

Charlton Kings Infants' School



Code of Conduct and Guidelines for Safe Working Practices
for the Protection of Children and Staff September 2019

Written by K. James

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This Code of Conduct is to be read in conjunction with the CKIS Safeguarding Statement, Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy & Procedures and all associated safeguarding policies. In addition you should read 'Safeguarding children quick reference for new school staff or volunteers' and 'Parent/Volunteer Guidelines' both documents are available on the school website www.ckis.org.uk.

Introduction

The Governors of CKIS have a legal duty under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by creating and maintaining a safe learning environment. In this regard, all staff, volunteers and visitors have a duty to keep children and young people safe and protect them from harm. Staff, volunteers and visitors should ensure that they do not put themselves in situations in which allegations of abuse or inappropriate behaviour could be made. The Public are also entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from school staff, governors and volunteers and to have trust and confidence in their integrity. All adults working within CKIS must therefore act with the utmost good faith with regard to the business of the school and not do anything which may adversely affect its reputation.

The following Code has been drawn up with a view to reducing the risk of staff being accused of improper or unprofessional conduct in all aspects of their work. It aims to help staff work safely and professionally and clarify what behaviour constitutes safe practice and what is unacceptable and/or illegal. The Code refers closely to the IRSC Guidance for Safe Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Settings.

Scope

The Code applies to all adults working in school whatever their position, roles or responsibilities and is therefore aimed at all school-based staff and volunteers. The Code is predominantly geared towards safe working practices for the protection of children and in this connection should be read in conjunction with our suite of CKIS Safeguarding and Child Protection policies. However, the Code also encompasses other general aspects of conduct expected throughout CKIS. The Code cannot cover every eventuality. Its purpose is to show the standard expected of employees, volunteers and visitors, but it does not replace the general requirements of the law. In respect of teachers specifically, the Code supplements the General Teaching Council (GTC) Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers.

General obligations

All adults in school should understand the responsibilities that are an intrinsic part of their employment or role. They should make a professional judgement about their actions and behaviour and seek to avoid conduct, which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation or intentions. If there is an incident where staff or volunteers feel there may be a concern, they should discuss the circumstances that informed their action, or their proposed action with the Headteacher, to help ensure that the safest practices are employed and the risk of actions being misinterpreted reduced. Records should be made of any incidents and decisions made or further actions agreed, with their justifications, in accordance with school policy.

All staff should know the designated person for child protection (Katie James – Head teacher), be familiar with local child protection arrangements and understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children and young people. Staff and volunteers should understand their responsibility to voice any general concerns that they might have about practice within the school, in accordance with CKIS Whistle Blowing policy. Staff should also be aware of and comply with CKIS financial and administrative regulations and any other procedure manuals. Unlawful, unsafe or inappropriate behaviour may result in disciplinary action being taken.

Good practice guidelines

The following Code and guidelines set out specific areas of conduct and behaviour that constitute expected and safe practice. If staff or volunteers are in any doubt about any aspect of this guidance or need to seek further clarification about a particular situation in the absence of specific guidance, they are advised to speak to the Head teacher.

Propriety and behaviour

All adults working with children and young people are in a position of trust in relation to the individuals in their care. Staff and volunteers are expected to adopt high standards of personal integrity and conduct and behave in such a way that does not compromise their position both within or outside CKIS. The General Teaching Council for England's Statement of Professional Values and Practice also sets out the minimum professional standards for the regulation of the teaching profession and recognises that 'professionalism involves using judgement over appropriate standards of personal behaviour'.

Staff should not:

- behave in a manner, which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or act as a role model;
- use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine pupils;
- make (or encourage others to make) unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate other individuals or might be interpreted as such.

If staff are cautioned, arrested or convicted of any offence, they must tell the Head teacher at the earliest opportunity.

Confidentiality and information disclosure

Staff and volunteers should not use any information obtained in the course of their duties to the detriment of CKIS or for personal gain or benefit or pass this information on to others who might use it in such a way. Staff must also take all reasonable steps to ensure that the loss, destruction, inaccuracy or disclosure of information does not occur as a result of their actions, including information relating to school business and pupil data.

There are some circumstances in which staff and volunteers may be expected to share information about a child, for example, when child protection issues arise. In such cases adults have a duty to pass on information without delay in line with local procedures. If staff are in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential they should seek guidance from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

- Staff should not use their position to gain access to information for their own advantage or to intimidate, humiliate or embarrass a child/family;
- Staff are expected to treat any information they receive about children and young people in a discreet and confidential manner;

Equality issues

All staff should adhere to the CKIS Equal Opportunities Policy, in addition to the requirements of the law.

- staff should not discriminate in recruitment and employment practices, nor in the delivery of services;
- staff should also ensure that in their dealings with parents and other members of the public, they ensure the provision of an efficient and impartial delivery to all individuals.

Employment matters

All staff and governors involved in appointments and/or tendering process should ensure that these are made on the basis of merit.

- staff should not be involved in an appointment or decisions relating to discipline, promotion or pay adjustments for any individual who is a relative or with whom they are in a close personal relationship;
- all relationships of a business or private nature with external contractors, or potential contractors should be made known to the Head teacher.

Public duty and private interest

It is important that staff do not put themselves in a position where their duty to CKIS and their private interests conflict. Staff should not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work and the provision of a balanced and professional service, ensuring that they work to the professional standard required.

Other employment/private work

Any external work that staff undertake must not bring CKIS into disrepute or conflict with the school's interest. Any copyright created by a member of staff during their employment with CKIS becomes the property of the school.

- staff should not set up a business or accept employment with a business that is engaged in work, which is in direct competition with CKIS.
- private work should not be undertaken in the school's time, or using the schools premises or equipment, without prior approval of the Head teacher.

Dress and appearance

Staff and volunteers should ensure that they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks that they undertake and that through their appearance, they promote a positive and professional image. Clothing should be smart and professional (ie jeans should not be worn, other than on school trips).

Financial inducements and gifts

Staff should ensure that they use public funds entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner and that they do not give or receive any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage, which might be misinterpreted.

Any offers of significant giftsⁱ, hospitality or sponsorship should be recorded in the school's Gifts & Hospitality Register held by the Clerk to the Governing Body. The register must include all offers of gifts, etc whether accepted or declined. Advice/permission should be sought from the Head teacher before any gift, hospitality or sponsorship is accepted (see below). When in doubt the employee should always refuse such gifts.

Although staff should not give or receive gifts from pupils or parents on a regular basis or of any significant value, it is acceptable however for staff to receive small tokens of appreciation, such as at Christmas time or the end of term.

- staff should not seek or receive preferential rates for themselves by virtue of their dealings on behalf of the school;
- staff should generally only give gifts to an individual young person as part of an agreed reward system;
- where staff do give gifts, they should ensure that they are of insignificant value and given to all children equally.

Use of school time and facilities

The School's property and facilities (eg stationery, computers, photocopiers) may only be used for school business unless permission for their private use has been granted.

Publication of books/articles

If staff or volunteers wish to publish books, articles, letters, dissertations etc that they have written in connection with their duties and in which they describe themselves as holding an appointment with the school they must consult the Head teacher. All staff and volunteers should speak to the Head teacher if they wish to publish books, articles, letters, dissertations etc, which have been written in connection with their duties and their role within CKIS.

Physical contact

It is unrealistic to suggest that staff should never touch pupils. There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, such as when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance or as an integral part of some lessons such as PE and music. Staff should use their professional judgement at all times. Where feasible, staff should seek the child's permission before initiating contact. Where a member of staff thinks that an incident could have been misinterpreted it should be reported to the Head teacher. Any formally agreed plan for children with SEN or physical disabilities should be understood and agreed by all concerned and staff should be provided with relevant information about vulnerable pupils in their care where it is relevant for this to be provided in order for staff to be able to undertake tasks appropriately. Extra caution may also be required where it is known that a child has suffered previous abuse or neglect. Many such children are often needy and seek out inappropriate contact, thereby leading staff to be vulnerable to allegations of abuse.

In this regard, staff should:

- be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described;
- never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent;
- always explain to a pupil the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take;
- look at alternatives, where it is anticipated that a pupil might misinterpret contact and consider involving another member of staff, or a less vulnerable pupil in a demonstration;
- never indulge in horseplay, tickling or fun fights;
- always tell a colleague when and how they offered comfort to a distressed child and record any situations, where they think they may give rise to concern;
- adhere to the school's physical intervention policy and be acquainted with DfES Guidance in respect of physical contact with pupils and meeting the medical needs of children and young people in school.

Changing

Children are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes or getting ready for planned physical activities such as PE or physical clubs. However, there does need to be an appropriate level of supervision to safeguard young people and satisfy health and safety considerations. Any supervision must therefore be appropriate to the needs and age of the young people concerned.

- staff should use the appropriate physical support to assist young children in changing for PE or after school activities;
- staff should not change in the same place as children.

Behaviour management and physical intervention

Corporal punishment is unlawful in all schools and physical force should never be used as a form of punishment; to do so is likely to constitute a criminal offence. However in some circumstances, staff in schools have the right to use physical intervention/reasonable force for the shortest period necessary to control or restrain pupils. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 provides the legal power for school staff to use reasonable force to prevent pupils from committing a crime or causing injury, damage or disruption (see CKIS Reasonable Force Guidelines);

- staff should try to defuse situations before they escalate;
- staff should keep parents informed of any sanctions;
- staff should adhere to CKIS policies on Behaviour Management and Physical Intervention;
- where it is identified that staff are likely to have to restrain on a regular basis they should have received appropriate training.

Sexual contact with children and curriculum issues

It is a criminal offence for any adult in a position of trust to engage in any form of sexual activity with a young person under 18, even with their consent (Sexual Offences Act 2003).

One to one situations

When staff work regularly on an individual basis with children, they are generally more vulnerable to allegations. To avoid such situations arising staff should:

- ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in one to one situations;
- always report to a senior colleague any situation which gives rise to complaint, disagreement or misunderstanding or where a child becomes distressed or angry.

Educational visits and school clubs

Staff should always take care to have another adult present during out of school activities, unless otherwise agreed with the Head teacher. Health and safety requirements should be strictly adhered to at all times and a risk assessment should be completed and agreed by the Head teacher prior to all educational visits. Staff should ensure that they display professional behaviour during activities that take place off the school site and ensure that their behaviour cannot be interpreted as seeking to establish an inappropriate relationship or friendship. Staff should therefore maintain a professional relationship with pupils at all times.

First aid and administration of medication

In cases where first aid or medication needs to be administered, all staff should adhere to the CKIS Health and Safety and medicines in school policies. A health care plan should be drawn up in circumstances where the child needs to take regular medication and any such agreement between the child, parents/ carers and the school must be negotiated, agreed and recorded with the designated school nurse.

Staff should:

- make other staff aware of the task being undertaken;
- explain to the child what is happening.

Intimate Care

All children have a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of an intimate nature is required. A care plan should be drawn up and agreed with parents for all children, including those with special needs, who require intimate care on a regular basis.

In this regard staff should:

- adhere to the school's intimate care guidelines;
- make other staff aware of the task being undertaken;
- explain to the child what is happening;
- consult with colleagues where any variation from the agreed procedure or care plan is necessary and record the justification, sharing the information with parents.

A detailed Intimate Care Policy has been produced for CKIS which should be referred to for further detail.

Photography, videos and other creative arts

Many school activities involve recording images, but the use of such images needs careful consideration and handling. The use of any images of children for publicity purposes will also require the appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their legal guardians.

Staff should therefore:

- be clear about the purpose of the activity and about what will happen to the images when the lesson or activity is concluded;
- ensure consent is gained from the pupil and their legal guardians where being used for publicity purposes;
- ensure that a senior member of staff is aware that the photography/image equipment is being used and for what purpose;
- ensure that all images are available for scrutiny in order to screen for acceptability;
- be able to justify images of children in their possession;
- never use mobile phones or other personal technology to take images;
- avoid making images in one to one situations.

Internet use (see also Acceptable Use policy)

Accessing child pornography or indecent images of children on the computer is illegal. Under no circumstances should adults in schools access inappropriate images on the internet. The same rule applies to the use of the school's equipment by members of staff at home, eg use of laptops. Staff should follow the school policy on the use of IT equipment.

Staff and volunteers should also ensure that they do not use social media to post or comment upon any matters relating to the running of the schools, the needs of individual pupils or with reference to staff, volunteers and parents. If adults have concerns regarding the inappropriate use of social media by a member of staff, volunteer or parent, they should share these with the Head teacher.

Charlton Kings Infants' School provides a supportive and nurturing environment for all members of our school community; children, parents, staff and visitors. We always strive to ensure that everyone is welcomed and benefits from the collective support of the team. If you have any concerns regarding the well-being or actions of a child or member of staff, please ensure that you speak to the Head teacher (Designated Safeguarding Lead).

Declaration of receipt

I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct and Guidelines for Safe Working Practice and will ensure that I adhere to the code at all times.

Name: *(please print)*:

Signature: Date:

Please return this slip to the Head teacher as soon as possible

¹ Gifts which exceed £25.00 value should be recorded