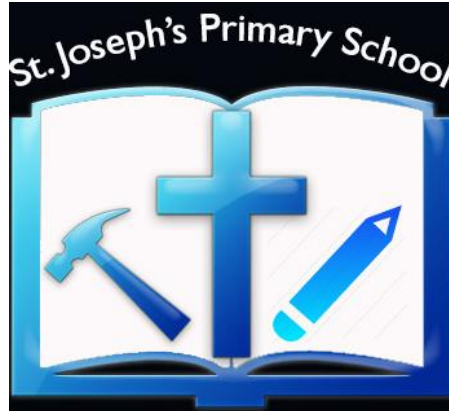


St. Joseph's Primary School, Meigh



STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

Agreed by Governing Body	October 2018
Review Date	October 2020
Review Schedule	Biennial
Person(s) Responsible	Principal/Safeguarding Team
Signed (Chair of Governing Body)	

The use of the word **staff** in this policy also refers to **governors, volunteers, students (teaching and non-teaching) and work experience pupils** working in the school. **All such personnel** are required to adhere to this Code of Conduct.

The Schools Designated Teacher is Mrs J. Brennan

and the DDT is Mrs L. Garvey

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Code of Conduct is intended as a guide and help to all school staff in St. Joseph's Primary School, Meigh. It sets out standards of conduct which staff are expected to follow when within, or representing the school. All actions in dealing with children, parents, colleagues and associated school business should be shaped and influenced by the code. We in St. Joseph's, Meigh uphold high expectations in accordance with our Catholic ethos, Teachers' Pay & Conditions of Employment and the Equality Act (2010) ensuring discrimination, direct or indirect, harassment and victimisation are challenged to ensure equality.

This document is not a prescriptive guide to what staff should and should not do. It highlights the principal areas where staff need to be aware of their responsibilities when working in the school and is a framework for behaviour. All staff should ensure they are familiar with the specific policies that underpin these behaviours.

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the children and young people in their charge must be above reproach. This Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interaction with staff within the education sector. It is intended to assist in respect of the complex issue of child abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk and offering staff guidance on prudent conduct.

This Code is not exhaustive but is written to assist staff and it is important that staff should take advice and guidance if necessary. If in doubt seek clarification.

1.2 Staff are requested to read this Code carefully and consider the issues it raises

1.3 The Principal should also ensure that all staff are aware of the Code's contents and are fully briefed on its implications.

1.4 Reference to this code will be made in all contracts of employment, and copies will be given to all staff. In addition, the induction programme for all new staff will reinforce the principles of this Code.

1.5 Investigations of alleged breaches of this Code will be covered under the School's Disciplinary procedures and related codes of practice.

1.6 All staff have personal and legal responsibilities, including; treating others with dignity and respect; acting honestly, using public funds and school equipment appropriately, adhering to health and safety guidelines and practising equal opportunities at all times. These expectations are set out below and should be fully observed by all staff.

1.7 Investigations of alleged breaches of this Code will be covered under the School's Disciplinary procedures and related codes of practice.

CODE OF CONDUCT

2.0 EXCLUSIVITY OF SERVICE

- 2.1 Staff's off-duty hours are their personal concern, but they should avoid a position where duty and private interests conflict.
- 2.2 The School does not seek to preclude staff unreasonably from undertaking additional employment but you are required to devote your full time, attention and abilities to your duties during your working hours and to act in the best interests of the School at all times. Accordingly, you must not, without the written consent of the EA-Southern Region, undertake any employment or engagement which might interfere with the performance of your duties or conflict with the interests of the School.
- 2.3 It follows that, regardless of whether you are employed on a full-time or fractional contract, you are required to notify the EA-Southern Region and Principal of any employment or engagement which you intend to undertake whilst in the employment of the School. (including any such employment or engagement which commenced before your employment began with the School).

3.0 SPECIFIC ASPECTS

- 3.1 **Discrimination:** Staff must at all times observe the School's Equal Opportunities Policies for staff and pupils and treat pupils, parents and other stakeholders in accordance with those policies.
- 3.2 **Health and Safety:** Staff must take care of their personal hygiene, safety and welfare, and that of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions. All staff must comply with the requirements of the School Health and Safety policy and relevant legislation and regulations, and also ensure that pupils do likewise.
- 3.3 **Fire:** Staff must familiarise themselves with the fire precautions, procedures and drill routines. They must regard practice fire drills or building evacuations in a positive manner, and ensure they are perceived by pupils as an essential precaution to prevent risk of injury or fatality.
- 3.4 **Business Practice:** Staff must maintain an impeccable standard of integrity in all their professional relationships.
- 3.5 **Media:** Other than on matters of publicity, only the Principal is authorised to speak or send any communication on behalf of the School to members of the press or broadcast media. This decision is to avoid any embarrassment or unfair pressure on staff. This authorisation may be extended by the Principal to other staff members.
- 3.6 **Copyright:** Staff shall observe copyright laws on computer software, audio-visual and printed material.
- 3.7 **Data Protection Act/GDPR**

It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure the School's compliance with GDPR. Personal data must only be used to assist you to carry out your work; it must not be given to people who have no right to see it. All staff should maintain the security of all computerised databases of information on individuals, whether they are staff, pupils or members of the general public. Staff should refer any queries to the Principal.

4.0 **GENERAL POINTS**

Staff should display the highest possible standards of professional behaviour that is required in an educational establishment (**see also Appendix 1**).

4.2 Staff should seek to co-operate with their colleagues, providing support, help and guidance as required by them and their line manager, and enable effective communication throughout the School.

4.3 Staff should not use their position in the School for private advantage or gain.

4.4 Staff should avoid words and deeds that might bring the School into disrepute or might undermine colleagues in the perception of others (staff/pupils/parents/community).

4.5 Staff should retain professional independent objectivity and not promote dogma or political bias to others in their working activities.

4.6 Staff should be aware of, and should follow School policies systems and procedures. They should normally communicate through the line management structure, and should ensure pupils do likewise.

4.7 Continuing professional development and support shall be provided by the School and, where appropriate and agreed, will be based on the objectives of the School Development Plan. Periodically, employees will be required to attend certain training activities.

4.8 Staff should attend their place of work punctually in accordance with their conditions of service and at the times agreed with their line manager. Those unable to avoid being late or absent should, whenever possible, give as much notice to the Principal so that alternative cover arrangements may be made. Notification to the Principal in the **first instance** should be by way of phone call up to 11pm and not before 7am.

5.0 **ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES**

5.1 Teaching staff shall maintain and properly complete a register for all classes. The attendance register and associated monies/correspondence etc., must be sent to the office before 10.00am every morning together with the dinner register.

5.2 In order to ensure safeguards both for staff and pupils, staff must obtain permission from the Principal:

- before taking pupils off the School premises;
- before arranging for any visiting speakers;
- before incurring any expenditure on behalf of the School.
- before sending out any letters from the school. (All communications must be approved)

6.0 **CONFIDENTIALITY**

6.1 Members of staff and volunteers may have access to confidential information about students in order to undertake their every day responsibilities. In some circumstances staff may be given additional highly sensitive or private information. They should never use confidential or personal information about a student or his/her family for their own, or others' advantage. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the student.

- 6.2 Confidential information about students should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need to know basis. In circumstances where the student's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.
- 6.3 There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a student, 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.
- 6.4 If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from a senior member of staff. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to senior leadership.
- 6.5 Adults need to be aware that although it is important to listen to and support students, they must not promise confidentiality or request students to do the same under any circumstances.
- 6.6 Additionally concerns and allegations about adults should be treated as confidential and passed to a senior leader without delay
- 7.0 **WHEN IN DOUBT, ASK!**
If any member of staff is in any doubt with regard to the guidelines of this Code, and how they apply in any particular situation, then please consult with the Principal. It is re-emphasised that this Code is intended to be a help and to enable fairness and equity between all staff.

Conclusion

Relationships and Attitudes

We value greatly the relationships which exist between staff and pupils in St. Joseph's Primary School and we would wish to see those maintained. It is always necessary, however, to ensure that these relationships are appropriate and professional so that the warm and caring atmosphere which is an integral part of our community and which is so nourishing for everyone, is enabled to flourish.

Within the Pastoral Care Policies of St. Joseph's Primary School staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age, maturity and gender of the pupils, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought.

Verbal Interaction

All verbal exchange in school shall be conducted in a calm and professional manner. During school time staff should address other staff and parents as Mr, Miss, Mrs and never by their first names in front of children. Only in unusual circumstances, for example in emergency situations or when attracting attention in large areas, should voices be raised. Sarcastic, threatening or demeaning verbal interaction is not acceptable. The use of humour can be helpful in diffusing situations but the humour used must be understood and appropriate.

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 Principal or in their absence the designated teacher.

Failure to abide by the Staff Code of Conduct may result in Disciplinary Action.

Monitoring of the Code of Conduct

The monitoring of the actions described in the Code of Conduct is the responsibility of all staff. Any breaches of the Code must be reported according to the Safeguarding Procedures and to the Principal. The matter will then be dealt with according to Safeguarding Procedures or the Disciplinary Procedures.

The governors, via the Principal, will monitor the Staff Code of Conduct, in order to ensure that all it is consistently applied.

Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy. This policy is made available to all parents, so that they can be properly informed.

Members of staff are also referred to the following school policies:

- Safeguarding Policy/Child Protection;
- Positive Behaviour;
- Safe Handling;
- Special Educational Needs;
- Anti-Bullying;
- Pastoral Care;
- Intimate Care;
- First Aid and Administration of Medicines;
- Relationships and Sexuality Education;
- Educational Visits;
- Acceptable Use Policy for Mobile Phones and Related Technologies;
- eSafety;
- Use of Reasonable Force;
- Managing Attendance at Work;
- Whistleblowing;
- Directed Time Guidance; and
- Health & Safety.

Compliance

All staff must complete the form (sign and date) in Appendix 4 to confirm they have read, understood and agreed to comply with the Code of Conduct.

Appendix 1 – Professional Behaviour

Appendix 2 – Child Protection

Appendix 3 – Disciplinary Rules

APPENDIX 1

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR

Professional behaviour is a generic term, but within this Code of Conduct includes such aspects as:

- acting in a fair, courteous and mature manner to pupils, colleagues and other stakeholders;
- co-operating and liaising with colleagues, as appropriate, to ensure pupils receive a coherent and comprehensive educational service;
- endeavouring to assist the School achieve its corporate and strategic objectives – in particular, by adopting a positive attitude to marketing and the achievement of quality and equality;
- respect for School property;
- maintaining the image of the School through standards of professional dress and presentation, (no denim, nose/tongue piercings, provocative attire etc.), standards of general courtesy, correct use of school stationary, etc.
- taking responsibility for the behaviour and conduct of pupils in the classroom and sharing such responsibility elsewhere on the premises;
- being fit for work (ie not adversely influenced by drugs, alcohol, etc.);
- being familiar with job requirements (eg proper preparation, use of suitable methods/systems, maintenance of appropriate/required records, etc), including keeping up-to-date with developments relevant to the job.
- being familiar with communication channels and School procedures applicable to both pupils and staff;
- ensuring all assessments/exams/tests are conducted in a fair and proper (prescribed) manner, and that procedures are strictly followed with respect to confidentiality and security;
- respect for the rights and opinions of others.
- Avoid personal disputes and resolve to settle conflict immediately and in a calm and public viewpoint;
- Do not question decision making in the public domain, but seek an audience away from the public viewpoint;
- Respect confidentiality

This list is not exhaustive but the examples are given as a summary.

Appendix 2

CHILD PROTECTION

All actions concerning children must uphold the best interests of the child as primary consideration. Staff must implement all school policies and procedures including the child protection policies and procedures at all times.

A. GUIDELINES FOR SELF PROTECTION

- a. In the event of injury to a child, ensure that it is recorded and witnessed by another adult. Keep records of any false allegations a child makes against you or other staff including: “you are always picking on me,” or “You hit me,” or comments such as “Don’t touch me.” Keep records of dates and times. Get another adult to witness the allegations if possible.
- b. If a child touches you or talks to you in a sexually inappropriate way or place, record what happened and tell another adult. As it could be totally innocent, do not let the child feel at fault. However, remember that ignoring this or allowing it to go on may place you in an untenable situation. Neither is it a good idea for the child to go on doing this to another person who might take advantage and say the child instigated it. Do give firm guidelines on what is appropriate behaviour to the child.
- c. Do not spend excessive amounts of time alone with one child away from other people. In one-to-one situations leave the door open and tell another member of staff you are going to see the child alone.
- d. If you are in a care situation with a child try to have another person present. (**see Intimate Care Policy**)
- e. Never do something of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves. This includes cleaning bottoms, etc., or any activity which may be misconstrued. Parent permission must be given for intimate care.
- f. Do not go into the toilet alone with children if possible.
- g. Be mindful of how and where you touch a child. Never pat a child on the bottom.
- h. Be careful of extended hugs and kisses from children. Discourage children from being over familiar. The guideline is important, not only for your protection, but for the children. This may be particularly relevant for children with special needs.
- i. If you must physically restrain a child be aware that this could be interpreted as assault. (**See Reasonable Force Policy**)
- j. Never use sexually suggestive comments about a child, even in jest.
- k. Never keep suspicions of abuse or inappropriate behaviour by a colleague to yourself. If there is an attempt to cover-up, you could be implicated through your silence.

- I. All children must leave the school premises within ten minutes of the end of day bell, unless parental permission has been given.

We subscribe to the following good practice in the following areas:

B. Private Meetings with Pupils

- a. Staff should be aware of the dangers that may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place. As far as possible, staff should conduct such interviews in a room with visual access, or with the door open.
- b. Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. It may be necessary to use a sign indicating that the room is in use but it is not advisable to use signs prohibiting entry to the room.
- c. Where possible another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview, and the school will take active measures to facilitate this.

B. Physical Contact with Pupils

- a. As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils.
- b. It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.
- c. ***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, or others or property from harm. (DENI Circular 1999/on the use of reasonable force, gives guidance on Article 4 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (Power of member of staff to restrain pupils) and Reasonable Force Policy 2012.***
- d. There should **never** be any physical response to misbehaviour whatever the provocation, this is illegal, except where it is required to maintain the safety of the pupil or that of others. In this event the reasonable force policy should be fully adhered to and the incident reported immediately to the Principal.
- e. In particular circumstances, such as use of certain areas like the swimming pool we have our own guidelines for these circumstances. Teachers stay outside changing rooms and verbally encourage children to change quickly. Teachers should only enter changing rooms in the case of an emergency.
- f. 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.
- g. Any physical contact, which would be likely to be misinterpreted, by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.
- h. Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting, or in approved out of school 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.

- i. Where physical contact is required to maintain the safety of the pupil or others around them that safety must take precedence over all other considerations.

D. Choices and Use of Teaching Materials

- a. Teachers should avoid teaching material, the choice of which, might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.
- b. When using teaching materials of a sensitive nature a teacher should be aware of the danger that their application, either by pupils or by the teacher, might after the event be criticised. Schools have already received advice on the value of consulting parents and Governors when proposing to use materials in connection with Relationships and Sexuality Education programmes.
- c. If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the principal before using it. If the material to be used is very contentious, and if there are concerns about any pupils in a class in relation to it, it is good practice to consult with the Principal.

E. E-Safety and Internet Use

- a. It is **strongly recommended** that members of staff do not allow pupils to have access to their personal mobile phone numbers/devices or to their personal and school email addresses. Mobile phones must not be used during teaching time.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- d. Social Networking Sites present particular difficulties for staff in all schools. Great care must be taken to ensure that appropriate boundaries are maintained between staff, parents and pupils at all times. It is **strongly recommended** that no member of our staff communicate with pupils or parents via social networking sites, at any time. Information directly related to the school community must never be posted on personal social networking sites. Staff should also be mindful of content attributable to them, posted on others sites (eg. friends and family) who may not have the privacy settings recommended. Any attempt by parents or pupils to communicate with staff in this way must immediately be brought to the attention of the Principal and Designated Teacher. Parental queries should not be responded to by individuals but referred to the principal.
- e. Any material that is witnessed on Social Media in regard to our school, our staff and our pupils must be reported immediately to the Principal. 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.
- f. Contact with students 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 students. If contacted by a student by an inappropriate route, staff should report the contact to the Principal immediately.
- g. Photographs/stills or video footage of students 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. The resultant files from such recording or taking of photographs must be retained and destroyed in accordance with the schools Records Management Policy and Disposal Schedules.

APPENDIX 3

DISCIPLINARY RULES

The following are examples of behaviour which the School finds unacceptable. The list is not exhaustive and it is acknowledged that it will be necessary to exercise judgement in all cases and to be fair and reasonable in all the circumstances. Please make further reference to 'A Policy Statement and Code of Practice on Measures to combat Harassment for all staff...'

- a. Any form of physical/verbal violence towards pupils.
- b. Physical violence, actual or threatened towards other staff or visitors to the School.
- c. Sexual offences, sexual insults or sexual discrimination against pupils, other staff or visitors to the School.
- d. Racial offences, racial insults or racial discrimination against pupils, other staff or visitors to the School.
- e. Theft of School monies or property and of monies or property of colleagues or visitors to the School. Removal from School premises of property which is not normally taken away without the express authority of the Principal or of the owner of the property may be regarded as gross misconduct.
- f. Deliberate falsification of documents such as time sheets, subsistence and expense claims for the purpose of gain.
- g. Acceptance of bribes or other corrupt financial practices.
- h. Wilful damage of School property or of property belonging to other staff or visitors to the School.
- i. Wilful disregard of safety rules or policies affecting the safety of pupils, other staff or visitors to the School.
- j. Any wilful act which could result in actionable negligence for compensation against the School.
- k. Refusal to comply with reasonable instructions given by staff with a supervisory responsibility.
- l. Gross neglect of duties and responsibilities.
- m. Unauthorised absence from work.
- n. Being untruthful and/or engaging in deception in matters of importance within the School community.
- o. Deliberate breaches of confidentiality particularly on sensitive matters.
- p. Being incapable by reason of alcohol or drugs (not prescribed for a health problem) from fulfilling duties and responsibilities of employment.
- q. Conduct which substantially brings the name of the School into disrepute or which seriously

undermines confidence in the employee.

The following are examples of behaviour which could lead to formal disciplinary warnings.

- r. Unsatisfactory timekeeping without permission.
- s. Neglect of safety rules and procedures. Some offences of wilful neglect may be regarded as gross misconduct.
- t. Breaches of confidentiality. Deliberate breaches on sensitive matters may be regarded as gross misconduct.
- u. Failure to comply with reasonable work related requirements or lack of care in fulfilling the duties of the post.
- v. Behaviour towards other employees, pupils, and visitors which gives justifiable offence. Certain behaviour giving rise to offence may be regarded as gross misconduct.
- w. Acting in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as rude, impolite, contemptuous or lacking appropriate professional demeanour. In certain circumstances such behaviour may be regarded as gross misconduct.
- x. Conduct which it is considered adversely affects either the reputation of the School or affects confidence in the employee. Certain conduct may be regarded as gross misconduct.

