



NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME SCHOOL

Staff Code of Conduct

This policy relates to Newcastle under Lyme School, including EYFS.

1. Purpose

This policy is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school staff are expected to observe. School staff are role models and are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the pupils within the School. As a member of the School community, each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the School, whether inside or outside working hours.

The Staff Behaviour Policy has regard to *Keeping Children safe in Education* (2023) and to the DfE document *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2023).

This Staff Behaviour Policy applies to all staff (including those who are employed by the School, volunteer, work as supply teachers or contractors not directly employed by the School.)

2. Setting an Example

- All staff who work in the School 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 Policy helps all staff to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable.

3. Key Principles:

At Newcastle under Lyme School we expect all staff and volunteers to:

- Treat pupils with respect and put the well being, development and progress of all pupils first
- Demonstrate respect for diversity and to promote equality
- Provide positive encouragement to all pupils
- Ensure that their relationship with pupils remains on a professional footing
- Avoid behaviour that could lead to an observer questioning their conduct, intentions or suitability to care for children
- If staff have both low level or serious concerns about other members of staff or volunteers or the management of safeguarding in the School they should report these to the Headmaster in line with the School's *Whistleblowing Policy*, *Low Level Concerns Policy* and *Safeguarding Policy*
- Alert the School as appropriate to any changes to their own personal circumstances which may affect their suitability to work with children. This includes informing the Headmaster of any medical condition, disability or medication that may affect their ability to do their job and to alert the Headmaster of any charge or summons to appear in court in relation to a criminal offence (other than minor road traffic violations).

4. Guidelines on Acceptable Behaviour

- **Staff are expected to treat pupils with courtesy, sensitivity and respect.** This includes addressing pupils using their forenames and being fair and consistent in their use of punishment. Pupils should not be patronised or humiliated by members of staff, and in general it is seldom necessary or appropriate for members of staff to shout at individual pupils unless they are at risk or are risking the safety of others or behave towards them in an otherwise aggressive manner.
- **Members of staff should take care to avoid physical contact with pupils** except where it becomes necessary in the carrying out of their professional duties. Disproportionate attention should not be paid to pupils of either sex, whether singly or in groups. In general, physical contact with pupils should be avoided. However, there are situations when it is unavoidable. Displays of emotion by children should be met with a reasonable response (such as a hand on the shoulder). Kissing or cuddling (and in general hugging) a pupil is not appropriate, however for the youngest pupils in the Prep School physical contact can be used to comfort and reassure a pupil, but a member of staff should ensure that this takes place in full view of other staff. When a pupil is in need of consolation, great care should be taken to ensure that the consolation provided is appropriate to the circumstances and the age of the pupil. In sporting activities, especially when demonstrating exercise techniques, great care should be taken to avoid contact if possible. The teacher should either demonstrate the exercise technique him/herself or use visual aids. If physical contact is essential then hands should be placed in a supportive position, giving preference to arms, legs

and the back. **Members of staff are reminded that hitting a pupil is never acceptable and that the school does not use corporal punishment nor does it threaten the use of corporal punishment.** Where it is necessary for a member of staff to restrain a pupil physically the appropriate guidance in the *Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy* must be followed.

- **Staff should take particular care when meeting with pupils on a one-to-one basis.** Staff should take great care when dealing with a pupil alone. Where possible, such encounters should take place at a time when, and in a location where, there are other people in the vicinity. It makes sense to leave a door open and to have a physical barrier (such as a desk) between the pupil and the teacher. Such arrangements should, of course, be made in the context of the need to provide confidentiality where appropriate to the pupil concerned.
- **Members of staff should avoid being on their own with a pupil in a car.** It is inadvisable for a teacher to give a lift in a car to a pupil alone. Wherever possible and practicable it is advisable that transport is undertaken other than in private vehicles. If there are exceptional circumstances that make unaccompanied transportation of pupils unavoidable, the journey should be made known to a senior member of staff.
- **Members of staff must avoid having conversations with pupils that use inappropriate language,** such as swearing or sexual innuendo, or that are sexually suggestive. It is also not acceptable for members of staff to be in possession on the School site of inappropriate pictures, or to share inappropriate pictures or jokes with pupils.
- **Members of staff should be aware that it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over, such as a teacher, to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18** where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if, in the case of those over 16, the relationship is consensual.
- **Confidentiality:** Staff members should never give absolute guarantees of confidentiality to pupils or adults wishing to tell them about something serious. They should guarantee only that they will pass on information to the minimum number of people who must be told in order to ensure that the proper action is taken to sort out the problem and that they will not tell anyone who does not have a clear need to know. They will also take whatever steps they can to protect the informing pupil or adult from any retaliation or unnecessary stress that might be feared after a disclosure has been made.

5. Guidelines on the use of Electronic Communications / IT (see also *Social Media Policy for Staff*).

- Where members of staff need to communicate with pupils using e-mail, they must do so only using their staff school email addresses. Staff must not give pupils personal contact details (eg non school email address, telephone number or home address).
- It is not acceptable for members of staff to communicate with pupils using social networking sites (such as Facebook) or instant messaging services. Staff must not

become Facebook friends with pupils on personal accounts and must not follow them or communicate with them on Twitter, Whatsapp, Snapchat, Instagram or any other social media site.

- Staff should not request personal contact details from pupils with the exception of emergencies or if the details are required for the pupils on a school trip. The School recognises that members of staff may gather the mobile telephone numbers of pupils in the course of the safe running of a school trip. However, staff must delete any pupil numbers stored in their personal mobile telephones at the conclusion of the trip. In general, communicating with pupils using mobile telephones is not acceptable, and staff should not give their personal telephone numbers to pupils or personal email addresses to pupils, nor should they communicate with them by text message or personal email. If they need to speak to a pupil by telephone, they should use the School's telephones.
- Great caution is also advised when communicating with recent former pupils by electronic and other means, as they may have friends or siblings who are still pupils at the School. The School recommends that staff should not have personal social media contact with ex-pupils until three years after they have left the Upper Sixth.
- Staff should not discuss or share data relating to children, parents or carers in staff social media groups.

- **Photographic Images**

The taking of photographs of pupils by members of staff whilst undertaking school activities is acceptable in principle, whether the images are captured on school or personal equipment, with the **exception of the Early Years Foundation Stage where personal image capturing devices are not allowed**. It is not, however, acceptable for members of staff to take or share images of pupils that are inappropriate (either by virtue of what the pupils are doing or by virtue of how they are dressed). All photographs of pupils taken whilst undertaking school activities must be stored on the school network and must not be stored on personal devices. Personal devices may be used for temporary storage as part of the process of transferring captured images to the school network, but images must be deleted from personal devices once the process of transferring them to the school network has been completed and this must be carried out as soon as is possible. Images stored on the school network must not be downloaded onto personal devices, and members of staff must not take or download images of pupils for personal purposes.

Members of staff working in the EYFS must not be in possession of a personal camera or personal mobile telephone whilst working in the setting. Members of staff in possession of a smart watch, must switch the device to flight mode or remove it so that images cannot be sent or received. Parents and visitors are also required to refrain from using electronic devices for the purpose of making calls or recording images in the setting. Staff should feel empowered to prevent visitors using mobile devices in the EYFS setting. Parents of pupils in the EYFS are asked to give consent to the use of Tapestry (Electronic Learning

Journey) to record images that illustrate the pupils' individual development. All images should be deleted once the pupil has left the setting.

6. Physical Contact

a) Physical Restraint

Any physical restraint is only permissible when a child is in imminent danger of inflicting an injury on himself/herself or on another, and then only as a last resort when all efforts to diffuse the situation have failed. Another member of staff should, if possible, be present to act as a witness. All incidents of the use of physical restraint should be recorded in writing and reported immediately to the Headmaster who will decide on appropriate action and will record the incident. Where this relates to the School's Nursery and EYFS setting, parents will be informed of any physical restraint used on their child the same day or as soon as reasonably practicable.

b) Physical education and other activities requiring physical contact

Where exercises or procedures need to be demonstrated, extreme caution should be used if the demonstration involves contact with pupils and, wherever possible, contact should be avoided. It is acknowledged that some staff, for example, those who teach PE and games, or who offer music tuition, will, on occasions, have to initiate physical contact with pupils in order to support a pupil so they can perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument or assist them with an exercise. This should be done with the pupil's agreement. Contact under these circumstances should be for the minimum time necessary to complete the activity and take place in an open environment. Staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the child.

c) Intimate / personal care in EYFS

Pupils are encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their own personal care as is possible and practicable. When assistance is required, this is normally undertaken by one member of staff, however, another appropriate adult is made aware of the task to be undertaken. Arrangements for intimate and personal care are open and transparent. The health, safety and welfare of the children are promoted and their dignity and privacy respected. A signed record is kept of all intimate and personal care tasks undertaken.

7. Safeguarding Pupils

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils/students from:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- neglect

The duty to safeguard pupils includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil to the School's DSL or DDSL.

The School's DSL is Deputy Head Pastoral (Mrs J A Simms)

The School's DDSLs are:

In the Senior School:	Assistant Head Pastoral (Mr I J Bousfield) Head of 6 th Form (Mr A Poole)
In the Prep School:	Head of the Prep School (Mrs K Thomson)
For the EYFS:	Nursery Manager (Mrs E Taylor)

Staff must read and be familiar with the School's *Safeguarding Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy, Anti Bullying and Anti Cyber Bullying Policy, Missing Pupil Policy, Social Media Policy for Staff*. As well as being familiar with the above documents all staff at the School will be sent (digitally) and be expected to have read '*Keeping Children Safe in Education: for school and college staff*' (2023) Part 1 including Annex A and B.

8. Avoiding Allegations of Abuse: Guidance to Staff

Allegations of abuse of children are sometimes made against staff by children themselves or by their parents/guardians or by others close to the School. In cases such allegations can be malicious or unfounded. Staff have a duty, however, to ensure that they do not put themselves in a situation where it may be easier for such allegations to arise.

Allegations / concerns that do not meet the harms threshold – 'low level concerns' (see the *Low Level Concerns Policy*)

The School has created a culture in which all concerns about adults (including allegations that do not meet the harms threshold) are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately, and this is critical.

We encourage an open and transparent culture; enabling us to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour early; minimise the risk of abuse; and ensure that adults working in or on behalf of the School are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the ethos and values of the School.

'Low level' does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the harms threshold.

'Low level' concern is still a concern, no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the School may have acted in a way that

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work.
- and does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children.
- having favourites.
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone.
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door;
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating, or offensive language

- humiliating pupils

All staff must have a good understanding of what constitutes a low level concern and the governing body ensure that low level concerns are included as part of our *Staff Code of Conduct* and *Safeguarding Policy* as set out in *KCSIE*. All staff are aware of how these concerns will be dealt with. If a member of staff has a 'low level' concern they must report it to the Headmaster.

The Headmaster will collect as much evidence as possible by speaking:

- directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously;
- to the individual involved and any witnesses.

The information collected will help to categorise the type of behaviour and determine what further action may need to be taken.

All 'low level' concerns will be recorded in writing along with the rationale for any decisions made or action taken.

Records will be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, the School will decide on a course of action, either through its disciplinary procedures or where a pattern of behaviour moves from a concern to meeting the harms threshold, in which case it should be referred to the LADO.

Any member of staff or volunteer who does not feel confident to raise their concerns with the Headmaster or Chair of Governors should contact the LADO directly (further information can be found in the School's *Safeguarding Policy*).

9. Daily Conduct Requirements for Staff

Pupils inevitably take considerable notice of the standards set by members of staff, and it therefore follows that staff should set the appropriate example in all aspects of their work.

- **Loyalty:** Staff are expected to remain loyal to the School and to uphold its stated aims and values at all times (including in cyberspace). Members of staff should avoid conduct (whether in school or otherwise) that could in any way bring the School into disrepute or that could demonstrate a lack of fitness for working with children.
- **Dress:** Staff are expected to dress smartly and conventionally, and to be neat and professional in appearance. For male members of staff this means wearing a jacket and tie, and female members of staff should dress with an equivalent level of formality. Sports clothing should only be worn when PE or Games sessions are being run. Gowns and hoods are worn for Founders' Day and the annual Prize Giving ceremony.
- **Attendance and Punctuality:** Staff are expected to be present in school at all times when the School is in session, and to attend parents' evenings, training days and other functions as directed by the Headmaster, unless they have been granted permission for absence. Punctuality is important for both staff and pupils at the start of each lesson and other organised activities. At the end of a lesson, pupils should be let out promptly but should not be released early.

- **Confidentiality:** Staff must maintain the highest possible standards of confidentiality and ensure that confidential documentation, records and discussions from meetings remain confidential within the School. (“Within the School” does not extend to former members of staff).
- **Use of the Internet:** Staff use of the internet for personal purposes is acceptable but must not interfere with the professional duties and obligations of the member of staff. For support staff, this means that in practice use of the Internet for personal purposes should be confined to scheduled breaks in duty. For teaching staff, this means that the Internet must not be accessed for personal purposes whilst the member of staff is supervising or teaching a pupil or groups of pupils. Use of the Internet that requires large bandwidth (such as streaming video, including live television, and file downloads) must only be for pupil benefit and not for personal purposes between the hours of 8.30am and 4.00pm. Staff access to the Internet through the School network (at all times) or through portable personal devices (whilst on school premises or whilst supervising pupils off-site) must be confined to content that is suitable and appropriate for a school environment. Staff should be aware that records are kept of their use of the Internet in school and that all internet traffic through the school network may be monitored. Misuse of the Internet whilst on school premises or whilst undertaking school duties off-site is a potentially serious disciplinary offence.
- **Smoking:** To promote a healthy and pleasant working environment and because of the fire risk, smoking (in any form, including the use of e-cigarettes) is not allowed anywhere on site.
- **Alcohol and Illegal Drugs:** Consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs is not permitted on site save where, in the case of alcohol, at a school function or otherwise agreed in exceptional circumstances in advance by the Headmaster, when modest amounts of alcohol may be consumed. Employees' conduct and performance must not be adversely impacted by alcohol or drugs when undertaking their duties
- **Security:** In the interests of security, employees must wear their identity card whilst in school and produce it on request. Staff must not remove any school documents from the site nor take any photographs without due permission. The School reserves the right to search the outer clothing, bags, lockers and vehicles etc. of staff members whilst on site. The staff member may have a colleague in attendance on such (rare) occasions.

Members of staff should read this policy in conjunction with the *Staff Handbook, Social Media Policy for Staff and Computer Acceptable Use Policy*.

Policy Reviewed at SMT:
Next Review Due:

J A Simms
September 2023
September 2024