

# Keeping Children Safe in Education: Code of Conduct for Safer Working Practice

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## Introduction

All education settings are required to have a clear and effective Code of Conduct for adults working in the setting. This document provides a guide for all adults working in school (including staff, Academy Advisory Board members, volunteers and visitors) about acceptable and desirable conduct to protect both pupils and adults. It refers to and complements other policies and guidance in the school including:

-  Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
-  School Behaviour Policy
-  School policy on physical interventions
-  School ICT policy
-  Record keeping policy/procedure

This policy reflects the requirements set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2015, and is based upon the attached DCSF document 'Guidance for Safe Working Practice for Adults Who Work with Children and Young People (education version)' March 2009), in which you can find useful examples of acceptable and unacceptable conduct, together with discussion of the issues raised. **[Schools in Northamptonshire should also add the following wording: it also reflects the Northamptonshire County Council leaflet 'Safer Working in Education Settings', which is also attached.**

In particular all adults working in schools should keep the following statements from Keeping Children Safe in Education in mind:

-  Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children (paragraph 4)
-  All school and college staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn (paragraph 7)
-  Staff members working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned when about

the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the interests of the child (paragraph 13)

Staff working in early years provision within schools should be aware that in addition to the general requirements for school settings, additional requirements will apply to use of mobile phones and other digital devices, and compliance with these additional requirements will be strictly enforced.

All adults working in the school must know who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the school, be familiar with the school's child protection and safeguarding policy, and understand their individual responsibilities to safeguard and protect children and young people.

In addition, the Teaching Standards 2012 (which apply to maintained schools) state that teachers should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.

## Basic principles

-  Adults working in school are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead a reasonable person to question their motivation or intentions
-  Adults working in the school must work and be seen to work in an open and transparent way
-  Adults should discuss and/or take advice promptly from their line manager or another senior member of staff about anything which could give rise to concern. This would include for example reporting infatuations by a pupil for that or another member of staff, to ensure that such situations can be handled promptly and sensitively
-  The school should keep a record of any such incident and of decisions made/further actions agreed, in accordance with the school's record keeping policy
-  Staff should apply the same professional standards regardless of gender or sexuality
-  Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them

As a general principle, when thinking about taking any course of action with a pupil or other child, adults should ask themselves the following questions:

-  Is this needed to meet the pupil's needs?
-  Is there a professional reason for me to do it?
-  Can I do it in a way that is safe for both the pupil and for me?

Only if the answer to all three questions is YES should the adult take the course of action.

**All staff, volunteers and visitors to the schools must:**

-  Be familiar with and work in accordance with the school's policies, including in particular

- Child Protection
- Behaviour
- Physical Intervention
- Internet Safety
- Intimate Care
- Health and Safety
- Use of Photography and Video
- Whistleblowing

[Add to or amend list as appropriate for your setting]

-  Provide a good example and a positive role model to pupils
-  Behave in a mature, respectful, safe, fair and considered manner. For example, you must ensure that you
  - Are not sarcastic, and do not make remarks or 'jokes' to pupils of a personal, sexual, racist, discriminatory, intimidating or otherwise offensive nature
  - Do not embarrass or humiliate children

-  Do not discriminate favourably or unfavourably towards any child. For example
  - Treat all pupils equally – never build 'special' relationships or confer favour on particular pupils
  - Do not give or receive (other than token) gifts unless arranged through school

-  Ensure that your relationship with pupils remains on a professional footing. For example, you must

- Only touch pupils for professional reasons, and when this is necessary and appropriate for the pupil's wellbeing or safety (more guidance on this is set out in the DfES Guidance for Safe Practice referred to above)
- Not behave in a way that could lead a reasonable observer to question your conduct, intentions or suitability to care for other people's children
- Not make arrangements to contact, communicate or meet with pupils outside your work (this includes use of email, text and other messaging systems)
- Not develop 'personal' or sexual relationships with pupils. In particular your attention is drawn to the provisions of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, which creates a criminal offence of abuse of a position of trust (when a person aged 18 or over is in a 'position of trust' with a person under 18 and engages in sexual activity with or in the presence of that child, or causes or incites that child to engage in or watch sexual activity)

## Reference documents

-  Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE) 2015
-  School policies handbook
-  Local Safeguarding Children Board - local safeguarding children procedures on dealing with allegations about staff and other adults
-  Guidance for Safe Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People (education version) DCSF March 2009
-  Northamptonshire schools: Safer Working in Education Settings leaflet
-  The Teachers' Standards 2012