



# **KNOCKAVOE SCHOOL**

## **&**

# **RESOURCE CENTRE**

## *Code of Conduct Policy*

**2023**

Position	Signed	Date
Principal	<i>Sheron Cassidy</i>	<i>30/3/23</i>
Chair of Board of Governors	<i>June Neill</i>	<i>30/3/23</i>



## **Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers in Schools (Circular 2017/04 Annex C)**

### **Objective, Scope and Principles**

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school staff and volunteers are expected to observe. School staff and volunteers are role models and are in a unique position of influence and trust and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the pupils within the school. As a member of a school community, each person has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside working hours.

- This Code of Conduct applies to all staff and volunteers of the school.
- This Code of Conduct does not form part of any employees' contract of employment.

### **The Code includes sections on:**

1. Setting an Example
2. Safeguarding Pupil
3. Private Meetings with Pupils
4. Relationships with Pupils
5. Physical Contact with Pupils
6. Honesty and Integrity
7. Conduct Outside of Work
8. E-Safety and Internet Use
9. Confidentiality
10. Dress and Appearance
11. Disciplinary Action
12. Compliance

### **1. Setting an Example**

- All staff and volunteers who work in Knockavoe School should set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils. Staff must therefore, for example, avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.
- All staff and volunteers must demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same. They should demonstrate our core values in conversations and relationships with other staff and volunteers in the school showing respect at all times.
- All staff and volunteers must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.



- This Code helps all staff and volunteers to understand what behaviours are and are not acceptable and regard should also be given to the disciplinary rules set out by the employing authority. (Education Authority – EA)
- All staff and volunteers are expected to familiarise themselves and comply with all school policies and procedures.

## **2. Safeguarding Pupils**

- All staff and volunteers have a duty to safeguard pupils from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- The duty to safeguard pupils includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil or colleague to a member of the school's Safeguarding team (Designated Teacher (DT) Grainne Dunne/Deputy Designated Teacher (DDT) Emma McGinn, Catherine Burke and Jim Callaghan for Child Protection or the Principal – Mrs Sharon Cassidy).
- All staff and volunteers are provided with copies of the school's Child Protection Policy and EA Whistleblowing Policy via email. They must be familiar with these documents and other relevant school policies e.g. e-Safety and Acceptable Use Policy.
- All staff and volunteers should treat children with respect and dignity. They must not demean or undermine pupils, their parents, carers or colleagues.
- All staff and volunteers should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of pupils, embarrassing or humiliating pupils, discriminating against or favouring pupils.
- All staff and volunteers must take reasonable care of pupils under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare. Staff should also complete and be aware of Risk Assessments/Risk Management Plans/Medical Care Plans where appropriate in accordance with school policies and WHSCT procedures.
- Risk Assessments must be completed and signed by Principal or Vice Principal prior to educational visits; as per Educational Visits Policy.

## **3. Private Meetings with Pupils**

- Staff should be aware of the dangers which may arise from private meetings with individual pupils. It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential meetings must take place. As far as possible, staff



should conduct such meetings in a room with visual access, or with the door open.

- Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the meeting is taking place. It may be necessary to use a sign indicating that the room is in use, but is not advisable to use signs prohibiting entry to the room.
- Where possible another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the meeting, and staff will take active measures to facilitate this.
- Staff should be mindful of the potential risks involved in the use of social networking sites accessed by pupils.

#### **4. Relationships with Pupils**

- All staff and volunteers must declare any relationships that they may have with pupils/pupils outside of school; this may include mutual membership of social/youth/sports groups, tutoring, respite or family connections. Staff and volunteers should not assume that the school are aware of any such connections. A declaration form may be found in Appendix 1 and 2 of this document.
- Relationships with pupils must be professional at all times, sexual relationships with pupils are not permitted and may lead to an abuse of trust and criminal conviction.

#### **5. Physical Contact with Pupils**

- To avoid misinterpretations, and so far as is practicable, staff and volunteers are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with a pupil.
- It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, to suggest staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, such as a hug, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this level of reassurance.
- Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm.
- Staff who have to administer first-aid to a pupil should ensure, wherever possible, that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. *However, no member of staff should hesitate to provide first-aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.*
- Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to his / her HOD / PRINCIPAL.
- Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting, or in approved out of school's activities, where more informal



relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school/work environment. Please remember if a child makes any disclosures or presents with behaviours that would indicate a child protection concern, please inform lead member of staff on residential immediately. They must then contact the school immediately on receipt and inform a member of school's Child Protection Team.

- Staff and volunteers should therefore be cognisant of the guidance issued by the Department on the use of reasonable force (Circular 1999/09 and guidance document 'Towards a Model Policy in Schools on Use of Reasonable Force).

## 6. Honesty and Integrity

- All staff and volunteers must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work as per our school core values. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities. All resources/equipment remain the sole property of the school and must not be removed. Receipt books are provided for each class and must be used to record monies received. Each class should keep an Audit book for monies received/spent throughout the academic year. All books to be submitted to the school office, in keeping with GDPR.
- Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to the Principal with the exception of "one off" token gifts from pupils or parents (please see our school Hospitality & Gifts Policy). Personal gifts from individual members of staff or volunteers to pupils are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted and may lead to disciplinary action. A record will be kept of all gifts received.





## **7. Conduct Outside of Work**

- All staff and volunteers must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the staff/volunteers own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.
- In particular, criminal offences that involve violence, possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are to be regarded as unacceptable and will lead to disciplinary action.
- Staff and volunteers may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school. It should not contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance in the school. Staff should seek advice from the Principal when considering work outside the school.

## **8. E-Safety and Internet Use**

- Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Regard should be given to the schools' 'E-Safety' and 'ICT Acceptable Use Policy' at all times both inside and outside of work.
- Staff and volunteers must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute. Staff and volunteers should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have.
- Staff should exercise caution in their use of all social media or any other web based presence that they may have, including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts established by others. This may also include the use of dating websites where staff could encounter pupils either with their own profile or acting covertly. Staff need to be vigilant that any, personally posted, online pictures/photos should not identify their place of work.
- Contact with pupils must be via school authorised mechanisms. At no time should personal telephone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with pupils.
- If contacted by a pupil by an inappropriate route, staff should report the contact to the Principal immediately.
- Photographs/stills or video footage of pupils should only be taken using school equipment for purposes authorised by the school. Any such use



should always be transparent and only occur where parental consent has been given as per Video/Photo Consent Forms. The resultant files from such recording or taking of photographs must be retained and destroyed in accordance with the schools GDPR Policy, IAR and Disposal Schedules. It is recommended that personal mobiles are not used to take photo/video footage, however on occasion in the absence of a school device personal phones may be used to capture special images/ video footage. Staff should transfer these to school devices as soon as possible and delete from their personal phone.

### **9. Confidentiality (In Line with Safeguarding Policies and Procedures)**

- Members of staff and volunteers may have access to confidential information about pupils in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities. In some circumstances, on a need to know basis, staff may be given additional highly sensitive or private information. They should never use or discuss confidential or personal information about a pupil or his family for their own, or others' advantage. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the pupil or family.
- Confidential information about pupils should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need to know basis. In circumstances where the pupil's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.
- There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a pupil, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a duty to pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated child protection responsibilities who will inform the relevant bodies as appropriate.
- If a member of staff or volunteer is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from member of SMT. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the Principal or Vice Principal.
- Staff and volunteers need to be aware that although it is important to listen to and support pupils, they must not promise confidentiality or request pupils to do the same under any circumstances.
- Additionally, concerns and allegations about adults should be treated as confidential and passed to the Principal without delay. If the concern is about the Principal the concern must be passed to the Chair of the Board of Governors.
- The school's child protection arrangements should include any external candidates studying or sitting examinations in the school.



## **10. Dress and Appearance**

- All staff and volunteers must dress in a manner that is appropriate to their role and promote a professional image.
- Staff and volunteers should dress in a manner that is not offensive, revealing or sexually provocative.
- Staff and volunteers should dress in a manner that is absent from political or other contentious slogans. Staff and volunteers should not be wearing any clothing with emblems or crests that may cause offence.

## **11. Disciplinary Action**

- Staff and volunteers should be aware that a failure to comply with this Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including but not limited to dismissal.
- The Principal will take advice from EA regarding any matter that could potentially lead to disciplinary action.

## **12. Compliance**

- All staff and volunteers must complete the form in Appendix 1 to confirm they have read, understood and agreed to comply with the code of conduct. This form should then be signed and dated.





Appendix 1 -

**Confirmation of Compliance and Relationship Declaration**

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby staff and volunteers of the school are known to pupils outside of work. Examples include membership of social/youth/sports groups, tutoring, respite or family connections

Staff must declare any relationship outside of school that they may have with pupils.

Employee Name	Pupil Name	Relationship

**\*All staff and volunteers must complete the section below.**

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with the school's Code of Conduct Policy.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position/Post Held \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Principal.**



Appendix 2 -

**Pupils Outside of Work Declaration**

*(All staff and volunteers must declare any relationships that they may have with pupils/pupils outside of school; this may include mutual membership of social/youth/sports groups, tutoring, respite or family connections. Staff and volunteers should not assume that the school are aware of any such connections).*

I can confirm that I am fully aware of the code of conduct relating to contact out of school with pupils in line with this policy.

If I am in contact with a pupil outside of school, I am aware that the following must be adhered to:

- I emphasise to parents that this is done completely independently of the school.
- No monies come through the school at any point, informally (eg via the child) or formally.
- No private contact is to take place on the school premises. Any exceptions to this must be agreed with the Principal e.g. if a staff member is supporting a pupil through direct payments and this starts after contracted working hours.

I confirm that if these circumstances change at any time I will complete a new form to ensure the school are aware of any relationships.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Principal.**