



Snowflake School

‘Improving the quality of family life’

Staff Code of Conduct

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1. AIMS, SCOPE & PRINCIPLES

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

School staff have an influential position in the school and should act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

We also expect all support staff, trustees and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

At Snowflake School our Principal Aim is: *“To improve the quality of family life”* by working with our community of staff, pupils and families. We do this in our school by following our **SUPER** values.

Safe, Understanding, Patient, Enthusiastic, Respectful

We expect all staff to embody these values in their everyday conduct, with pupils, colleagues and the wider community.

Failure to follow the Code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken as set out in our staff disciplinary procedures.

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff should use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils.

2. LEGISLATION & GUIDANCE

Schools have a legal duty to create and maintain a safe learning environment for children. A staff Code of Conduct is a mandatory requirement as described in the DfE statutory guidance: ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’

Snowflake school seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for children in our care. The following code draws together existing laws, regulations and conditions of service designed to protect the interests of staff, volunteers and the pupils.

Staff set an example to pupils. They will:

Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality

Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school

Treat pupils and others with dignity and respect

Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others

Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

Not express personal beliefs in a way that exploits pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law

Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within

3. SAFEGUARDING

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect.

Staff will familiarise themselves with our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures, and the Prevent initiative, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

Our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures are available on our website (www.snowflakeschool.org.uk). New staff/agency/volunteers will also be given a copy of our safeguarding leaflet on arrival.

4. LOW LEVEL CONCERNS ABOUT MEMBERS OF STAFF

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harms threshold, is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt'. For example, this may include:

Being over-friendly with children

Having favourites

Taking photographs of children on a personal device

Engaging in one-to-one activities where they can't easily be seen

Using inappropriate language

Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy. We also encourage staff to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage staff to report it to the Safeguarding Lead.

All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way. Reports should be made in person and through Myconcern and Myconfide.

Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed, and the staff member supported to correct it, at an early stage.

This creates and embeds a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff, while minimising the risk of abuse.

Reporting and responding to low-level concerns is covered in more detail in our child protection and safeguarding policy. This is available on our website www.snowflakeschool.org.uk

5. ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND MEDICATION AT WORK

Snowflake School staff must ensure that they are not unfit for duty as a result of the effects of alcohol or drugs. Snowflake School staff should be aware of the lasting effects of alcohol and drugs, both prescription and illegal, and ensure that any consumption of these substances does not impair their ability to carry out their duties. If a member of staff is deemed to be under the influence of alcohol, drugs or medication, they will be requested to leave the setting by management staff and will receive a written warning.

Absenteeism -> Excessive sick leave, frequent and unexplained absences and lateness.

- frequent Monday and/or Friday absences and excessive lateness
- leaving work early especially on a Monday
- frequent visits to the toilet
- unexplained absence/high rate of accidents or frequent accidents at work resulting in injury and/or damage to equipment.

Staff must also note that many prescribed medications and over the counter medicines can have an adverse effect on the ability to work. Therefore, staff must always check that they can still work safely before taking any medicine.

6. SMOKING

Staff are not permitted to smoke on the school premises or grounds. This includes all types of smoking devices and paraphernalia including cigarettes, cigars, electronic cigarettes.

7. DOMESTIC ABUSE

Domestic abuse is a crime. The school may consider a range of measures to support any employee who discloses they are living in or dealing with a violent relationship, for example counselling or flexibility around their workload. Any employee found to be a perpetrator of domestic abuse may be subject to disciplinary action, which may result in dismissal.

8. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Employees at Snowflake School have a duty to familiarise themselves with all the safety regulations that apply to their job and the area in which they work. Please refer to the Health and Safety Policy.

9. EMPLOYEE BREAK

Staff at Snowflake School can take a tea/coffee break for 15-minutes between 10am – 11am and then 30 minutes for their lunch break between 12pm – 1pm. Employees can take their breaks in the staffroom or outside the school's premises. Staff must remember to sign out and in on Inventory when going out for morning break and lunch break.

10. VIOLATION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Snowflake School may take disciplinary action against employees who repeatedly or intentionally *fail to follow our code of conduct*. Disciplinary actions will vary depending on the violation.

Possible consequences include:

- Warning
- Suspension
- Termination
- Demotion

Snowflake School may take legal action in cases of **corruption, theft, embezzlement or other unlawful behaviour**.

11. DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

Discrimination:

All individuals are treated equally at Snowflake School, and we do not tolerate discrimination based on age, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, citizenship, marital status, family status, disability or any additional ground protected by law. This commitment applies to all interactions with individuals doing business with Snowflake School. This includes recruitment, donation, promotion, training, discipline, termination, compensation and events and programs sponsored by Snowflake School.

Workplace Harassment:

Workplace harassment is defined as unwelcome conduct or comments, either directly against an individual in the workplace or made in a general manner that contributes to an environment that is hostile or lacking respect or dignity.

Examples of workplace harassment include:

- insulting, intimidating, demeaning, annoying, embarrassing or otherwise offensive behavior.
- inappropriate or unwelcome focus or comments on a person's physical characteristics or appearance.
- bullying and cyberbullying.
- isolation and shunning, gossip, rumors, negative blogging, insults, name-calling.
- slamming doors, throwing objects and physical contact

Discrimination and Workplace Violence Sexual Harassment:

Sexual harassment is defined as engaging in unwelcome sexual solicitation, conversation or advances against an individual or made in a general manner

- unwelcome sexual advances.
- requests for sexual favors.

- verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature including sexual jokes, graphic spoken commentary about a person's body, derogatory or degrading remarks, leering, whistling, unwanted physical contact, or assault.
- inquiries or comments about an individual's sex life; and
- displaying sexually offensive material Workplace Violence:

Workplace violence is defined as the attempted or actual exercise of physical force against an individual in the workplace that could cause discomfort, pain or injury. The definition also includes threats to exercise physical force and domestic violence that occurs in the workplace. Examples of workplace violence include:

- Hitting, punching, slapping, poking or other means of unwanted physical contact or assault
- Challenging an individual to fight
- Engaging in unwelcome horseplay
- Bringing weapons into the workplace
- Threatening an individual verbally or in writing
- Stalking or intimidating

12. STAFF-PUPIL RELATIONSHIPS

Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so.

If staff members and pupils must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

This takes place in a public place that others can access

Others can see into the room

A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of school hours if possible.

Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes social media profiles.

While we are aware many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to pupils are not acceptable.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, or if a staff member is concerned at any point about a fellow staff member and a pupil, this should be reported in line with the procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

13. COMMUNICATION & SOCIAL MEDIA

Staff social media profiles should not be available to pupils. If staff have a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name as pupils may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead and set public profiles to private.

Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship. Additionally, they should not make any efforts to find pupils' or parents' social media profiles.

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify pupils at the school without their consent.

14. ACCEPTABLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Staff will not use technology in school to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.

Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops or school equipment for personal use, in school hours or in front of pupils. They will not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.

We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system. Please see the school's Internet Use Policy for further details.

15. CONFIDENTIALITY

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy of sensitive and confidential information about the school, staff, pupils and their parents.

This information should never be:

Disclosed to anyone unless required by law or with consent from the relevant party or parties

Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others

Used for a purpose other than what was collected and intended for

This does not overrule the duty of staff to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, as detailed further in our Child protection and safeguarding policy.

16. HONESTY & INTEGRITY

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, handling money, claiming expenses, using school property and facilities.

Staff will not accept bribes.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the school is correct. This should include:

Background information (including any past or current investigations/cautions related to conduct outside of school)

Qualifications

Professional experience

Where there are any updates to the information provided to the school, the member of staff will advise the school as such as soon as possible. Consideration will then be given to the nature and circumstances of the matter and whether this may have an impact on the member of staff's employment.

17. IMPARTIALITY

Part 2 of the [Schedule to the Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#) requires schools to take all reasonable steps to ensure that where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils, they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views. Staff must therefore ensure that they do not promote any political opinion or persuasion over others and must seek to be nonpartisan when teaching pupils political issues. For leaders and proprietors, this nonpartisan approach also applies to communications with school staff.

Legal duties on political impartiality do not supersede schools' other statutory requirements. Schools should take a reasonable and proportionate approach to ensuring political impartiality, alongside their other responsibilities.

18. DRESS CODE

Staff should dress in a professional manner. Supervisors, Class Leads and Tutors are expected to wear Snowflake School uniform, which shall be provided by the school. Other Snowflake staff are expected to dress smart casual as appropriate for school. Clothes should not display any offensive or political slogans.

Jewellery is not encouraged especially piercings and large earrings. These are worn at staff's personal risk.

19. CONDUCT OUTSIDE OF WORK

Staff should not act in a way that would bring the school or the teaching profession into disrepute. This covers conduct including but not limited to relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school on social media.

20. GIFTS, REWARDS, FAVOURITISM AND EXCLUSION

The school has policies in place regarding the giving of gifts or rewards to children and the receiving of gifts from them or their parents/carers and staff should be made aware of and understand what is expected of them. See Staff Handbook.

Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.

There are occasions when children or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff e.g. at Christmas or as a thank-you and this is usually acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.

Similarly, it is inadvisable to give such personal gifts to children or their families. This could be interpreted as a gesture either to bribe or groom. It might also be perceived that a 'favour' of some kind is expected in return.

Any reward given to a child should be in accordance with agreed practice, consistent with the school's behaviour policy, recorded and not based on favouritism.

Adults should exercise care when selecting children for specific activities, jobs or privileges in order to avoid perceptions of favouritism or injustice. Similar care should be exercised when children are excluded from an activity. Methods of selection and exclusion should always be subject to clear, fair, agreed criteria.

This means that staff should:

- be aware of and understand their organisation's relevant policies, e.g. rewarding positive behaviour
- ensure that gifts received or given in situations which may be misconstrued are declared and recorded
- only give gifts to a child as part of an agreed reward system
- where giving gifts other than as above, ensure that these are of insignificant value and given to all children equally
- ensure that all selection processes of children are fair and these are undertaken and agreed by more than one member of staff
- ensure that they do not behave in a manner which is either favourable or unfavourable to individual children

21. FIRST AID

All schools should have an adequate number of qualified first-aiders. The school should report all serious or significant incidents to the parents e.g. by sending home a copy of the accident/incident form with the child and/or telephoning the parents.

Any member of school staff may be asked to become a qualified first-aider but they cannot be required to do so unless this forms part of their contract of employment.

Snowflake School for Children with Autism:

- ensures there are trained and named individuals to undertake first aid responsibilities, including paediatric first aid
- ensures training is regularly monitored and updated
- refers to local and national First Aid guidance
- adheres to the school's health and safety policy
- explains to the child what is happening.
- always acts and be seen to act in the child's best interest

22. ARRANGEMENTS

This policy will be reviewed annually but can be revised as needed. It will be approved by the board of trustees.

Our Chair of Trustees will ensure this Code of Conduct is implemented effectively and will ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard children and deal with any concerns.

23. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

This policy links with our policies on:

Disciplinary, dismissal and capability procedure *(which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct. It also sets out examples of what we will deem as misconduct and gross misconduct).*

Grievance procedures

Child protection and safeguarding

Attendance

Wellbeing

Revision

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