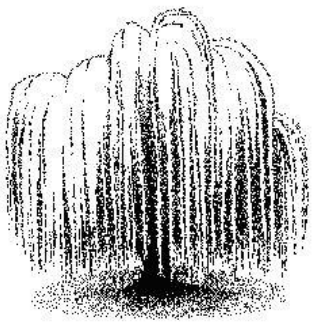


Arksey Primary School

PROFESSIONAL CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

November 2026

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

1. INTRODUCTION

All employees have personal and legal responsibilities, including treating others professionally and with dignity, acting honestly, using public funds and school equipment appropriately, adhering to health and safety guidelines and practising equal opportunities at all times whilst ensuring no bullying or harassment of any individual is tolerated. These expectations are set out below and should be fully observed by all staff employed by the school.

This document is not a prescriptive guide to what employees should and should not do. It highlights the principal areas where employees need to be aware of their responsibilities when working in the school, or representing the school, and is a framework for behaviour. Employees should ensure they are familiar with the specific policies that underpin these behaviours through reference to the documents highlighted in the "Required Reading" throughout the Code. The documents will be available in the school's 'Keeping Children Safe' reference file. If these documents are not supplied at induction, the employee should ask the school for copies.

2. COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF CONDUCT

The Code of Conduct forms part of an employee's contract. Failure to comply with it and with the associated school policies ("Required Reading") may result in disciplinary action being taken, and the school and/or the school reserves the right to take legal action against employees where breaches of the Code warrant such action.

Required reading:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- School's Equality Policies and Schemes
- Teachers Professional Standards
- Low Level Concerns Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

The school operates within a culture of openness, School and transparency in which staff must uphold the values of the organisation. The school expects all staff to endorse and commit to its values of putting children first.

3. PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR AND CONDUCT

3.1 Treating other people with dignity and respect.

All employees are expected to treat other colleagues, pupils and external contacts, such as parents, professionally and with dignity.

Staff are required to comply with the school's equality policies in respect of colleagues, pupils and other contacts such as parents. Unacceptable behaviour such as discrimination, bullying, harassment or

intimidation will not be tolerated in schools. This includes physical and verbal abuse and use of inappropriate language or unprofessional behaviour with colleagues, pupils and parents.

3.2 Expectations

Staff must lead by example and are required to: -

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality.
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language.
- 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
- Express personal beliefs in a way that will not overly influence pupils, exploit their vulnerability, or potentially lead them to break the law.
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within.
- Report any concerns regarding staff who demonstrate behaviour that is not consistent with the code of conduct.

3.3 Appropriate relationships with children

All employees of the school are expected to act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to suspect their actions or intent. Employees in schools are in a position of trust and have a duty to protect young people from discrimination and harm and to maintain appropriate professional boundaries at all times. 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 in particular 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and should seek clarification on any points they are not clear on.

If members of staff 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 teaching hours if possible, unless the contact is due to after school clubs/activities/residential visits that are provided by and verified by the School.

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

Whilst we are aware any pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example at the end of the academic 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, they should report this to their line manager or the headteacher. All staff must observe professional boundaries at all times with pupils.

Staff should refer to the Low-level concerns policy if they have any concerns about behaviour that is not consistent with the of the Code of Conduct.

3.4 Professional behaviour

Employees must not misuse or misrepresent their position, qualifications or experience or bring the reputation of the school into disrepute. Such behaviour may lead to disciplinary action and where relevant, referral to the Teachers Regulation Agency. Employees of the School are in an influential

position and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour in and outside of the workplace.

3.5 Criminal actions

All employees have a duty to inform their Headteacher immediately if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution. The Headteacher will discuss this with the employee in the context of their role and responsibilities in order to help safeguard children and other employees at the school. Failure to report such events may be dealt with as a disciplinary.

3.6 Communication, social media and use of mobile phones.

All employees of the school's social media profiles must not be made available to pupils. If they 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.

All employees are prohibited from attempting to contact pupils or their parents via social media, or any other means outside of the school in order to develop any sort of private relationship. They will not make any efforts to find pupils' or parents' social medial profiles.

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at the School without their, or their parents' consent. Any images or content regarding pupils will only be posted on verified private social media platforms, with access control, that represent the School.

The use of personal mobile phones and other electronic items with the function to record, e.g. glasses, by staff is only permitted at designated break times and in areas to which pupils do not access.

Mobile phones and devices should be switched off or in silent mode during teaching time and must not be present in areas where children access. It is prohibited to take photographs of pupils on any personal mobile device.

3.7 Acceptable use of technology

Staff are prohibited from using technology on site belonging to the school or their own personal devices 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 contents/websites. Staff must be mindful of sites that are open on their own devices whilst on the school premises, it is advisable to close down all browsing that is open upon entering the school premises.

Staff will not use personal mobile phones or laptops, or School equipment for personal use in teaching hours or in front of pupils. At no time will any member of staff use their own personal mobile phones or cameras or other devices to take pictures of or record pupils.

School information, images and recordings must not be shared with AI without express written permission from the headteacher.

We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the School's IT system.

The school has the right to monitor emails, phone-calls, internet activity or document production, principally in order to avoid offensive or nuisance material and to protect systems from viruses, but also to ensure proper and effective use of systems by employees.

Employees should be aware that the school has the right to access employees' personal email and computer files if saved on school communication systems, if required for investigation of misuse.

It is recommended that employees do not use school systems (phone, email, computers) for excessive personal use. Inappropriate usage, which includes excessive or regular personal use may result in disciplinary action for the employee and in serious cases could lead to an employee's dismissal.

Passwords should not be shared and access to computer systems must be kept confidential.

3.8 Confidentiality

In the course of their role, employees are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the School, staff, pupils and their parent. This information must not be:

- Disclosed to anyone without the relevant authority.
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others.
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where they believe a child is at risk or harm.

Employees of the School must not give statements to the media or press regarding School business; any enquiries for information from the media must be referred to the School Central Team.

3.9 Honesty and integrity

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

The institution's anti-bribery policy statement can be found in the School Financial Regulations policy.

The guiding principles to be followed by all members of staff must be:

- the conduct of individuals should not create suspicion of any conflict between their official duty and their private interest.

- the action of individuals acting in an official capacity should not give the impression (to any member of the public, to any organisation with whom they deal or to their colleagues) that they have been (or may have been) influenced by a benefit to show favour or disfavour to any person or organisation.

Employees of the School should not accept any gifts, rewards or hospitality (or have them given to members of their families) from any organisation or individual with whom they have contact in the course of their work that would cause them to reach a position whereby they might be, or might be deemed by others to have been, influenced in making a business decision as a consequence of accepting such hospitality. The frequency and scale of hospitality accepted should not be significantly greater than the institution would be likely to provide in return. When it is not easy to decide between what is and is not acceptable in terms of gifts or hospitality, the offer should be declined, or advice sought from the CFO.

3.10 Dress Code

Employees will always dress in a professional, appropriate manner. Outfits will not be overly revealing. Clothes will not display any offensive or political slogans.

The head teacher is empowered to determine the standard of smartness that is acceptable in school.

Whilst the School accepts that tattoos are an expression of an individual, any visible tattoos that display profanities or expression of extreme views must be covered up.

All employees are encouraged to make sound judgments and choices in relation to their attire for work including footwear which must be suitable for their role with a closed heel and toe unless extreme weather is declared.

3.11 Conduct outside work

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school, teaching profession or professional position of staff into disrepute. This covers relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school on any social media sites.

Derogatory or offensive comments on any social media platform about the school must be reported to the Headteacher. Employees are instructed not to respond to or 'like' any such comments.

All staff must be aware of professional boundaries both in and outside of the work place with regard to pupils.

4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

4.1 Employees should declare any financial or non-financial interests that may cause any conflict with the school interests.

When considering whether there may be a conflict of interest an employee shall seek advice from their Head teacher and if necessary complete the relevant declaration form.

5. USE OF SCHOOL PREMISES & EQUIPMENT

5.1 School equipment and premises are available only for school-related activities and should not be used in relation to another job or post or for excessive or regular personal use, unless authorised in writing and in advance by the Headteacher. Where schools offer the use of premises e.g. Lettings, the relevant policy for use of the premises must be observed.

6. OTHER EMPLOYMENT

6.1 Employees are permitted to take up secondary employment outside the school, as long as the activity does not constitute a conflict of interest, adversely affect their primary employment at the school or exceed the legal maximum time as defined by the Working Time Regulations.

A conflict of interest will be any financial gain that is associated with any interaction outside of school with pupils from across the School.

The secondary employment must be undertaken outside the working hours of the employee's normal post and employees are required to keep the Headteacher (Governing Body if the employee is the Headteacher) informed of their employment by other organisations, or their own business ventures. Employees will be required to complete the declaration form.

7. HEALTH AND SAFETY

7.1 Employees must adhere to the school and The School 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.

Risk assessments must be in place for all activities involving children and young people undertaken both on and off the school site.

This includes taking immediate safety action in a potentially harmful situation (either at school or off-site) by complying with statutory and school guidelines and collaborating with colleagues, agencies and the School.

More detailed Health and Safety advice will be provided within your school's induction procedures.

8. USE OF ALCOHOL AND ILLEGAL DRUGS

8.1 The taking of illegal drugs or alcohol during working hours is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All employees are expected to attend work without being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs and without their performance being adversely impacted by the consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs.

If alcohol or drug usage impacts on an employee's working life, the school has the right to discuss the matter with the employee and take appropriate action, having considered factors such as the school or School's reputation and public confidence.

All school and School buildings and premises operate a no smoking/vaping policy.

APPENDIX ONE

GUIDANCE FOR SAFER WORKING PRACTICE FOR STAFF, VOLUNTEERS, GOVERNORS etc WHO WORK WITH CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE

1. INTRODUCTION

This guidance is intended to assist the school to minimise the risk of staff and volunteers being accused of improper conduct towards the children and young people with whom they come into contact during their work. The subject must be covered in staff induction arrangements for all employees and volunteers.

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff relate to pupils and where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur. Staff must exercise professional judgement in their dealings with pupils. For the vast majority of staff this code of conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their practice. If staff have any doubts about the advice contained in this document, they should consult their head teacher.

Staff have a crucial role to play in shaping the lives of young people. They have a unique opportunity to interact with children and young people in ways that are both affirming and inspiring. This guidance is designed to help staff establish the safest possible learning and working environments. The aims are to safeguard young people and reduce the risk of staff being falsely accused of improper or unprofessional conduct.

All staff should refer to the Low Level concerns policy where they witness behaviour that is not consistent with the code of conduct.

2. REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse may be physical, sexual or psychological. While child abusers may be relatives or friends of the family, some meet children in other contexts and a small minority of these may gain access to children in schools as teachers or support staff or through their voluntary involvement in school activities. Pupils and staff should not feel inhibited from reporting abuse by staff or volunteers, or any incident where a pupil has grounds to believe that a member of staff or volunteer has crossed the boundary of acceptable behaviour. Headteachers and staff will continue to do all they can to ensure that the environment within schools encourages pupils and staff to make truthful reports of any inappropriate behaviour.

2.1 Child Protection Procedures

The action to be taken by staff when they suspect a pupil is being abused by a person outside or inside the school, and the steps that must by law be taken if an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff by a pupil, are set out in the school's child protection procedure and all staff should be familiar with this.

2.2 Other procedures and guidance

Staff should also be familiar with the school's policies about physical contact with pupils, the use of reasonable force to control or restrain pupils, and the procedures that should be followed if a pupil needs first aid or medical attention.

3 GUIDELINES FOR STAFF

3.1 Private meetings with pupils

(a) Staff and volunteers should be aware that private meetings with individual pupils may give rise to concern. There will be occasions when a confidential interview or a one-to-one meeting is necessary, but, where possible, such interviews should be conducted in a room with visual access, or with the door open, or in a room or area which is likely to be frequented by other people, and another pupil or adult should be present or nearby. Where such conditions cannot apply, staff should ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place.

(b) Meetings with pupils away from the school premises should only be arranged with the specific approval of the Headteacher.

3.2 Physical contact with pupils

(a) Physical contact may be misconstrued by a pupil, parent or observer. Touching pupils, including well intentioned informal and formal gestures such as putting a hand on the shoulder or arm, can, if repeated regularly, lead to serious questions being raised. As a general rule staff must not make gratuitous physical contact with their pupils. It is particularly unwise to attribute touching to their teaching style or as a way of relating to pupils.

(b) Not all children and young people feel comfortable about physical contact, and adults should not make the assumption that it is acceptable practice to touch as a means of communication. Permission should be sought from a child before physical contact is made.

(c) Any form of physical punishment of pupils is unacceptable and not tolerated in any context.

3.3 Where physical contact may be acceptable.

(a) There may be occasions where a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance, which may include physical comforting such as a caring parent would give. Staff should use their discretion in such cases to ensure that what is, and what is seen to be by others present as normal and natural does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same pupil over a period of time. Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance, he/she should seek the advice of the head teacher.

(b) Some staff are likely to come into physical contact with pupils from time to time in the course of their duties. Examples include showing a pupil how to use a piece of apparatus or equipment, demonstrating a move or exercise during games or PE. Staff should be aware of the limits and boundaries within which such contact should properly take place and of the possibility of such contact being misinterpreted.

(c) There may be occasions where it is necessary for staff to restrain or remove a pupil physically to prevent him/her from inflicting injury to others or self-injury, damaging property, or causing disruption. In such cases only the minimum force necessary may be used and any action taken must be to restrain the pupil. Where an employee has taken action to physically restrain a pupil, he/she should make a written report of the incident in

the form prescribed by the school's policy on restraint. Physical restrain is a last resort, in the first instance staff should seek support from a more senior member of staff and seek to de- escalate the situation.

3.4 Caring for pupils with additional needs

(a) Staff who have to administer first aid should ensure wherever possible that other children or another adult are present if they are in any doubt as to whether necessary physical contact could be misconstrued.

(b) Wherever possible staff who have to help children with intimate care routines must be accompanied by another adult, and pupils should, wherever possible, be encouraged to change themselves. It is accepted that there will be some situations where pupils will present particular problems for staff and the emphasis will be on what is reasonable in all the circumstances.

3.5 Relationships and attitudes

(a) All staff should clearly understand the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their dealings with pupils. Intimate or sexual relationships between staff and pupils will be regarded as breach of School, and any sexual activity between a member of staff and a pupil under 18 years of age is a criminal offence.

(b) All staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age and gender of the pupils and take care that their language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when members of staff of either gender are dealing with adolescent boys and girls.

(c) Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. Even if a young person seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff must not respond but address the situation with their head teacher.

(d) From time-to-time staff may encounter pupils who display attention seeking behaviour. Staff should aim to deal with those situations sensitively and appropriately but must ensure that their behaviour cannot be misinterpreted. In these circumstances, the member of staff should also ensure that the head teacher or a senior colleague is made aware of the situation.

(e) Staff should never give their personal details such as home or personal mobile phone number, home or personal e-mail address to pupils.

3.6 Where conversation of a sensitive nature may be appropriate.

(a) Many staff have a pastoral responsibility for pupils and in order to fulfil that role effectively there will be occasions where conversations will cover particularly sensitive matters. Staff must, in these circumstances, use their discretion to ensure that, for example, any probing for details cannot be construed as unjustified intrusion.

(b) Other staff in school may, from time to time, be approached by pupils for advice. Pupils may also appear distressed and staff may feel the need to ask if all is well. In such cases staff must judge whether it is appropriate for them to offer counselling and advice or

whether to refer the pupil to another member of staff with acknowledged pastoral responsibility for the particular pupil.

3.7 Inappropriate comments and discussions with pupils

(a) As with physical contact, comments by staff to pupils, either individually or in groups, can be misconstrued. As a general principle therefore, staff must not make unnecessary comments to and/or about pupils which could be construed to have a sexual connotation. It is also unacceptable for staff to introduce or to encourage debate amongst pupils in class, or elsewhere, which could be construed as having a sexual connotation that is unnecessary given the context of the lesson, or the circumstances. At the same time, it is recognised that a topic raised by a pupil is best addressed rather than ignored.

(b) Systematic use of insensitive, disparaging or sarcastic comments is also unacceptable, as is humiliating pupils. Any such acts may be treated as gross misconduct.

(c) The use of books, videos and films of an explicit or sensitive nature, particularly in relation to language of sexual behaviour must be given careful consideration to ensure that its selection is not subsequently misinterpreted. There should always be a clear link with the targets of the teacher's programme.

3.8 Extra-curricular activities

(a) Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in extra-curricular activities, or a residential setting such as a residential trip or outdoor education camp or extended visit away from home. Typically, a less formal approach than usual is appropriate in these settings, but that can be open to misinterpretation. Although a more informal approach is usual in such circumstances, the standard of behaviour expected of staff will be no different from the behaviour expected within school or within normal school hours.

(b) Staff should take care in receiving or giving gifts to pupils which could be misunderstood. Gifts to individual pupils from staff will be exceptional and should be assessed against the school's policy or by a senior member of staff. Inappropriate gifts from pupils should be reported to the Headteacher.

3.9 On-line communication and social forums

(a) While it is recognised that the use of e-mail as an agreed medium for the submission of work, advice over aspects of subjects being covered or other professional matters can be beneficial, it is essential that this is done safely and in a way that complies with school policy on e-safety and acceptable use.

(b) Staff should keep passwords secure and ensure that no other person can gain access to their e-mail account and maliciously send messages, which appear to have been written by them.

(c) Staff should only ever communicate with pupils using an e-mail address provided as part of the School internet service, even if they are sending messages from home. These services can be monitored and provide a measure of protection for both parties.

(d) The increased availability of internet 'chat rooms', instant messaging and social networking sites also pose risks for pupils and staff. Whilst they are popular among young people and offer many positive experiences, there is widespread concern about their potential abuse. The school's policy is that members of staff are prohibited from using internet 'chat rooms', instant messaging or social networking sites such as X formally

Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and Snapchat, to communicate with pupils. It is advised that any member of staff with a social networking site should ensure that it is appropriately secured and satisfy themselves that pupils and parents of the school cannot access this.

(e) All use of the internet, e-mail or any other digital or electronic equipment within school must be in line with the relevant school policies on Acceptable Use and e-Safety.

3.10 Gifts, Rewards and Favouritism

(a) The giving of gifts or rewards to children or young people should be part of an agreed policy for supporting positive behaviour or recognising particular achievements.

(b) It is acknowledged that there are specific occasions when adults may wish to give a child or young person a personal gift. This is only acceptable practice where, in line with the agreed policy, the adult has first discussed the giving of the gift and the reason for it, with the senior manager and/or parent or carer and the action is recorded. Any gifts should be given openly and not be based on favouritism. Adults need to be aware however, that the giving of gifts can be misinterpreted by others as a gesture either to bribe or groom a young person.

(c) Adults should exercise care when selecting children and/or young people for specific activities or privileges to avoid perceptions of favouritism or unfairness. Methods and criteria for selection should always be transparent and subject to scrutiny.

(d) Care should also be taken to ensure that adults do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.

(e) There are occasions when children, young people or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to adults e.g., on special occasions or as a thank-you and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.

4 Sharing Concerns and Reporting incidents

4.1 Sharing Concerns.

It is the responsibility of every member of staff, volunteer and Governor within the school to report any concerns they may have that a child is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed. Any concerns should be reported immediately to your designated member of staff, Headteacher or local social care office. The low level concerns policy provides a mechanism for staff to raise concerns, no matter how small about their own and other member of staff behaviour.

4.2 Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is a mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. If a member of staff does not feel able to report concerns to a senior member of the school staff, then they can contact the School or relevant external agency to report concerns.

4.3 Reporting Incidents

Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued he/she should discuss the matter with the Headteacher/DSL as soon as possible. Where it is agreed with the Headteacher the member of staff or volunteer should provide a written report of the incident. A detailed written report should always be made if a member of staff had

been obliged to restrain a pupil physically, or where a complaint has been made by a pupil, parent or other adult.