



Islandmagee Primary School

Code of Conduct Staff and Volunteers

Introduction

All adults who come in contact with pupils at Islandmagee Primary School have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare and are in a position of trust with them and their parents. All actions concerning such children must uphold their best interests as a primary consideration. Behaviour of staff and volunteers towards pupils in their charge must be above reproach.

Furthermore, we advocate and expect the following:

- A caring and gentle manner
- A listening ear
- Respect for each individual child
- A ready smile and a positive attitude
- A calm approach, particularly in emergencies
- Vigilance towards emerging situations with a flexible approach
- The promotion of 'safe'

Aim

To clarify what constitutes appropriate behaviour and professional boundaries for adults in their relationship with pupils.

To clarify what constitutes appropriate behaviour and professional boundaries between adults; staff and volunteers.

To provide confidence and understanding to staff and volunteers about acceptable standards of professional behaviour to which they should conform.

To protect staff and volunteers by reducing the risk of being unjustly accused of improper or unprofessional conduct.

This Code is informed by the guidance and procedures set out in legislation and by Education Authority child protection guidance.

Code of Conduct

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff and volunteers interrelate with children and young people, or where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur.

In all circumstances, employee's professional judgement will be exercised and for the vast majority of employees this Code of Conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their practice.

From time to time, however, it is prudent for all staff to reappraise their own teaching styles, relationships with pupils and their manner and approach to individual children, to ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions, in the minds of colleagues, of pupils or of their parents and guardians.

Propriety and Behaviour

All adults working with pupils have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children and young people. It is therefore expected that they will adopt standards of personal conduct that will not compromise their position in their workplace or indicate an unsuitability to work with children or young people.

Attitudes

All staff and volunteers should treat pupils with respect and dignity and not in a manner which demeans or undermines them, their parents or carers, or colleagues. Staff and volunteers should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age and maturity of their pupils. They 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. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require thought to ensure that conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation.

Setting an Example

All staff and volunteers in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils. Staff and volunteers at Islandmagee Primary, should therefore treat colleagues with respect and dignity refraining from using sarcasm or demeaning language. Conflict between staff should not be discussed or evident in the presence of pupils, neither should staff and volunteers criticise each other or their work to pupils, their parents or carers. Demonstrating high standards of conduct encourages our pupils to do the same. All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to be familiar with all school policies and procedures and to comply with these so as to set a good example to pupils.

Social Contact

Staff and volunteers who work with pupils should not have secret social contact with them or their families. No pupil should be in or invited into, the home of an adult who works with them, unless the reason for this has been clearly established and officially agreed e.g. babysitting, tutoring or friends of their children. Adults should use their professional judgement when taking part in any planned or unplanned social contact with pupils or their parents.

Any situation which may place a pupil at risk or which may compromise the school or their own professional standing, must be reported to the Principal or Senior Teacher. A written record of any such occurrence must be kept in accordance with the school Record Keeping Policy.

Confidentiality

Staff and volunteers may have access to confidential information about pupils in order to undertake their responsibilities. These details must be kept confidential at all times and only shared when it is in the interests of the pupil to do so.

Confidential matters will be stored securely. Such confidential information must not be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the pupil concerned, or their family nor a staff member or volunteer or their family.

Behaviour Management

All pupils have a right to be treated with respect, dignity and equality. The use of demeaning or insensitive comments or use of position to intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce or undermine children or young people is fully unacceptable.

Adults must be mindful of tone of voice and volume. Hand gestures which could be interpreted as aggressive or invasive of personal space are also deemed inappropriate. A calm and measured approach to a situation is needed and staff should never give the impression that they have lost their temper, or are acting out of anger or frustration. Interventions must be appropriate and relevant to circumstance.

Any form of corporal punishment is wholly unacceptable.

The Principal retains an incident log.

Ref: Reasonable Force and Safe Handling Policy and Education Authority guidance

One to One Situations

Where there is a need for a member of staff or volunteer to be alone with a pupil, certain procedures and explicit safeguards must be in place.

When one to one situations, including confidential interviews, are necessary adults should:

- avoid meetings with a pupil in remote, secluded areas or behind closed doors with 'engaged' or equivalent signs
- as far as possible conduct interviews in a room with visual access or with a door open. Where such conditions cannot apply, staff and volunteers are advised to ensure another adult knows the interview is taking place
- ensure child is aware of why they are there
- ensure pupils exit route is clear
- record of any situation where a pupil becomes distressed or angry

Physical Contact

Adults should avoid unnecessary physical contact with pupils.

Occasions when it is entirely appropriate for adults to have some physical contact with a pupil with whom they are working may include sports, drama, music or outdoor activities. Adults may have to initiate some physical contact with pupils, for example to demonstrate technique in the use of a particular piece of equipment, adjust posture, or perhaps to support a pupil so they can perform an activity safely or prevent injury. Staff should explain to the pupil the reason why the contact is necessary and what form the contact will take. Such activities should take place in a safe and open environment i.e. one easily observed by others and last for the minimum time necessary. Contact should be relevant to age or understanding and adults should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the pupil.

There will be occasions when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance and this may involve physical contact. Young children, in particular, may need immediate physical comfort, for example after a fall, separation from parent etc. Note not all children seek physical contact as reassurance. Adults should use professional judgement maintaining clear professional boundaries.

If an adult believes that his / her action could be misinterpreted, or if an action is observed by another as being inappropriate or possibly abusive, the incident and circumstances should be reported to a senior member of staff immediately without delay.

Where a pupil initiates inappropriate physical contact, it is the responsibility of the adult to sensitively deter the pupil and help her understand the importance of personal boundaries. Such circumstances must always be reported and discussed with the principal.

Sexual Contact

All adults should clearly understand the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their contacts with pupils. Intimate or sexual relationships between pupils and the adults who work with them will be regarded as a grave breach of trust and treated as a criminal offence.

This means that adults should not:

- have sexual relationships with pupils
- have any form of communication with a pupil that could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative
- make sexual remarks to, or about, a pupil
- discuss their own intimate or sexual relationships with or in the presence of pupils
- Adults should be aware that consistently conferring inappropriate special attention and favour upon a pupil might be construed as being part of a 'grooming' process

Infatuations

Occasionally, a pupil may develop an infatuation with an adult who works with them. An adult, who has a concern that a pupil is developing an infatuation, should discuss this at the earliest opportunity with the Senior Teacher or Principal so that action can be taken to avoid any hurt, distress or embarrassment for either party.

A written record of any such occurrence should be kept.

Personal Care

Some job responsibilities necessitate intimate physical contact with pupils on a regular basis, for example, assisting with toileting, providing intimate care for pupils with disabilities or medical care. The nature, circumstances and context of such contact should comply with any medical and/or individual education plan that has been drawn up for the pupil. All pupils have a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of a physical or intimate nature is required and, depending on their abilities, age and maturity, should be encouraged to act as independently as possible.

Ref: Intimate Care Policy

First Aid and Administration of Medication

It is expected that many adults working with pupils will be aware of basic first aid techniques. It is not however, a contractual requirement and whilst adults may volunteer to undertake such tasks, they should be suitably trained before administering first aid and/or any agreed medication and abide by School Policy.

Home Visits

It is essential that there is clear justification for such an arrangement and that there has been appropriate agreement with the Principal or Chair of Governors where relevant.

Transporting Pupils

There will be occasions when staff or volunteers may volunteer to transport pupils as part of their duties. It is the responsibility of those who use their own vehicles for transporting pupils to hold a valid Driving Licence and to ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy, appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded. It is advised when transporting pupils to avoid being alone with them, unless the principal or parents / carers are aware of and agree to this arrangement. Children should where possible travel in the back seat.

There may be occasions where a pupil requires transport in an emergency situation or where they may be at risk. Such circumstances should be reported to the Principal.

Compliance with the law regarding road safety must be complied with.

Trips and Outings (including residential)

A Risk Assessment must be completed prior to any school visit, trip or residential in line with the Educational Visits Guidance 2017.

Members of staff must make the Principal aware of their itinerary and should reasonably, keep the Principal updated during the visit

Staff and volunteers should take particular care when supervising pupils on trips and outings. Behaviour of adults must remain professional and above reproach at all times.

Where activities include overnight stays, careful consideration needs to be given to sleeping, changing, toileting and washing arrangements. Pupils, staff, volunteers and parents should be informed of these prior to the start of the trip. In all circumstances, those organising trips and outings must pay careful attention to ensuring safe staff pupil ratios especially on overnight stays.

Dress and Appearance

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, at Islandmagee Primary adults should dress in ways which are appropriate to their professional role and not in any way that might cause embarrassment or offence to others.

Staff uniform is available to order but not essential.

Communication using technology

All communication between pupils currently attending Islandmagee Primary School and staff or volunteers should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries and should be transparent and open to scrutiny.

This means that adults should:

- not give their personal contact details to any pupil.
- always use school email addresses, school phones when communicating with parents for educational purposes. On occasions, and only with prior agreement from the Principal, it may be necessary for staff or volunteers to use their own personal emails or personal communication equipment to communicate with parents. This may include using and storing parent's personal numbers or emails. Staff and volunteers must delete these when no longer needed. This is at the teacher's own discretion and is not usual practice.
- never use internet or web-based communication channels to send personal messages to a pupil other than through the agreed platform of Class Dojo or Google Classroom through the parent or guardian's account.
- ensure that if they make use of any social networking tools such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat or Twitter, details are not shared with parents and privacy settings are set at the maximum available. All adults must be cautious about what they write on these types of media including nothing that brings them, their place of work or other adults who work there into disrepute.

Photography and Videos

Working with pupils may involve the taking or recording of images. Any such work should take place with due regard to the law and the need to safeguard the privacy, dignity, safety and well-being of children and young people. This must be in line with school GDPR and Data Protection Policies and must adhere to relevant permissions from parents and carers.

Staff and volunteers should not:

- use images which may cause distress
- take images of pupils for their personal use.
- take images of pupils unless it is in accordance with child protection procedures
- Staff should not use their personal equipment to store these images. In the exceptional circumstance of the preparation of publicity material for the school images may be edited on the Principal's (or specifically delegated colleague) personal devices and subsequently deleted.

Access to Inappropriate Images and Internet Usage

There are no circumstances that will justify staff or volunteers possessing indecent images. Staff and volunteers who access and possess links to such websites will be viewed as a significant and potential threat to children.

Where indecent images of children are found, the PSNI and Education Authority Designated Officers for Child Protection will be immediately informed.

Staff and volunteers should not use equipment belonging to their organisation to access adult pornography; neither should personal equipment containing these images or links to them be brought into the workplace.

Staff and volunteers should ensure that pupils are not exposed to images or web links of an indecent nature. Any films or material used for educational purposes with must be age appropriate and viewed in advance of showing to pupils.

If any of the above circumstances arises, the Designated Teacher and/or Principal should immediately be informed.

Gifts, Rewards and Favouritism

The giving of gifts or rewards to pupils should be part of supporting positive behaviour or recognising particular achievements. It is acknowledged that there are specific occasions when staff or volunteers may wish to give a pupil a personal gift. Any such gifts should be given openly and be of insignificant value so that this is not misinterpreted by others as favouritism or grooming.

Staff should be wary of accepting gifts from current or potential parents or pupils, unless they are of insignificant value.

Staff should not normally accept any benefits, corporate hospitality or discounts from commercial organisations. If in doubt, the member of staff should discuss with the Principal.

Voicing and sharing concerns

Staff and volunteers should be assured that they can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion (Public Interest Disclosure Act (NI Order) 1998).

Staff and volunteers have not only a responsibility but also a duty of care to report any behaviour by colleagues that raises concern, regardless of source. This is particularly important where the welfare of pupils may be at risk.

It is essential that accurate and comprehensive records are maintained wherever concerns are raised about the conduct or actions of staff and volunteers.

TERMS, DEFINITIONS and MEANINGS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

Duty of care

To keep children and young people safe and to protect them from sexual, physical and emotional harm. The behaviour of the adult should demonstrate integrity, maturity and good judgement at all times. Employers also have a duty of care towards their employees. This requires them to provide a safe working environment for adults and provide guidance about safe working practices. This means that adults should:

- always act, and be seen to act, in the child's best interests
- avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions
- take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour.

This means that employers should:

- ensure that appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures are adopted.

Position of Trust

One in which one party is in a position of power or influence over the other by virtue of their work or the nature of their activity.

Adults should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others.

Professional Judgement

Professional Judgement is used in circumstances where adults have to make decisions or take action in the best interests and welfare of the child or young person which could contravene guidance or where no guidance exists. In doing so they should consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably. They must record and share incident with the Principal or Senior Teacher.

In undertaking these actions individuals will be seen to be acting reasonably.

This means that where no specific guidance exists adults should:

- discuss the circumstances that informed their action, or their proposed action
- report any actions which could be misinterpreted
- always discuss any misunderstanding, accidents or threats
- always record discussions and reasons why actions were taken
- record any areas of disagreement about course of action taken and if necessary refer to a higher authority such as the Chair of Governors or Education Authority

Linked Policies

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Intimate Care Policy

Supporting Pupils with Medication Needs

First Aid Policy

Reasonable Force and Safe Handling Policy

Social Media Policy

Maintaining Contact Policy

Remote Learning Policy

GDPR Statement

Disposal of Records Policy

Disposal of Records Policy Appendix B: Records Management Policy

Legislation & Guidance informing the Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers at Islandmagee Primary School

The Children (NI) Order 1995

Welfare & Protection of Pupils Education & Library (NI) Order 2003

Department of Education NI documents Pastoral Care: Guidance on the Use of Reasonable Force to Restrain and Control Pupils (1999)

Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection (1999),

Welfare & Protection of Pupils (Circular 2003/13)

The Area Child Protection Committee, Regional Policy and Procedures (2005)

Joint Education & Library Boards (NI) Regional Policy Framework on the Use of Reasonable Force / Safe Handling (2004)

Educational Visits: Policy, Practice & Procedures (2007)

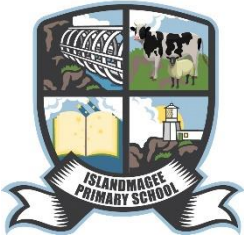
Department for Education & Skills Guidance for Safe Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Adults in Educational Settings (2006)

Department for Children, Schools & Families Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults working with Children and Young People (2009)

ATL Advice Social Networking sites: How to Protect Yourself (2010)

Department of Education & Education Authority Guidance for Remote Learning (2020)

Document Date	Submitted to Board of Governors and Ratified	Review Date	Summary of Changes
2016	September 2016	2018	
2017	January 2017	2020	Updated November 2017
2020	12 th November 2020		Cross Referenced to linked Policies Updated 2020



CODE of CONDUCT: CONFIRMATION of COMPLIANCE

ISLANDMAGEE PRIMARY SCHOOL

STAFF and VOLUNTEERS

I have received and read the Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers, Islandmagee Primary.

I agree to adhere to the guidance outlined and understand the expectations in the knowledge that failure to do so breaks this agreement of acceptable conduct in my position of trust as part of the community of Islandmagee Primary.

NAME: _____

ROLE/ POSITION: _____

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____

This agreement of compliance is to be signed, dated and returned to the Principal.