

Arksey Primary School

Code of Conduct for Working with Children

(including procedures for low level concerns)

Reviewed November 2026

Introduction

This guidance document describes the standards of conduct and practice that all Arksey Primary School employees and volunteers should follow when working with children. It is designed to complement other advice or codes of conduct produced by employers or national bodies, not to replace or take priority over them.

All those working with children have a responsibility to know, understand and comply with relevant statutory and organisational provisions relating to the safeguarding of children, and have a responsibility to know how and when to report any matters of concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy in their absence) where children's welfare is jeopardised.

Arksey Primary actively promotes the Safeguarding of children and is alert to indicators and uses the Farrer Guidance (see appendix 2) to consider low level concerns and create a culture that sets the expectations and context of behaviour. What that means in practice is that ensuring that all those who work with children behave appropriately, and the early identification (including allegations that do not meet the harm threshold) and prompt and appropriate management of concerns about adults, is critical to effective safeguarding in line with KCSIE through self-reporting and adults sharing concerns about other adults.

"It could happen here."

Whilst this document covers a wide range of situations, it is recognised that it cannot cover every eventuality. However, the principles contained within it must apply in every circumstance and the Safeguarding Policy and Managing allegations against Staff should be adhered to where thresholds of harm are met. The disciplinary policy may apply in other instances. Where they are not, but behaviour is inconsistent with our code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, the Local Authority Designated Officer will be consulted and advice sought. Adults do not need to be able to determine if a concern is low level or if it meets the threshold of allegation, but they must share it with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or in the case of the head teacher, with the Chair of Governors. Low level concerns are retained in a central file, to ensure that any patterns of behaviours can be spotted. They will not be placed in an individual's personnel file unless disciplinary, whistleblowing or grievance procedures are invoked.

Glossary

Term	**Meaning**
Child	Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday
Welfare	Well-being in relation to the 5 outcomes defined in the Children Act 2004: stay safe, be healthy, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic wellbeing
Worker	Employee, self-employed person, trainee, contractor or volunteer, including governors
Allegation	An allegation or concern made by anyone, child or adult, where there is (or there is believed to be) a risk of harm to a child
Parent	Adult with parental responsibility

Purpose

The purpose of the guidance is to protect and promote the interests of workers and the children they work with. All adults who come into contact with children and young people, in their work, have a legal and moral duty to keep children and young people safe and to protect them from sexual, physical and/or

emotional harm. The duty that rests on an individual is to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the welfare of a child or young person is paramount.

The guidance aims to:

- Keep children safe by clarifying which behaviours constitute safe practice and which behaviours should be avoided;
- Assist adults working with children to work safely and responsibly and to monitor their own standards and practice;
- Support managers in setting clear expectations of behaviour and/or codes of practice relevant to the services being provided;
- Give a clear message that unlawful or unsafe behaviour is unacceptable and that, where appropriate, disciplinary or legal action will be taken;
- Support safer recruitment practice;
- Minimise the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations made against adults who work with children;
- Reduce the incidence of positions of trust being abused or misused.

Diversity

At all times consideration needs to be given to the diversity needs of workers and children. Aspects of gender, culture or religion may be relevant when considering the nature of allegations or appropriateness of communications or physical interventions.

Reporting incidents

Any incidents of concern should always be reported to a senior manager and recorded. In cases where there is an allegation or risk of harm to a child, the incident must be reported to the senior designated officer for the service area or the Local Authorities Designated Officer (LADO). Contact details are listed at Appendix 1.

Procedures are in place adopted through the Doncaster Safeguarding Children's Partnership (DSCP) for dealing with allegations against staff, and a whistle blowing policy is in place.

The Doncaster Safeguarding Children's Partnership Commitment. The DSCP will ensure:

- Appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures are in place in all areas that undertake work with children and that they are continually monitored and reviewed and made easily accessible to all workers;
- Workers are treated fairly and reasonably in all circumstances and if subject to an allegation will be supported and the principles of natural justice applied;
- The safe practice of workers is continually promoted through supervision and training;
- Workers have readily available access to senior management or other emergency contact person;
- Guidance is readily available to both adults and children;
- A culture of openness and support is fostered;
- Readily known systems are in place for situations and concerns, from either party, to be raised and recorded and for their outcomes to be analysed in order to review procedures and working practices;
- Agencies have procedures in place regarding lone working, physical intervention and risk assessment;
- That agencies will have agreed care plans in place when work involves intimate care;
- Clear eSafety policies are in place;
- A clear and easily accessible Whistle Blowing policy is in place.

Personal Conduct

Confidentiality
Workers must:
- Keep private and sensitive information confidential at all times and only share it to relevant people when it is in the interests of the child to do so;
- Not use information to intimidate, humiliate or embarrass a child;
- Be aware of the need to listen to and support children whilst understanding the importance of not promising to keep secrets;
- Never request a child to keep secrets.

Making a professional judgement
Workers must
- Make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the child;
- Record judgements taken and share them with a senior manager;
- Ensure actions taken are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably;
- Discuss any misunderstandings, accidents or threats with a senior manager;
- Be aware of their position of trust and inequalities of power, and ensure neither is used for personal advantage or gratification;
- Not use their position to intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce, undermine or exploit children;
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others;
- Not create relationships which create a personal friendship or are of an intimate or sexual nature, or which might reasonably be seen to be developing or to have developed in such a way

Personal/living space
Workers must:
- Not invite a child into their home or any home or domestic setting frequented by them, unless the reason for this has been firmly established and agreed with parents and senior managers or the home has been designated as a workplace e.g. childminders, foster carers; tutors
- Be vigilant in maintaining their own privacy and mindful of the need to avoid placing themselves in vulnerable situations;
- Not ask children to undertake personal jobs or errands;
- Maintain professional boundaries.

Gifts, rewards and favouritism
Workers must:
- Be aware of their organisation's policy on the giving and receiving of gifts;
- Ensure that gifts received or given in situations that may be misconstrued are declared;
- Only give gifts to an individual child as part of an agreed reward system;
- Ensure that when operating reward systems, methods and criteria for selection of children for awards are fair and transparent.

Infatuations and Crushes
Workers must:
- Deal with infatuations sensitively and appropriately to maintain the dignity and safety of all concerned;
- Make sure their own behaviour is beyond reproach;
- If they become aware of an infatuation developing or any indications that it may, record it and discuss it with a senior manager so that action can be taken to avoid any hurt, distress or embarrassment.

Communication
Workers must:

- Ensure communication takes place within clear and explicit professional boundaries: this includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, e-mails, digital devices/cameras, videos, web-cams, websites, blogs and any other form of social media or communication processes, and ensure all communication models that expected without fear of harassment or bullying of any individual;
- Not share any personal information with a child;
- Not request, or respond to, any personal information from a child, other than that which may be appropriate as part of their professional role;
- Not give their personal contact details to children, including their mobile number, home phone or personal e-mail address, unless there is a professional need to do so which is agreed with senior management and parents;
- Only use equipment e.g. mobile phones, provided by their organisation to communicate with children, making sure that parents/carers have given permission for this form of communication to be used;
- Only make contact with children for professional reasons and in accordance with organisational policy;
- Only use text messaging as a last resort when no other forms of communication are possible;
- Not use internet or web-based communication channels to send messages to children unless there is a professional need to do so which is agreed with senior management and parents;
- Use internal e-mail systems in accordance with the organisation's policy;
- Never share images or literature of a sexual or violent nature with children or expose children to such images or literature:
- Never download, access, possess or distribute indecent images, or images constituting extreme pornography, as defined in law;
- Never share images or literature with children in a context likely to expose them to the risk of radicalisation or exploitation.

Social contact
Workers must:

- Never have planned social contact with children unless the reason for this has been firmly established and agreed with senior managers and parents;
- Never have secret social contact with children and/or their parent(s);
- Always obtain senior management approval for any planned social contact with children;
- Advise senior management of any planned or unplanned social contact with children that has occurred, including contact through social media or any other form of electronic cornmunication.
- Report and record any situation which may place a child at risk or may compromise the organisation or their own professional standing.

Emotional, intimate or sexual contact
Workers must:

- Know and understand the implications of working in a position of trust in the context of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, and accordingly
  - Never engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of a child, or cause or incite a child to engage in or watch sexual activity;
  - Never have any form of communication which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative or which involves a degree of intimacy or emotional attachment unwarranted by their professional role;
  - Never make sexual remarks to or about a child either verbally, electronically or in writing;

- Never discuss their own sexual relationships with or in the presence of children;
- Never confer inappropriate special attention or favour upon a child, recognising that to do so might be construed to form part of a grooming process giving rise to reasonable concerns about motives;
- Always ensure language, attitudes and demeanour do not give rise to comment or speculation about improper motives and never cause a child to confuse legitimate and necessary professional care with inappropriate emotional attachment;
- Always ensure conversations and relationships with children take place within boundaries of respect and professionalism.
- Never act or comment in any way which might reasonably be thought to be flirtatious or intended to solicit, encourage or endorse an infatuation, crush emotional attachment or perception of intimacy on the part of a child.
- Always take care to avoid acting or commenting in any way which might reasonably be considered thoughtless about the child's potential interpretation of such actions and comments, and careless in particular as to the potential impact of such actions or comments on any infatuation, crush, emotional attachment or perception of intimacy which might develop.

Physical contact

Workers must:

- Never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent or sexually motivated;
- Have physical contact with a child only when it is necessary, reasonable in the circumstances, and in ways which are appropriate to their professional or agreed role and responsibilities;
- Be aware of the child's reactions or feelings and, as far as possible, only use a level of contact which is acceptable to the child and for the minimum time necessary;
- Seek permission from the child, or the parent if the child is very young, before physical contact is made, and agree what contact is acceptable;
- Be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, by an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described;
- Not assume that when a child is distressed they seek physical comfort;
- Always be prepared to report and explain actions and accept that all physical contact is open to scrutiny;
- Not indulge in horse play;
- Always encourage children, where possible to undertake self-care tasks independently;
- Be aware of cultural or religious views about touching and sensitive to issues of gender;
- Where there is regular physical contact needed, agree the nature of the contact with senior management and the parent as part of a formally agreed plan;
- Where a child initiates inappropriate physical contact, sensitively deter them and help them understand the importance of personal boundaries.

Behaviour management

Workers must:

- Not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a child;
- Not use sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments;
- Ensue any sanctions and rewards are part of an agreed behaviour management policy;
- Try to defuse situations before they escalate;
- Never use corporal punishment;
- Follow the behaviour policy and only use physical intervention in exceptional circumstances and as a last resort, when other behaviour management strategies have failed and where there is a risk of physical injury or serious damage to property;
- When using physical intervention, use the minimum force necessary and techniques in-line with recommended policy and practice and always report and document the incident;
- Be mindful of other factors which may be impacting on a child's behaviour, e.g. bullying, changes in home circumstances;

  Note: the use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence.

Personal/Intimate care

Workers must:

- Adhere to the organisation's intimate care guidelines or code of practice;
- Make other staff aware of the task being undertaken;
- Explain to the child what is happening;
- Carefully and sensitively observe the emotional responses of the child, and record and report any concerns to senior management and parents;
- Respect children's privacy at all times;
- Avoid any physical contact when children are in a state of undress, other than as part of an agreed care plan;
- Not change in the same place as children;
- Not shower or bathe with children:
- Not assist with any personal care task which a child can undertake themselves.

First Aid and the administration of medicine

Workers must:

- Be suitably trained and qualified before administering first aid and/or any agreed medication;
- Ensure arrangements are in place to obtain parental consent for the administration of first aid or medication;
- Adhere to the organisations policy;
- Make adults aware of the task being undertaken;
- Explain to the child what is happening;
- Ensure an appropriate health/risk assessment is undertaken prior to undertaking certain activities.

One-to-one situations/home visits

Workers must:

- Ensure that, when lone working is an integral part of their role, full and appropriate risk assessments have been agreed;
- Avoid meetings with a child in secluded areas;
- Always inform colleagues and/or parents about one-to-one contact beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by;
- Wherever possible, avoid being in a one-to-one situation with a child behind closed doors or signalling any message, overt or implied, that a room in which a meeting is taking place is engaged or that the meeting is not to be disturbed;
- Carefully consider the needs of the child when in one-to-one situation and always report any situation where the child becomes distressed or angry;
- Agree the purpose for any home visit with senior management unless it is a routine, acknowledged and integral part of the worker's role;
- Never put themselves or be placed in a one-to-one situation when little or no information is available about the child or family.

Transporting

Workers must:

- Ensure requirements around seat belts and car seats are adhered to;
- Not offer lifts outside normal working duties unless this has been brought to the attention of senior management and been agreed with parents;
- Ensure they are fit to drive and free from any drugs, alcohol or medicine that is likely to impair judgement or ability to drive;
- Record details of the journey in accordance with agreed procedures;
- Ensure that there are proper procedures in place for vehicle, passenger and driver safety, including appropriate insurance;
- Ensure that any unplanned lifts given to a child are recorded, notified to senior managers

at the earliest opportunity and can be justified in the context of the worker's professional role and duty to ensure the safeguarding of the child.

Trips and Outings

Workers must:

- Recognise that they are in a position of trust and ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times and stays clearly within defined boundaries;
- Ensure staff/child ratios and gender mix are appropriate;
- Always have another adult present in out of work activities, unless otherwise agreed with a senior manager;
- Ensure risk assessments are undertaken;
- Have parental consent to the activity;
- Never share beds, bathe, shower or change with children;
- Ensure that sleeping arrangements in accommodation on residential outings involving overnight stays have been thoroughly assessed as safe and respectful of everyone's personal welfare, dignity and privacy, and have been agreed with senior management, parents and children to be safe, suitable and satisfactory.

Photography and Videos

Workers must:

- Be clear about the purpose of any activity involving photography and what will happen to the images when the activity is concluded;
- Be able to justify the reason for having images of children in their possession;
- Avoid making images in one-to-one situations or situations that may be construed as secretive or which show a single child with no surrounding context;
- Only use equipment provided or authorised by their organisation;
- Immediately report any concerns if any inappropriate or intrusive images are found;
- Have parental consent to take, display and/or distribute any images of children;
- Not use images that may cause distress or offence;
- Not use mobile phones or any other devices that have a camera to take images of children.

Access to inappropriate images and internet usage

Workers must:

- Never access, make or store indecent images of children (to do so would be illegal and lead to a criminal investigation);
- Never make or store images of children, gathered as a result of their work, on personal equipment;
- Follow their organisation's guidance on the use of IT equipment;
- Ensure that children are not exposed to unsuitable material through ICT;
- Ensure that any materials shown to children are age-appropriate;
- Immediately report any concerns, if any inappropriate or intrusive images are found, to the LADO.

Mandatory Reporting

* Radicalisation

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on specified authorities to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism (the "Prevent Duty"). Government guidance has been produced for specified organisations which those organisations must have regard to in complying with the Prevent Duty. The duty applies to bodies which have significant interaction with people who could be vulnerable to radicalisation, bodies which include schools, local authorities, police forces, some NHS bodies, further education and higher education providers, prisons, young offenders' institutions, and providers of probation services.

Accordingly, where the duty applies, workers must:

- Recognise that protecting children against the risk of radicalisation is a feature of the wider duty to ensure children are safeguarded;
- Follow the organisation's normal safeguarding policies where they have concerns that a particular child or group of children are at risk of radicalisation.

* Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of external female genitalia or other injury to female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting, harmful consequences. Section 58 of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty on teachers. along with social workers and other registered healthcare professionals, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or by virtue of visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18. Those required by law to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions if they fail to do so. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and children should not be examined, but the same definition of what is meant by "to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out" is used for all professionals for whom this mandatory duty applies. Teachers must report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless the teacher has a good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such cases with the school's Designated Safeguarding lead and involve Children's Social Care as appropriate.

*Sexual abuse

Appendix 1

Contact details

School Improvement Adviser Safeguarding Jo Howe - Jo.howe@doncaster.gov.uk

LADO
Civic Office
Waterdale
Doncaster
DN1 3BU

LADO Tel: 01302 737332
Email: LADO@doncaster.gov.uk

Education related enquiries may be emailed to educationsafeguarding@doncaster.gov.uk

Additional Information

https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school
https://www.gov.uk/governmentlpublications/whistleblowinq-about-safequarding-in-local-authority-childrens-services

Appendix 2 – Farrar Guidance

See Additional Document