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Thongsley Fields Primary & Nursery School

# Code of Conduct

for all adults working in school

Keeping Children & Adults Safe

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# Thongsley Fields Primary & Nursery School

## Code of Conduct Policy

### 1. Aims, scope and principles

*At Thongsley Fields, we are a family – living, each day, all the values that a family might uphold and instil. We want the very best for everyone in our school regardless of whether they are a child or an adult; we nurture gifts and talents and closely support those areas of living and learning together that might be that bit harder to achieve.*

*We do this by recognising and celebrating difference and treating everyone equitably with the same respect and care. We listen, aim to know everyone as well as we can and we look after each other. As expectations our high, we also deliver tough messages that are not always easy to hear or to accept but a very necessary part of growing and developing into being the very best we can be. We extend this way of being to our parents and our local community believing that there is strength in working in partnership and a comfort in knowing that Thongsley Fields is at the hub of the local community.*

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow. By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

Many of the principles in this code of conduct are based on the [Teachers' Standards](#). However, we expect that all those working (whether paid or unpaid) in our school will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in those standards.

School staff have an influential position in the school and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour. We therefore expect all support staff, governors and volunteers to act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and well-being of others.

Failure to follow this code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in our staff disciplinary procedures.

This code of conduct is not exhaustive: if situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils.

### 2. Legislation and guidance

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), we are expected to have a staff code of conduct, covering acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

### 3. General obligations

Staff are expected to set a good example to pupils by:

- maintaining high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- never using inappropriate or offensive language in school
- treating pupils and others with dignity and respect

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- showing tolerance and respect for the rights of others
- not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- not expressing personal beliefs in a way that exploits pupils' vulnerabilities or might lead them to break the law
- understanding the statutory frameworks they must act within
- adhering to the Teachers' Standards.

### **4. Safeguarding**

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect.

Staff will familiarise themselves with our safeguarding policy and procedures, and the Prevent initiative, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

Our safeguarding policy and procedures are available from the school office, the staff room, MyConcern or the policies section of our school website. New staff are given copies on arrival and required to sign to confirm they have been read and understood.

#### **4.1 Low-level concerns about members of staff**

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harms threshold, is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt'. For example, this may include:

- Being over-friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on a personal device without explicit consent from the Headteacher
- Engaging in one-to-one activities where they can't easily be seen
- Using inappropriate language

Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct both inside and outside of work.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in our safeguarding policy. We also encourage staff to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage staff to report it.

All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way.

Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed, and the staff member supported to correct it, at an early stage.

This creates and embeds a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff, while minimising the risk of abuse.

Reporting and responding to low-level concerns is covered in more detail in our safeguarding policy. This is available from the school office, the staff room, MyConcern or the policies section of our school website.

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## 5. Staff-pupil relationships

Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so.

If staff members 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 in to the room
- a colleague or line manager knows this is taking place.

Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of school hours where possible.

Personal contact details MUST NOT be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes social media profiles.

While we are aware many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school 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, or if a staff member is concerned at any point about a fellow staff member and a pupil, this should be reported in line with the procedures set out in our safeguarding policy.

## 6. Communication and social media

School staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should avoid using their full name and/or identifiable profile images, as pupils may be able to find them.

Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead, and set ALL public profiles to *private*.

Staff MUST NOT attempt to contact pupils or their parents via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship.

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at the school without explicit consent.

Staff must be aware of and follow the school's online safety policy.

## 7. Acceptable use of technology

Staff will not use technology in school 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 content.

Staff will avoid using mobile phones or other equipment for personal use during school hours or in front of pupils without explicit consent from the Headteacher.

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The school reserves the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school's IT system and staff must be aware of and follow the school's acceptable use policies.

### **8. Confidentiality**

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the school, staff, pupils and their parents.

This information should never be:

- disclosed to anyone unless required by law or with consent from the relevant party or parties
- used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for.

This does not overrule a staff member's duty to report safeguarding concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, as detailed further in our safeguarding policy.

### **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 school property and facilities.

Staff will not accept bribes. Gifts must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register in accordance with the Trust's Gifts and Hospitality policy.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the school is correct. This should include:

- background information (including any past or current investigations/cautions related to conduct outside of school)
- qualifications
- professional experience.

Where there are any updates to the information provided to the school, the member of staff will advise the school as such as soon as reasonably practicable. Consideration will then be given to the nature and circumstances of the matter and whether this may have an impact on the member of staff's employment.

Care should be taken when selecting children for specific activities, jobs, privileges and when pupils are excluded from an activity in order to avoid perceptions of favouritism or injustice. Methods of selection and exclusion should be subject to clear, fair and agreed criteria.

### **10. Dress code**

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice, self-expression, religious and cultural customs. However, adults must maintain an appropriate standard of dress and personal appearance at work, which promotes a positive and professional image.

Clothing and footwear must be safe and clean and take account of health and safety considerations e.g. open-toed shoes would rarely be appropriate in school.

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Adults must ensure they are dressed in ways which are appropriate to their role and not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative and specifically should not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding; should be religious and culturally sensitive and free of any political or otherwise contentious slogans, and not considered to be discriminatory.

Adults who dress or appear in a manner which may be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or, where the Adult is an employee, allegations of misconduct that may lead to action under our Disciplinary Procedure.

### **11. Conduct outside of work**

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school, or the teaching profession, into disrepute. This covers conduct including but not limited to relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school on social media.

### **12. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed every three years (but can be revised as needed) and will be approved by the full governing board.

Our governing board will ensure this code of conduct is implemented effectively, and will ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard children and deal with any concerns.

### **13. Links with other policies**

This policy links with our policies on:

- Staff disciplinary procedures, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct. It also sets out examples of what we will deem as misconduct and gross misconduct
- Staff grievance procedures
- Child protection and safeguarding
- Gifts and hospitality
- Online safety and acceptable use of IT equipment