

Monkstown Nursery School Code of Conduct

Reviewed: June 2018

Staff Code of Values and Professional Practice

In line with the Council's Code of Values and Professional Practice launched on 4 October 2004 the teaching staff of Monkstown Nursery School seek to:

- Respect the core values underpinning professional practice (trust, respect, integrity, honesty, fairness, tolerance, commitment, equality and service).
- Encourage attitudes and conduct commensurate with the core values of the profession.
- Enhance the status of the profession in the eyes of the public.

All staff who work in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils. All staff must, therefore, demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same.

All staff must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct. This Code helps all staff to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable. An integral part of our work with the young children in our care is the building up of positive relationships built on trust. When working with the young child in the nursery school situation, the adult necessarily takes on the role of a caring parent. The Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from these relationships. It is intended to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of child abuse by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct.

Behaviour Management

Pupils will be dealt with fairly and positively by staff, respecting their rights as individuals. (see Behaviour Management Policy.) Staff are expected to act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to suspect their actions or intent. Staff are in a position of trust and have a duty to protect young people from discrimination and harm and to appropriate professional boundaries. Unprofessional relationships will not be condoned. It is equally important for staff to avoid behaviour that might be misinterpreted by others in order to protect both young people and themselves. Staff are required to read and understand school policies on Child Protection and Safeguarding.

Use of Reasonable Force To Restrain or Control Pupils

In fulfilling our duty to promote and secure good behaviour and discipline on the part of pupils of the school, we follow our Positive Behaviour Policy, which is used to positively support the children through any difficulties they may experience in learning to conform to acceptable behaviour.

In a situation where these behaviour management strategies have failed to resolve the problem or are inappropriate, there are some circumstances in which reasonable force might be appropriate or necessary to restrain or control a pupil. Staff are aware of guidelines laid down by DENI in Circular 1999/9 and will apply this guidance in the following ways in situations which are particularly relevant to the nursery school.

Circular 1999/9 outlines three broad categories where it is necessary to use appropriate physical contact to restrain or control a pupil:-

1. where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury
2. where there is a developing risk of injury or significant damage to property
3. where a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order and discipline

As applied to the nursery school situation, the following circumstances may require limited physical contact:-

1. Verbal explanations may be insufficient in some cases to reinforce rules for appropriate behaviour for the safety of the children. A member of staff may need to take the child by the hand to remove him from imminent danger or may need to hold a child still in a calm and firm manner, once more, mirroring the actions of a caring parent.
2. Where a child is having a temper tantrum and is not responding to reasonable explanation or where he is causing risk of injury to himself or others, the teacher in charge will take him to an area where he can safely vent his feelings and frustrations – usually an open space away from others, such as the story

room. If the teacher assesses that he is risking his own safety, she may physically restrain him by:

- taking him on her knee
- restricting his hand or foot movement by using a firm hold

At all times, the child's safety and welfare are paramount and throughout this period, the teacher will seek to verbally reassure and soothe the distressed child. All such instances will be reported to parents at the end of the session.

If the behaviour persists, and it is apparent that the child is experiencing deeper distress and not a passing tantrum, the parents will be notified immediately.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

Please read the school's policy for detailed information on Safeguarding and Child Protection.

Procedures for reporting disclosed or suspected child abuse

The Designated Teacher for Child Protection is Ms Shauna Wilson (DT). The Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection is Ms Lynn Acheson (DDT).

•Members of staff should exercise tact and sensitivity in responding to a disclosure of alleged abuse. They should act in the following way:

- a) remain calm and reassuring – children who have suffered abuse may withdraw if they detect signs of doubt or revulsion. Listen carefully and quietly- the chief task at this stage is to listen to the child and as soon as possible afterwards make a note of the discussion to pass on to the designated teacher.
- b) retain the child's trust, whilst explaining that his/her disclosure must be reported. Never promise confidentiality;
- c) any disclosures of abuse reported by pupils and comments made subsequently by a parent, carer or other adult regarding the nature of the alleged abuse will be recorded and counter-signed by the class teacher and the principal (Designated Teacher). This note should record the time, date, place and people who were present, as well as what was said. Signs of physical injury should be described in detail - UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD A CHILD'S CLOTHING BE REMOVED. Any comment by a child or adult about how an injury occurred should be written down, preferably quoting words actually used.
- d) Staff should be aware that these notes may need to be used in any subsequent court proceedings);
- e) whilst discreet preliminary clarification from parents or carers may help to confirm or allay concerns, it is not the responsibility of any member of staff to carry out investigations into cases of suspected abuse, or to make extensive enquiries of parents or carers.

•Any teacher or other member of staff who has knowledge or reasonable suspicion that a child is being abused should report his or her concerns to Ms Wilson or in her absence, Ms Acheson. A record will be kept of reported suspicions, countersigned by the person reporting them and the Principal (Designated Teacher).

•The Designated Teacher will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral. Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately.

•The Designated Teacher may seek advice and consult with one of the Education Authority's Designated Officers before a referral is made. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice. The safety of the child is our first priority.

•Where there are concerns about possible abuse, the Designated Teacher will inform:

- Social Services
- The EA's Designated Officer for Child Protection
- PSNI (if appropriate)

A UNOCINI form will be completed and forwarded to Gateway.

•If the Principal decides not to make a referral, the parents and complainant (if different) should be informed of this decision, of the information the school was given and of the decision that a referral was not warranted - if they still have concerns they may raise the matter with Social Services.

•If information about possible abuse by someone outside the school is given to a member of staff by a pupil, whether or not the pupil is the subject of the alleged abuse, the above procedures apply, except that the parent of the pupil giving the information (unless he/she is the possible abuser) should be involved at the earliest possible stage and should, where possible, be present while the school is seeking any preliminary clarification from the child to assess whether a referral is necessary.

- If any member of staff feels unsure about what to do if he/she has concerns about a child, or unsure about being able to recognise signs or symptoms of possible child abuse, he/she should talk with the DT.
- It should be noted that the information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held 'in confidence'. In the interests of the child, staff may need to share this information with other professionals. However, only those who need to know will be informed.

•If a complaint is made against the Principal, the Deputy Designated Teacher must be informed immediately. She will inform the chairman of the Board of Governors and together they will ensure the necessary action to be taken.

Criminal Action

School employees must inform the Principal (or the Principal inform the Chairman of the Board of Governors) immediately if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, pending prosecution, or police investigation.

Communication

When talking to Parents/carers, staff should not discuss in detail issues relating to any pupil other than the child of those parents. Staff should not disclose information relating to the school community inappropriately at any time. All communication with the media must be directed through the Principal or their nominee.

Disciplinary procedures

Informal and formal disciplinary procedures against staff will be followed according to the Department of Education guidelines and the school's Disciplinary Policy.

Dress Code

The school operates a smart yet comfortable and practical dress code. School hoodies and polo shirts may be purchased at a cost to employees.

Health and Safety

Healthy and Safety is the shared concern of all staff and is the responsibility of all users. Risk assessments must be carried out to cover all school events, outings and excursions. Unknown visitors should be politely challenged by staff. All visitors must wear a visitor pass and all staff must wear a staff identity badge if not wearing their school hoodie/polo shirt. Any Health and Safety concerns should be passed on to the Principal. All employees must adhere to the school's Health and Safety policy, procedure and guidance and must ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and everyone in the school environment safe and well. This includes taking immediate safety action in a potentially harmful situation (either at school or off-site) by complying with statutory guidelines.

Physical Contact with Pupils

- In the nursery school situation, staff often need to give reassurance to a distressed child in the form of physical comforting as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this support.
- Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.
- 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.
- Following any incident where a member of staff feels that her actions have been or may be misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted to the Principal.
- Staff who have to administer first aid should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. No member of staff should hesitate to provide first aid in an emergency, however trained first aiders should be sent for-Mrs Doyle, Mrs Owen.
- Physical punishment is illegal as is any form of physical response to behaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint. Due to the age and level of understanding of the children in the nursery school, it is evident that limited physical contact by a member of staff is often necessary to accompany verbal explanations when reinforcing rules for the safety of the children. The bounds of appropriate physical contact are clarified below.

One-To-One Contact with A Member Of Staff

Intimate Care

All staff who provide intimate care to children have completed child protection training and will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. No child should be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain. All intimate care support will be recorded by the staff member who attends to the child and Parents/carers will be made aware of any clothing changes. Students and volunteers are NEVER permitted to attend to a child's intimate care. **Please see Intimate Care Policy.**

Toileting

The children are encouraged to be independent in toileting as far as possible at their stage of development. If a child needs assistance, staff should not be inhibited from providing the attention of a caring parent.

Changing Clothes

If a child needs to have clothing changed, this would be carried out in the bathroom area to ensure the child's privacy, but with toilet doors open or child sitting on a chair beside the open door and another adult nearby. In the case of a child with Special Educational Needs, who needs to have nappies changed, this will be carried out by the designated nursery assistant at the nappy changing station in the Disabled Bathroom, with the door open.

Dealing with a Temper Tantrum

If a child is not listening to reasonable explanation and is at risk of causing injury to himself or others, the teacher may take him to a safe area, usually the story room, where the window pane in the door allows the story room to be in full view of the other adults and children.

All incidents will be recorded and signed by the member of staff concerned.

Medication

Should a child require the administration of medication during the school day, parental consent will be required to formally authorise this.

Smoking

The school is a health-promoting organisation and therefore operates a no smoking policy.

Social Media

All members of staff and students on placement should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, are still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and other legislation. They must also operate in line with the school's Child Protection Policies. Within this policy there is a distinction between use of school-sanctioned social media for professional educational purposes and personal use of social media.

1. Personal use of social media:

- School staff and students on placement will not invite, accept or engage in communications with parents or children from the school community in any personal social media whilst in employment or on placement in Monkstown Nursery School.
- Any communication received from parents or children on any personal social media sites must be reported to the designated person for Child Protection i.e. the Principal, Ms S Wilson.
- If any member of staff or student on placement is aware of any inappropriate communications involving any child in any social media, these must immediately be reported as above.
- Members of the school staff and students on placement are strongly advised to set all privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media accounts
- All email communication between staff and members of the school community on school business must be made from an official school email account.
- Staff and students on placement should not use personal email accounts or mobile phones to make contact with members of the school community on school business, nor should any such contact be accepted, except in circumstances given prior approval by the Principal.
- Staff and students on placement are advised to avoid posts or comments that refer to specific, individual matters related to the school and members of its community on any social media accounts.
- Staff and students on placement are also advised to consider the reputation of the school in any posts or comments related to the school on any social media accounts.
- Staff and students on placement should not accept any current pupil of any age or any ex-pupil of the school under the age of 18 as a friend, follower, subscriber or similar on any personal social media account.

2. School-sanctioned use of social media:

There are many legitimate uses of social media within the curriculum and to support student learning. There are also many possibilities for using social media to enhance and develop students' learning or the profile of the school.

When using social media for educational purposes, the following practices must be observed:

- Staff should set up a distinct and dedicated social media site or account for educational purposes. This should be entirely separate from any personal social

media accounts held by that member of staff, and ideally should be linked to an official school email account.

- The URL and identity of the site should be notified to the Principal before access is permitted for parents and students.
- The content of any school-sanctioned social media site should be solely professional and should reflect well on the school.
- Staff must not publish photographs of children without the written consent of parents /carers, identify by name any children featured in photographs, or allow personally identifying information to be published on school social media accounts.
- Care must be taken that any links to external sites from the account are appropriate and safe.

Acceptable Use Policy for iPads

Staff Users Responsibilities:

- Free educational Apps may be downloaded. Purchased Apps must be approved by the Principal. Be aware of the Volume Purchase Program (VPP) the Education Authority operate.
- Users must use protective covers/cases for their iPad.
- The iPad screen is made of glass and therefore is subject to cracking and breaking if misused: Never drop nor place heavy objects (books, laptops, etc.) on top of the iPad.
- Only a soft cloth or approved laptop screen cleaning solution is to be used to clean the iPad screen.
- Ensure your iPad is charged efficiently.
- Do not subject the iPad to extreme heat or cold.
- Do not leave unattended.

Telephone Calls / Mobile Phones:

- 1 Mobile phones should be switched off or placed on silent during child contact time. The nursery accepts that staff will bring their mobile phones to work. As a general rule, staff are not permitted to make or receive calls/texts during work time as this inevitably impacts on work time.

- 2 In exceptional circumstances and with the Principal's permission staff may be granted permission to leave their phone on during working hours. If for any reason, a mobile phone must be used in the classroom, this must be recorded in the Use of mobile phone log situated in the office.
- 3 Staff are not permitted to use recording equipment on their mobile phones within the nursery or during visits, trips and events.
- 4 Students are not permitted to answer the school telephone.
- 5 Staff should log all important phone calls in the telephone record log.
- 6 Personal calls to the school should be restricted to non-contact time except in cases of emergency or at the Principal's discretion.

Staff

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Exploitation

The duty to safeguard pupils includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil to the school's Designated Teacher (DT), Ms Wilson.

Staff are provided with personal copies of the school's Child Protection Policy and should be familiar with this document.

Staff Relations

- In front of pupils colleagues should refer to each other by their titles (Mr, Mrs, Miss etc).
- Staff who feels undermined by another member of staff should approach the Principal.
- Staff who socialise with parents outside of school are reminded that they should not discuss school business or fellow staff members.

Punctuality and Hours of Work

Members of staff should be punctual on all occasions; being ready to start work on time, this means arriving at least five minutes before the given start time. Part Time room staff should be in the staffroom by 12.00noon for 30-minute lunch break. Fulltime staff should be in the staffroom by 1.45pm for 30-minute lunch break.

Professional Behaviour

All staff are expected to treat other colleagues, pupils and external contacts, such as Parents/carers, with dignity and respect and are required to comply with the school's

equality policies. Unacceptable behaviour such as discrimination, bullying, harassment or intimidation will not be tolerated. This includes unprofessional behaviour, physical and verbal abuse and use of inappropriate comments, language or tone. Staff must behave at all times in compliance with the law and must not misuse or misrepresent their position, qualifications or experience or bring the reputation of the school into disrepute. Such behaviour will not be condoned and may lead to disciplinary action.

Professional Responsibilities

- Staff must comply with school policies and procedures that support the wellbeing and development of pupils.
- Staff must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of pupils

“In keeping with the spirit of professional service and commitment teachers will at all times be conscious of their responsibility to others: learners, colleagues and indeed the profession itself”.

GTCNI 2004

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed and monitored in line with the school’s policy review schedule.