool club…etc.
  - **Staff should remain on site for a reasonable amount of time for professional meetings, meetings with colleagues, parents…etc. Exceptions to this may include a pre-arranged appointment or where they are undertaking school business. In cases such as these, agreement should be sought with either the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or Line Manager.**
  - Non-teaching staff are governed by the terms and conditions as stated within their contracts but should be on the school site by no later than 10 mins before their contracted start time. This allows all staff to get themselves ready for their agreed start time.
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school around children
- Treat pupils and others with dignity and respect – 3Bs
- Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others – 3Bs
- 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 – 3B
- 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
- Adhere to Health and Safety and COVID-19 routines and systems that have been put in place to keep themselves and others safe.

4. SAFEGUARDING *(To be read in conjunction with the latest Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and guidance contained on the school website)*

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child-centred. **This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.**

Staff will familiarise themselves with both local and statutory guidance as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education and all safeguarding and child protection procedures. They must ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

Our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and associated procedures are available in paper form at request, and from the schools online Key Docs (all staff have access to this).

New staff will also be given copies or links to copies via the school website on arrival as part of the school's induction process. The spectrum of behaviour for all staff is outlined in the diagram below:

Allegation

Behaviour which indicated that an adult who works with children has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicated they may pose a risk to children

Low-Level Concern

Any concern – no matter how small, even if no more than a 'nagging doubt' – that an adult may have acted in a manner which:

- Is not consistent with an organisation's Code of Conduct, and/or
- Relates to their conduct outside of the work place which, even if not linked to a particular act or omission, has caused a sense of unease about that adult's suitability to work with children.

Appropriate Conduct

- Behaviour which is entirely consistent with the organisations Code of Conduct, and the law

4.1 Allegation Management

The school will follow the guidance as set out in the latest Keeping Children Safe in Education as well as adhering to GSCP guidance.

Staff should familiarise themselves of the following local guidance:
https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gscp/lado-allegations/

4.2 Low level concerns

As part of their whole school approach to safeguarding, everyone at Swindon Village Primary should ensure that they promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the school (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

Creating a culture in which all concerns about adults (including allegations that do not meet the harms threshold) are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately, is critical.

If implemented correctly, this should encourage an open and transparent culture; enable our school to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour early; minimise the risk of abuse; and ensure that adults working in or on behalf of the school are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the school's ethos and values.

4.2.1 What is a low-level concern?

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold. 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 working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:
- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone and using them for inappropriate reasons;

4.2.2 What is the purpose of having an approach to low-level concerns?

- To ensure staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others;
- To empower staff to share any low-level safeguarding concerns with the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy);
- To address unprofessional behaviour and supporting the individual to correct it at an early stage;
- To provide responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised; and,
- To help identify any weakness in the school's safeguarding system.

4.2.3 Sharing low-level concerns (please refer to low-level concern form in Appendix 1)

- Low-level concerns about a member of staff should be reported to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy). Where a low-level concern is raised about the designated safeguarding lead, it should be shared with the Chair of Governors if the DSL is the Headteacher
- Staff are encouraged and feel confident to self-refer, where, for example, they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.
- Where a low-level concern relates to a person employed by a supply agency or a contractor to work in school, that concern should be shared with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy),

and/or headteacher, and recorded in accordance with the school's low-level concern/staff code of conduct policy, and their employer notified about the concern, so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

4.2.4 Recording and responding low-level concerns

All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing by the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy). The record should include:
- details of the concern,
- the context in which the concern arose,
- and action taken.

The name of the individual sharing their concerns should also be noted, if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible.

- If the concern has been raised via a third party, the designated safeguarding lead should collect as much evidence as possible by speaking:
  - directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously;
  - to the individual involved and any witnesses
- The information collected will help the DSL or deputy to categorise the type of behaviour and determine what further action may need to be taken. All of this needs to be recorded along with the rationale for their decisions and action taken.
- The records must be kept confidential, held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Records will be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, the school will decide on a course of action, either through its disciplinary procedures or where a pattern of behaviour moves from a concern to meeting the harms threshold, in which case it will be referred to the LADO.
- Consideration will also be given to whether there are wider cultural issues within the school that enabled the behaviour to occur and where appropriate policies could be revised or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again.
- Records will be retained at least until the individual leaves their employment.

4.2.5 What are the implications for a reference?

Keeping Children in Safe is clear that schools should only provide substantiated safeguarding allegations in references. Low level concerns 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. It follows that a low-level concern which relates exclusively to safeguarding (and not to misconduct or poor performance) should not be referred to in a reference. However, 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.

4.2.6 Whistle-blowing

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

> Pupils' or staff members' 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 Chair of Governors and report to the LADO

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.

For our school's detailed whistle-blowing process, please refer to our whistle-blowing policy.

5. STAFF/PUPIL RELATIONSHIPS

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.

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 should avoid contact with pupils outside of school hours if possible.

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 individual pupils are not acceptable. Staff are however able to provide gifts to the whole class at certain times of the year e.g. to say thank you to their class at the end of the academic year.
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 immediately.

6. STAFF/PARENT/CARER RELATIONSHIPS

Staff always seek to work in partnership with parents, using their understanding of their own child to help us to provide the best learning opportunities that staff can. Staff recognise parents' entitlement to express any concerns they may have about their child's learning, safety or staff well-being. Staff are

honest with parents, without undermining colleagues and respond fairly to their concerns irrespective of their race, religion, culture or social background.

The school Complaints Policy is readily available via the school website for all stakeholders. This makes clear to staff/parents/carers how concerns can be escalated to more senior staff. It is therefore important for staff to make sure that senior staff are aware of any escalation in a timely manner.

7. HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, parents/carers, handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities. Staff will not accept bribes.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the school about their qualifications and professional experience is correct.

8. CONDUCT OUTSIDE WORK

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school, or the teaching 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.

8.1 PRIVATE TUTORING

All staff should not engage in outside employment e.g. private tutoring of the schools own pupils which could be considered as undermining or conflicting with the business of the school. There is also the potential appearance of bias that could reduce the confidence that parents should have in the school.

Staff should not arrange private tuition of any of the school's pupils, in school or beyond, during term time or holiday time.

9. 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.

10. STAFF DRESS

Staff should dress in a manner that exhibits the importance of the job that they do. They avoid wearing clothes that could cause offence or embarrassment to others. At Swindon Village Primary, light blue jeans are not considered acceptable, unless staff are participating in a trip or visit that requires harder wearing clothes (e.g. residential trips). Staff should not wear excessive amounts of jewellery and understand their own Health and Safety responsibilities.

When leading physical activities and/or PE lessons (including Sports Day), staff should come in suitable clothing for that lesson (e.g. training shoes and tracksuit).

11. COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA

School staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils. 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.

11.1 ACCEPTABLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

The school recognises that the wide range of rapidly developing communications technologies has the potential to enhance learning. 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.

The table in Appendix 2 shows how the school currently considers the benefit of using these technologies for education. It should be noted that failure to adopt this protocol may result in disciplinary action being undertaken. More detailed guidance can be seen in the Acceptable Use Policy which should be read in conjunction with this staff Code of Conduct.

11.2 DEALING WITH UNSUITABLE/INAPPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES

Some internet activity e.g. accessing child abuse images or distributing racist material is illegal and would obviously be banned from school and all other technical systems. Other activities e.g. cyber-bullying would be banned and could lead to criminal prosecution. There are however a range of activities which may, generally, be legal but would be inappropriate in a school context, either because of the age of the users or the nature of those activities.

The school believes that the activities referred to in Appendix 2 would be inappropriate in a school context and that users, as defined below, should not engage in these activities in/or outside the school when using school equipment or systems.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Low-level concern form

<table>
<tr>
<td colspan="6">Swindon Village Primary School low-level concern form

Please use this form to share any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than a 'nagging doubt' – that an adult may have acted in a manner which:

is not consistent with SVPS Code of Conduct, and/or
relates to their conduct outside of work which, even if not linked to a particular act or omission, has caused a sense of unease about that adult's suitability to work with children.

You should provide a concise record – including brief context in which the low-level concern arose, and details which are chronological, and as precise and accurate as possible – of any such concern and relevant incident(s) (and please use a separate sheet if necessary). The record should be signed, timed and dated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Staff Member</td>
<td colspan="5"></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role:</td>
<td colspan="5"></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of concern:</td>
<td colspan="5"></td>
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<tr>
<td>Signed</td>
<td colspan="5"></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time and Date</td>
<td></td>
<td>At (Time)</td>
<td></td>
<td>On (Date)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions Taken (Specify)</td>
<td colspan="5"></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signed</td>
<td colspan="5"></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="6">This record will be held securely in accordance with the Swindon Village Primary School's low-level concerns policy which can be found in the Staff Code of Conduct. Please note that low-level concerns will be treated in confidence as far as possible, but the school may in certain circumstances be subject to legal reporting requirements or other legal obligations to share information with appropriate persons, including legal claims and formal investigations.</td>
</tr>
</table>

Appendix 2: Acceptable Use of Technology in School

Staff (including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers and contractors where appropriate)				
Communication Technologies	Allowed	Allowed at certain times	Allowed for selected staff	Not allowed
Mobile phones may be brought to school	Y			
Use of mobile phones in lessons (*Unless in the case of an emergency or where phone use has been agreed with HT/DHT)				Y*
Use of mobile phones in break / lunch times	Y			
Use of mobile phones when on playground duty (*Unless in the case of an emergency or where phone use has been agreed with HT/DHT)				Y*
Used of mobile phones during staff meetings / INSET* (All mobile phones to be kept on silent or turned off prior to the start of any meeting; where possible the phone should be kept out of view so that meetings are not disturbed)		Y		
Taking photos on school mobile equipment such as cameras and/or school ipads (*or where the HT/DHT has agreed for this to happen and then the photos to be transferred to the schools accounts and deleted)	Y*			
Taking photos on mobile phones or other camera devices (*seek HT/DH permission before taking photos)		Y*		
Storing school images of children on personal devices				Y
Use of personal email in school (*unless the HT/DHT has agreed because of a technical issue and to aid coms)				y*
Use of chat rooms / facilities in school hours				Y

Appendix 3: Dealing with unsuitable / inappropriate activities

User actions		Acceptable	Acceptable at certain times	Acceptable for nominated users	unacceptable	Unacceptable and illegal
Users shall not visit Internet sites, make, post, download, upload, data transfer, communicate or pass on, material, remarks, proposals or comments that contain or relate to:	Child sexual abuse images –The making, production or distribution of indecent images of children. Contrary to The Protection of Children Act 1978					x
	Grooming, incitement, arrangement or facilitation of sexual acts against children Contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 2003.					x
	Possession of an extreme pornographic image (grossly offensive, disgusting or otherwise of an obscene character) Contrary to the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008					x
	Criminally racist material in UK – to stir up religious hatred (or hatred on the grounds of sexual orientation) - contrary to the Public Order Act 1986					x
	Pornography				x	
	Promotion of any kind of discrimination				x	
	threatening behaviour, including promotion of physical violence or mental harm				x	
	Promotion of extremism or terrorism					x
	Any other information which may be offensive to colleagues or breaches the integrity of the ethos of the school or brings the school into disrepute				x	
Activities that might be classed as cyber-crime under the Computer Misuse Act: • Gaining unauthorised access to school networks, data and files, through the use of computers/devices • Creating or propagating computer viruses or other harmful files Revealing or publicising confidential or proprietary information (e.g. financial / personal information, databases, computer / network access codes and passwords) • Disable/Impair/Disrupt network functionality through the use of computers/devices • Using penetration testing equipment (without relevant permission)						x
Using systems, applications, websites or other mechanisms that bypass the filtering or other safeguards employed by the school/academy					x	
Revealing or publicising confidential or proprietary information (e.g. financial/personal information, databases, computer/network access codes and passwords)					x	
Unfair usage (downloading/uploading large files that hinders others in their use of the internet)					x	
Using school systems to run a private business					x	
Infringing copyright					x	
On-line gaming (educational)					x	
On-line gambling					x	
On-line shopping/commerce					x	
File sharing					x	