



# Suffolk County Council Code of Conduct

Adopted by

**Trimley St Mary Primary School**

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Term to review	Autumn 2025

<b>Document Reference</b>	SCC 173
<b>Document Title</b>	Code of Conduct
<b>Description</b>	Policy
<b>Version Number</b>	V1.0
<b>Version Date</b>	May 2024
<b>Last Review Date</b>	May 2024
<b>Next Review</b>	May 2026
<b>Reviewed By</b>	Julia Pearson
<b>Document History</b>	V1-May 24

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### 1. Purpose

The overriding expectation is that employees, volunteers, and those engaged to work in the school will adopt the highest standards of personal integrity and conduct both in and outside work. As role models they must behave, through their words and actions, at all times in a manner which demonstrates their suitability to work with children and which upholds the standards and reputation of the school.

This code of conduct provides an overall framework of the behaviours expected of individuals who work in the school.

The code is not intended to be exhaustive, and individuals should use professional, ethical, and moral judgements to act in the best interests of the school, its pupils, and its community.

This code should be read in conjunction with:

- Other school policies and procedures
- The terms of any employment or service contracts and agreements
- Relevant professional standards

## 2. Aims, Scope and Principles

This policy applies to all individuals employed by the school or those engaged by the school including:

- Relief/casual staff
- Supply staff
- Third parties providing services to the school (including self-employed)
- Voluntary workers

The school aims to:

- Set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow.
- Ensure Trimley St Mary Primary School is an environment where everyone is safe, happy, and treated with respect.

The school principles are:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- Staff should understand their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.
- All teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards.
- School staff have an influential position in the school and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating the highest standards of behaviour, ethics, and values.
- All support staff, governors, and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.
- Employees have an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation, and the reputation of the school, inside and outside working hours.
- Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviours and should avoid any conduct which would lead to any person to question their motivation and intentions.
- Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from their line manager, if they have acted in a way which may give rise to concern.

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

Trimley St Mary Code of Conduct will be shared with all employees as part of their induction programme. Thereafter, all employees will be expected to revisit the Code of

Conduct on an annual basis, along with other school policies, including, Child Protection, Safeguarding and Health and Safety Policies.

Each year, employees are required to sign to confirm they have read and agreed to abide by the contents of these policies, the content of which serve to safeguard children and young people.

### **3. Legislation and Guidance**

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

Many of the principles in this Code of Conduct are based on the [Teachers' Standards](#). Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards can be found in Appendix 1.

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 and safeguarding practices.

### **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

#### Governing Board

It is the responsibility of the Governing Board to establish and monitor standards of conduct and behaviour within the school, including the establishment of relevant policies and procedures.

Governors and Trustees should adhere to their own Code of Conduct.

#### CoHeadteachers and Line Managers

It is the responsibility of the CoHeadteachers and line managers to address promptly, any breaches of acceptable conduct and behaviour, using informal procedures where possible, but implementing formal procedures where necessary.

#### Employees

It is the responsibility of all employees to familiarise themselves with, and comply, with this Code of Conduct.

#### Engaged Workers/Volunteers

Engaged workers and volunteers are required to familiarise themselves, and comply, with this Code of Conduct so far as is relevant to their role. Any breaches of this Code of Conduct may result in the engagement of the worker/volunteer being terminated, in accordance with any applicable terms of engagement.

## 5. General Obligations

All staff who work within the school are setting examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by students. Therefore, staff must always display model professional behaviour. They will:

- Avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.
- Demonstrate the highest standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same.
- 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.
- Follow Government, and Public Health guidance during periods of global/ national/ local health pandemics/epidemics, during working and non-working hours.
- Express personal beliefs in a way that will not overly influence pupils and will not exploit pupil's vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- Avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.
- Not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or any substance. An individual prescribed medication should seek advice from their medical practitioner for any side effects and whether this impacts the ability to care for children in school. This make lead to reasonable adjustments being implemented, supported by a risk assessment.
- Apply the same professional standards regardless of culture, disability, gender, gender identify, language, racial origin, religious belief, and sexual orientation.
- Disclose all relationships which may create an enhanced risk to children irrespective of whether they have received a Childcare Disqualification.
- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality.
- Treat pupils and others with dignity and respect.
- Understand the statutory frameworks and all school policies in which they must act within.
- Adhere to the Teachers' Standards, or any other standards that apply to their role.

- Staff and managers should continually monitor and review practice to ensure this guidance is followed.

## 6. Reporting breaches of this Code of Conduct

The school wishes to promote an open environment that enables individuals to raise issues in a constructive way, and with confidence that they will be acted upon appropriately, without fear of recrimination/retaliation.

All employees, engaged workers, and volunteers are expected to bring to the attention of an appropriate line manager/Governing Board/Trustee any impropriety, deficiency in the provision of service or breach of policy or this code of conduct. Where appropriate, individuals should also refer to the School's Whistleblowing Policy.

## 7. Safeguarding

Full safeguarding guidance can be found in [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#). Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education, establishes two levels of concern that should be reported:

- i. Allegations that may meet the harms threshold
- ii. Allegations/concerns that do not meet the harms threshold – referred to for the purposes of this guidance as 'low level concerns'.

Further details of these levels of concern can be found in Appendix 2.

All staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from harm. This includes, physical, emotional, sexual, online, peer on peer abuse, neglect, exploitation, extremism, and radicalisation.

Our safeguarding policies can be found in the staffroom, the main office or saved on the school website.

All staff will:

- Report all concerns about a pupil to the schools' Designated Safeguarding Lead Phil Murray and at least one CoHeadteacher.
- Familiarise themselves with the schools' policies and procedures, particularly the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy to ensure that they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.
- Not demean or undermine pupils, their parents or carers, or colleagues.
- Must take the upmost care of pupils under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.
- Self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted.

- Handle reports in a responsive, sensitive, and proportionate way.

“Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with Children and Young People in Education Settings” issued by the Safer Recruitment Consortium sets out key expectations for adult interactions with children and young people –the full guidance is available [here](#).

In addition, individuals should be aware that it is criminal offence (s 16. 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.

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.

## 8. 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 weren't doing so.

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

Personal contact details must never be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes social media profiles.

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 into the room,
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place.

Staff should declare any relationship they may have with a pupil outside of work. This includes, but not limited to:

- Pupil is a family member,
- Pupil is a child of a friend,
- Pupil is in attendance to clubs or activities outside of school, where the employee is also present.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, this should be reporting to their line manager and CoHeadteacher immediately.

## 9. Staff / Staff Personal relationships at work

Employees must not allow personal relationships with a colleague to influence their conduct at work. Employees are expected to declare any personal relationships at work which may fall under this policy. The policy sets out Trimley St Mary's expectations concerning personal and professional boundaries at work and the management of personal relationships at work.

Trimley St Mary does not take a wholly prohibitive approach to personal relationships at work, as it is recognised that these are inevitable in any workplace. However, this policy seeks to ensure that such relationships are declared are transparent, and do not give rise to more or less favourable treatment.

This policy provides clear guidance to employees and managers, as their responsibilities to ensure, that issues arising from or involving personal relationships at work are dealt with promptly, sensitively, and effectively. By adhering to the guidelines in this policy, employees with personal relationships at work are more able to protect themselves from potential criticism.

Trimley St Mary's approach to personal relationships at work



In any workplace it is likely that some employees will be related to one another or develop a personal relationship, and if they are in close working relationship in the same school, the potential for conflict between personal/family loyalty and work responsibilities may arise.

In the UK, there are no specific laws governing personal relationships at work. However, legislation relevant to personal relationships in the workplace includes:

- The Equalities Act 2010;
- Protection of Harassment Act 1997;
- The Human Rights Act 1998 (Article 8), which provides for the right to a private and family life.

Workplace relationships have the potential to be detrimental to the operation and reputation of the school. For example, it could cause issues relating to:

- A conflict of interest (i.e., when an individual might be seen to be influencing school matters for actual, potential, or perceived personal benefit);
- Subjective or unfair recruitment decisions;
- Preferential or inconsistent treatment of employees;
- Breaches of confidentiality between the employees in the relationship;
- The perceptions of colleagues, parents or other members of the school community being shared as ‘gossip;’
- Inappropriate or unprofessional behaviours (e.g., physical contact at work);
- Positional power based on one person’s position in the school’s staffing structure;
- Bullying and harassment (e.g., unwanted physical contact or making threatening or insulting comments);
- The risk of inappropriate behaviours or grievances being raised if a personal relationship breaks down.

Despite these potential challenges, it is recognised that relationships in the workplace will not necessarily have any negative impact on the school’s operation or reputation. Also, employees have a right to a private life and this needs to be balanced against the potential impact of personal relationships at work. The right to a private life is not to be restricted by banning personal relationships at work.

However, it is recognised that there will be particular circumstances where the employees concerned will need to withdraw from certain decisions or from undertaking certain roles, in order to protect themselves and (and the school) from any possible criticism of unfair bias.

While it is not the school’s intention to infringe upon the private lives of its employees, it does expect that all employees (and others in scope of this policy) should always conduct themselves in ways that are consistent with the school’s values and with fairness and impartiality.

Where personal relationships occur between employees, it is the responsibility of both individuals to avoid any actual or potential conflicts of interest or favouritism.

## 10. Pupil Development

Staff must comply with school policies and procedures that support their wellbeing and development of pupils.

Staff must cooperate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies, where necessary, to support the development of pupils.

Staff must follow reasonable instructions that support the development of pupils.

If any staff member has any concerns regarding a pupil's learning or wellbeing development, they should report this to their line manager, promptly.

## 11. Communication and Social Media

For the purpose of this policy, 'Social Media' is defined as 'a form of electronic communication.' This includes, but is not limited to the following platforms:

- WhatsApp
- Instagram
- X (previously known as Twitter)
- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- TikTok
- YouTube
- Snapchat
- Email

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

If a personal profile is present on social media sites, considerations of using a first and middle name instead of a full name 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, for any reason.

There must not be any efforts to find pupils' or parents' social media profiles.

If parents/students contact staff via a social media account this should be reported to a DSL in school and a message requesting contact be made through the school with contact details attached used as a response.

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

Staff must not post, share, or comment in any way on social media that may bring the school or the individual's reputation into disrepute.

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network which may bring themselves, the school into disrepute.

Staff must not discuss pupils or relatives/guardians of pupils or colleagues on social media.

Staff must not share any confidential school information that may result in placing the school in disrepute or present a risk to the health and safety of pupils and employees.

Further information / details can be found within the schools Social Media policy.

## **12. 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
- Viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.

Staff must not use their school email account for personal use at any time.

Staff must not use personal electronic communication devices and cameras such as, mobile phones or tablets, to take pictures or videos in the school grounds.

Any photographs/video footage must be taken using school equipment and saved on the schools' IT Equipment.

Personal devices should not be used during directed hours of employment, unless in exceptional circumstance, and the employee's line manager has been notified. Outside directed times, mobile phones should only be used where pupils are not present.

Any school equipment that is issued to staff members, must be used for work purposes only. Personal accounts and details should not be present on the work device.

We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system as per the Acceptable Use of ICT policy.

## **13. 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 should never be:

- Disclosed to anyone unless required by law or with consent from the relevant party or parties.
- 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 Designated Safeguarding Lead where staff believe a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

Staff have an obligation to share with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, any information which gives to concern about the safety or welfare of a pupil. Staff must never tell/promise a pupil that they will not act on the information that they have disclosed.

Staff should not discuss pupils, colleagues, or the school in public places in any manner. Confidential instances must not be discussed outside school grounds, nor should it be discussed with other employees except with a senior member of staff with the appropriate role and authority to deal with the matter.

#### Media queries

Workers must not speak to the press or respond to media queries on any matter relating to the school. All media queries should be referred immediately to a CoHeadteacher/Chair of Governors.

## **14. Honesty and Integrity**

Staff must maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.

All staff must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they offer, promise, or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or if the request, agree or accept, or receive a bribe from another person. All concerns should be reported via the whistleblowing procedure.

Gifts from suppliers, parents or pupils exceeding the approximate value of £50 must be declared to a CoHeadteacher, or to the Chair of Governors, if a CoHeadteacher is the recipient.

Staff members should not give student's personal gifts as this action could be misinterpreted.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the school about their qualifications and professional experience is correct. Where there are any updates to the information provided to the school, the member of staff will advise the school as soon as reasonably practicable.

## **15. Property and possessions**

Staff must ensure they always take due care of school property, including proper and safe use, security, appropriate maintenance and reporting faults. If employees are found to have caused damage to school property, through misuse or carelessness this may result in disciplinary action.

Staff are responsible for the safety and security of their personal possessions, while on school premises. The school will not accept responsibility, for the loss or damage of personal possessions.

## 16. Dress Code

All staff are role models to all of our students. As such we should “demonstrate the positive values, attitudes and behaviour we expect from children and young people”

Employees must wear clothing which:

- is appropriate to their role.
- is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative.
- does not distract, cause embarrassment, or give rise to misunderstanding.
- is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans.
- is not considered to be discriminatory and is culturally sensitive.

Dress and general appearance should not incite, intimidate, break Health and Safety regulations, or impede the ability to carry out our professional roles.

## 17. Conduct Outside of Work

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school into disrepute or that calls into question their suitability to work with children. This covers conduct including but not limited to relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, inappropriate behaviour such as lewd or offensive action, as well as negative comments about the school on social media.

Workers must disclose to the school ( a CoHeadteacher and in the case of a CoHeadteacher to the Chair of Governors) immediately, any wrongdoing or alleged wrongdoing by themselves (regardless of whether they deny the wrongdoing/alleged wrongdoing), including any incidents arising from alternative employment or outside of work which may have a bearing on their employment or engagement with the school.

Employees should also refer to the expectations, set out in their contract of employment and the disciplinary procedures.

Employees should declare to a CoHeadteacher if they are attending a second place of work, to ensure there is not a conflict of interest and the employee is following the [Working Time Regulations 1998](#). Secondary employment or engagement must not interfere with the performance of the employee’s duties with this Employer.

In addition, employees should not engage in business or employment activities which are incompatible with or might conflict with the school's interests.

## **18. Disciplinary Action**

All staff need to recognise that failure to meet these standards of behaviour, and conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

## **19. Links with Other Policies**

This policy links with our policies on:

- 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.
- Grievance procedures
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Social Media Policy
- ICT policy

## **Appendix 1: DfE ‘Teachers’ Standards’**

### **Part 2: Personal and Professional Conduct**

A teacher is expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct throughout a teacher’s career.

Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:

- treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher’s professional position
- having regard for the need to safeguard pupils’ well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others, not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils’ vulnerability or might lead them to break the law

Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.

Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

## Appendix 2: Keeping Children Safe in Education- Levels of Concern

### Section one: Allegations that may meet the harm threshold as identified in paragraphs

356. This part of the guidance is about managing cases of allegations that might indicate a person would pose a risk of harm if they continue to work in their present position, or in any capacity with children in a school or college.

This guidance should be followed where it is alleged that anyone working in the school or a college that provides education for children under 18 years of age, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors 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;
- Behave or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

### Low level concerns

425. As part of their whole school approach to safeguarding, schools and colleges 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 or college (including supply teachers, volunteers, and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

408. Creating a culture in which all concerns about adults are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately, is critical. If implemented correctly, this should

- Enable schools and colleges to identify inappropriate, problematic, or concerning behaviour early.
- Minimise the risk of abuse  
Ensure that adults working in or behalf of this school or college are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries and in accordance with the ethos and values of the institution.

### What is a low-level concern?

427. The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant. 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 or college 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 harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children



- having favourites
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door, or
- humiliating children.

428. Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

429. Low-level concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources. For example: suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent, or other adult within or outside of the organisation; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.

430. It is crucial that all low-level concerns are shared responsibly with the right person and recorded and dealt with appropriately. Ensuring they are dealt with effectively should also protect those working in or on behalf of schools and colleges from becoming the subject of potential false low-level concerns or misunderstandings.

## **Appendix 3: Code of Conduct guidance for all staff**

### **When we speak to others we will:**

- Use a positive statement rather than a negative one so that children can learn what we expect of them in any situation.
- Always use a calm tone of voice, to explain something to or instruct the children, so that they can follow our words without feelings threatened or uncomfortable.
- Never use demeaning words or phrases to children as these may harm them from developing high self-esteem.
- Always communicate respectfully and professionally to other adults, even when we disagree.

### **As professionals we will:**

- Avoid workplace gossip and negativity as it breeds a toxic work environment and becomes a barrier to effective communication and collaboration.
- Maintain confidentiality about anything that we see or hear in the school, reporting concerns as appropriate, through agreed school processes.
- Work as part of a team by contributing as well as learning from others. Help to work collaboratively to build a strong workforce so that we can provide the best possible learning opportunities for the children.
- Work within the schools' policies and procedures to ensure consistency in approach between all members of the staff and governors.
- Treat everyone with respect.
- Dress appropriately, so that we set a good example and role model for the children.
- Behave in a positive way at all times.
- Report any safeguarding concerns, regarding children to the designated safeguarding lead by using the school's internal procedures.
- Report any concerns regarding the behaviour of an adult to the Head Teacher or if the concern is about the Head Teacher, to the Chair of Governors.