

**BALLYTOBER**



**Code of Conduct  
for  
Employees**

**Ratified : 28<sup>th</sup> June 2022**

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_**

## INTRODUCTION

At Ballytober Primary School we are committed to the code of ethics outlined in the General Teaching for Northern Ireland Code of Values and Professional Practice. The code sets out professional values and responsibilities which we uphold in our daily practice and professional duty.

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school staff, volunteers and visitors are expected to observe. The underlying purpose is to ensure that the School provides a high-quality service to its pupils and stakeholders in accordance with the vision/ ethos and to promote public confidence in the integrity of the school. 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/students 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, volunteers and visitors of the school.**

**This Code of Conduct does not form part of any employees' contract of employment.**

## SETTING AN EXAMPLE

- Everyone who works in school sets an example of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils/students. Everyone must therefore, for example, avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.
- Everyone must demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils/students to do the same.
- Everyone must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.
- This Code helps everyone to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable and regard should also be given to the disciplinary rules set out by the employing authority.
- Everyone is expected to familiarise themselves and comply with all school policies and procedures.

- The highest possible standards of professional behaviour that is required in an educational establishment should be demonstrated at all times by everyone.
- Staff and volunteers 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.
- Staff should also speak highly of their colleagues and demonstrate **ZERO TOLERANCE** on a parent speaking in a negative manner about any staff member. Any parent that has a complaint should be directed to Mrs Anderson for a meeting (made by appointment) and no dialogue taking place at the school door. Parents will be advised of the complaints procedure and how, if they wish, they can make their views known in writing to the BOG.
- Staff should not use their position in the school for private advantage or gain.
- Staff and volunteers should avoid words and deeds that might bring the school into disrepute or might undermine colleagues in the perception of staff/ pupils/ parents/ community.
- Staff and volunteers should retain professional independent objectivity and not promote dogma or political bias to others in their working activities.
- Staff and volunteers 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.
- 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.
- Staff and volunteers 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.
- Personal use of mobile phones or personal digital devices for all members of staff and volunteers are restricted to lunch/break times or to deal with emergencies only.

## **SAFEGUARDING PUPILS**

- Everyone has a duty to safeguard pupils/students from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- The duty to safeguard pupils/students includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil/student or colleague to a member of the school's Safeguarding team (Designated Teacher, Mrs Leighton : Deputy Designated Teacher, Mrs Chartres or the Principal).
- Everyone is provided with personal copies of the school's Child Protection Policy and must be familiar with these documents and how to report concerns as well as being familiar with other relevant school policies.
- Everyone should treat children with respect and dignity. They must not demean or undermine pupils, their parents, carers or colleagues.
- Everyone should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of students, embarrassing or humiliating students, discriminating against or favouring students.
- Everyone must take reasonable care of pupils/students under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare. Staff should also complete risk assessments where appropriate in accordance with school policies.

## **RELATIONSHIPS WITH PUPILS**

- Everyone must declare any relationships that they may have with pupils/students outside of school; this may include mutual membership of social groups, tutoring, or family connections. Staff and volunteers should not assume that the school are aware of any such connections.
- Relationships with students must be professional at all times, sexual relationships with students are not permitted and may lead to an abuse of trust and criminal conviction.

## **PUPIL DEVELOPMENT**

- Everyone must comply with school policies and procedures that support the well-being and development of pupils/students.
- Everyone must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of pupils/ students.

## **HONESTY AND INTEGRITY**

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

## **CONDUCT OUTSIDE OF WORK**

- 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.
- Staff 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.

## ONLINE 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 Social Networking 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 and volunteers 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 students either with their own profile or acting covertly.
- 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 and volunteers should report the contact to the Principal immediately.
- Photographs/stills or video footage of students should be taken using school equipment for purposes authorised by the school. Use of personal phones should be kept to a minimum. Any such use should always be transparent and only occur where parental consent has been given. The files from such recording or taking of photographs must be retained and destroyed in accordance with GDPR and Disposal Schedules.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

- Members of staff and volunteers may have access to confidential information about students in order to undertake their everyday 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 family for their own, or others' advantage. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the student.
- 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.
- Staff and volunteers shall maintain the appropriate levels of confidentiality with respect to student and staff records and other sensitive matters. They should take care not to discuss issues of particularly sensitive matters within the school community which could cause distress to school staff, pupils or parents. Refer to policy on Confidentiality.
- 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.
- If a member of staff/ volunteer 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 the Principal.
- Adults 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.
- Additional concerns and allegations about adults should be treated as confidential and passed to a senior leader without delay.

## DRESS AND APPEARANCE

- Everyone must dress in a manner that is appropriate to a professional role and promoting 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.

## GENERAL POINTS

1. 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.
2. 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. Business Practice: Staff must maintain an impeccable standard of integrity in all their professional relationships.
4. 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.
5. Copyright: Staff shall observe copyright laws on computer software, audio-visual and printed material.
6. Data Protection Act: 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 and refer to Privacy Notices on website for teaching and non-teaching staff as well as the Data Protection Policy.

## **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.

## **COMPLIANCE**

- Everyone must complete the form at the end to confirm they have read, understood and agreed to comply with the code of conduct. This form should then be signed and dated by all staff and volunteers. Visitors will be made aware of our code of conduct and should there be any non-compliance this will be dealt with by the principal.

If anyone 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 members of the school community.

## Appendix 1

### PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR

Professional behaviour is a generic term, but within this Code of Conduct includes:-

- acting in a fair, courteous and mature manner to pupils, colleagues and other stakeholders. Within the Pastoral Care Policies of the school and the employing authority, staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age, maturity and sex 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.
- Staff/ volunteers should also treat each other with respect, courtesy and in a professional manner. This should also translate in relationships with parents. The importance of confidentiality is outlined in the school's policy on confidentiality. Staff should ensure that information regarding pupils is only shared with the appropriate person. All staff should be aware of the confidential nature of personal information about a child and maintain that confidentiality.
- co-operating and liaising with colleagues, as appropriate, to ensure pupils receive a coherent and comprehensive educational experience;
- 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;
- respecting school property;
- maintaining the image of the school through standards of dress and general courtesy
- 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.
- staff exercise professionalism and care when conducting meetings with 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. Where such conditions cannot apply,

staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place or have another child or adult nearby/present.

## **PHYSICAL CONTACT / INTIMATE CARE**

Staff/ volunteers exercise professionalism and care when making physical contact with pupils:

1. As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils.
2. 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. Younger children may also need assistance changing clothing and this should be carried in line with our Intimate Care Policy.
3. Staff should be aware of a child who has clearly indicated that he/she is, or would be, uncomfortable with physical contact and refrain unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm.
4. Any form of physical response to misbehaviour is not acceptable.
5. 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.
6. Any physical contact, which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.
7. Following any incident where a member of staff/ volunteer feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to principal.
8. 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.

## **CHOICE AND USE OF TEACHING MATERIALS**

1. Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.
2. 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.
3. If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the Principal before using it.

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

## **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.

1. Any form of physical/verbal violence towards pupils.
2. Physical violence, actual or threatened towards other staff or visitors to the school.
3. Sexual offences, sexual insults or sexual discrimination against pupils, other staff or visitors to the school.
4. Discrimination in any form - racial, religious, gender, disability offences or insults against pupils, other staff or visitors to the school.
5. 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.
6. Deliberate falsification of documents such as time sheets, subsistence and expense claim for the purpose of gain.
7. Acceptance of bribes or other corrupt financial practices.
8. Wilful damage of school property or of property belonging to other staff or visitors to the school.
9. Wilful disregard of safety rules or policies affecting the safety of pupils, other staff or visitors to the school.
10. Any wilful act which could result in actionable negligence for compensation against the school.

11. Refusal to comply with reasonable instructions given by staff with a supervisory responsibility.
12. Gross neglect of duties and responsibilities.
13. Unauthorised absence from work.
14. Being untruthful and/or engaging in deception in matters of importance within the school community.
15. Deliberate breaches of confidentiality particularly on sensitive matter
16. Being incapable by reason of alcohol or drugs (not prescribed for a health problem) from fulfilling duties and responsibilities of employment.
17. 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.

1. Unsatisfactory timekeeping without permission.
2. Neglect of safety rules and procedures. Some offences of wilful neglect may be regarded as gross misconduct.
3. Breaches of confidentiality. Deliberate breaches on sensitive matters may be regarded as gross misconduct.
4. Failure to comply with reasonable work-related requirements or lack of care in fulfilling the duties of the post.
5. Behaviour towards other employees, pupils, and visitors which gives justifiable offence. Certain behaviour giving rise to offence may be regarded as gross misconduct.
6. 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.
7. 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.

Should there be a concern or a matter for complaint, this will be dealt with by the Principal upon making an appointment for a meeting. Formal complaints will be noted and forwarded on to the Board of Governors.

## **CONFIRMATION OF COMPLIANCE**

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with the school's code of conduct.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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