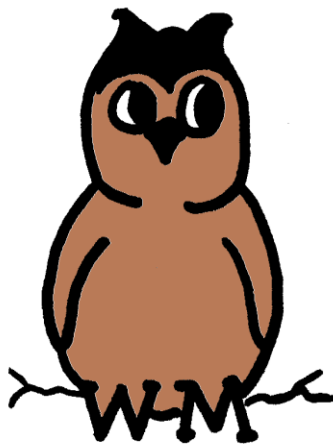


# **White Mere Community Primary School**



## **Staff Behaviour Policy**

**2024**

**Policy Monitoring & Ratification**

<b>Policy Name:</b>	Staff Behaviour Policy and Code of Conduct
<b>Responsible Committee:</b>	Resources Committee
<b>Policy Date:</b>	October 2024
<b>Date Proposed to Governing Body:</b>	15.10.24
<b>Date Adopted by Governing Body:</b>	15.10.24
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	October 2025

## **Purpose**

The Staff Behaviour policy (also known as the staff *Code of Conduct*) details the expectations with regards to how all adults (Governing Body members, all teaching and other staff, whether or not paid or unpaid, employed or self employed, external contractors, trainees and any other individuals who work on behalf of the school) will conduct themselves within their role at White Mere Community Primary School. It is essential that everyone understands that they have a duty to be constantly professional, respecting everyone that they come into contact with.

This document in particular is important in beginning to set out the expectations of the relationships that adults within school have with children. School staff are in a vulnerable position and must safeguard themselves against the possibility of allegations.

This document is by no means exhaustive and should be used in conjunction with other relevant policies. Whenever doubt exists, any member of staff should seek the advice of the Head Teacher or senior management staff.

Any behaviour in breach of this code by employees may result in action under our Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

## **Ethos**

The ethos of the school is essential in creating an atmosphere where people feel confident and valued.

Selflessness – your decisions must be taken in terms of the values and mission of the school.

Integrity – you must not place yourself in a situation where your position is compromised.

Accountability – you must accept accountability for your decisions and actions.

Conduct – you must abide by the professional standards expected.

Respect – you must treat others with respect.

The development of such an ethos is dependent upon staff actively promoting professional and understanding relationships.

All staff must understand the importance of all roles within school and how they impact upon the learning and development of the children. All school staff are to be valued for their input.

When speaking about children, staff will do so with respect and with the emphasis on their learning and welfare.

## **High Expectations**

At White Mere Community Primary School, there are no 'ceilings' placed on anyone. There are high expectations for all with an understanding that everyone can succeed and achieve.

The leadership and management of the school will seek to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills of all staff in order that they can fulfil their roles and responsibilities to greater effect. Negative attitudes about the competency of staff are unacceptable.

All adults will seek to develop knowledge, understanding and skills of all children with an understanding of their baseline. Negative attitudes regarding abilities of children are unacceptable.

### **Professional Courtesy**

Although there will be many depths of relationship between school staff, it is essential that staff understand the need to respect the relationship between employer and employee. In terms of school matters, staff should ensure that they speak with the Headteacher about certain professional matters, rather than discuss amongst colleagues. An example of this would be regarding interviews at other schools. It is important that the Headteacher is informed about applying for new posts and is the first to be told about the outcome as soon as possible. Issues arising in the workplace should be brought to the attention of the Headteacher/ Deputy Headteacher in the first instance.

### **Time Keeping**

All staff will ensure that they are punctual for their duties both within school and outside.

If circumstances arise where staff are going to be late for work, they must inform the office and/or the Head Teacher at the first opportunity, and seek out the HT on arrival at school.

### **Absence**

Schools are difficult work environments to manage if staff are absent. As much notice as possible is required in order to plan for absences, with the absentee keeping the school informed daily by telephoning the school in the first instance or the Head/Deputy, by 8.00am on the first day of absence and by 3.30pm on each day of absence.

In the majority of cases, all personal appointments should be held outside of school time, including meeting and training sessions.

School staff do not work flexible hours and therefore are contracted to work during term time. Staff should only request time away from school under exceptional circumstances. The request should be made in writing using the appropriate form to the Head Teacher who will make a decision in line with the Leave of Absence Policy, taking into account all factors.

In line with the school's absence management procedure, when staff have been absent, they must attend a meeting with the Headteacher, on their return to work. The meeting will identify reasons for the absence, offer support where necessary and discuss the impact upon the school. Within this meeting, staff will be notified of their absence record. If absence continues, counselling interviews will be held with the aim of supporting the employee to fulfil their contracted obligation to work.

### **Dress**

Staff should be aware that they are role models to children of White Mere Community Primary and others in the community. Therefore, staff must dress professionally and appropriately at all times.

Smart wear is to be worn in the classroom, whilst sporting attire should be worn for sports related activities only. Staff may need to adapt their clothing based on the activities they are delivering that day. Staff are to ensure that they are dressed in a PE kit when delivering PE and this may mean they are dressed for the whole day in this manner.

Casual wear such as jeans, trainers and flip-flops are not appropriate unless stated for particular events.

Various types of clothing are not acceptable in the work place for Health & Safety reasons (e.g. open shoes, long flowing skirts) which is explained through '*Slips, Trips and Falls*' training.

Whilst on school visits, staff should wear clothing that is appropriate to the event (e.g. walking clothing for outdoor pursuits). However, where events require children to wear school uniform, such as museums, staff must wear their usual school attire also.

### **Mobile Phones**

Mobile phones are an unavoidable technology, which have their uses. However, phones will be switched off/put on silent, during school hours from 8.45am until 3.30pm.

Staff may switch their phones on during lunch times although they must ensure that their use does not become problematic for others.

Mobile phones must not be switched on during meetings or training sessions (both internal and external) unless specifically needed to access something online. Additionally, staff should not use their mobile phones during non-classed based time (PPA/SLT) in school as this time is an expensive resource dedicated to school provision.

When out of school on educational visits or sporting competitions, at least one member of staff should take a mobile phone which should be switched on at all times. The mobile number to be contacted on will be made available to the office.

### **Meetings/Training**

A professional manner must be adopted at all meetings and training sessions. The attitudes of staff should be that of professional development with a positive focus on how the meeting will provide information to develop the practice of the individual and the school.

Staff should understand that, when they attend meetings and training outside of school, they are representatives of White Mere Community Primary. As a result, they should dress and conduct themselves to the high expectations set out in this document.

### **Equal Opportunities**

All adults and children are to be treated with respect and understanding regardless of gender, race, culture, faith, disabilities or sexual orientation. No negative terms regarding different groups are to be used within school under any circumstances.

## **Working with Adults**

In order to provide the best possible education for children, numerous adults will be involved in the teaching and learning process. In addition to this, various adults will be involved in respect of the welfare of pupils.

The staff are expected to treat all adults with respect and courtesy under all circumstances. Staff should not hold private conversations in a communal area of school eg staff room or corridors resulting in making other members of staff feel uncomfortable. Where discussions and conversations are becoming difficult between adults, a senior member of staff should be sought. Staff should be mindful of excluding a minority of colleagues from events and groups which involve the majority of staff.

Staff must be aware of the audience when speaking to a variety of adults, which will range from parents through to leaders and managers. Although the audience may be different, staff should be careful not to sound condescending and should make a clear distinction between how they speak to children and adults with respect to the language and tone of voice used.

Conversations and comments of a sensitive and/or confidential nature should not occur whilst children are present.

## **Working with Children**

The relationships between adults and children are the most important in creating the trust, which leads to a safe and purposeful environment. It is essential that adults maintain relationships that have clear boundaries for both the child and adult. Children must be able to perceive school staff as people they can trust and as a result staff must ensure that their practice maintains these trusting relationships.

Staff should endeavour to make clear that they are not 'friends' of the pupils but people who can support their learning and development, whilst helping to keep them safe from harm.

Staff should be careful not to become over familiar with children in the way that they speak, the types of conversations they have, or the way they refer to them (e.g. nicknames).

It is essential that staff follow all the school procedures with regards to child protection and safeguarding. Staff are expected to know, understand and agree to follow the Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy and ensure that they attend all associated training.

Personal relationships with children should not be allowed to develop as this breaches the trusting teacher/pupil relationship already created. Where pupils may attempt to share information with staff in order to develop the relationship in a more personal way, staff should handle this sensitively and report this to the Headteacher or Senior Management Team member.

## **Physical Contact with Children**

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 questions being raised. Staff must not make gratuitous physical contact with pupils and should avoid attributing 'touching' to their

teaching style as a way of relating to pupils. There will be occasions when physical contact will be acceptable. In general these will fall into one of three categories:

#### *Action to prevent harm or injury to the pupil or to others*

If it is necessary to prevent a pupil causing injury to him/herself or to others the use of minimum force and contact necessary to prevent harm or injury is acceptable and defensible. Such incidents must always be reported to the Head Teacher.

#### *Comforting a pupil in distress*

There is no easy definition of what is acceptable since much will depend on the circumstances, the age of the pupil, the extent and cause of the distress and the alternative means of providing comfort. Employees will need to use their professional judgment and discretion in relation to these factors. Employees should consider how others might perceive the action, even if no one else is present, and ensure that it does not develop into unnecessary contact. Particular care must be taken in instances, which involve the same pupil over a period of time.

#### *Unavoidable contact*

This is a particularly sensitive issue in subjects such as Physical Education and Drama and in some forms of skills coaching. All teachers must be alert to the possibilities of misinterpreting any contact. To avoid such misunderstanding all planned contact must be demonstrably unavoidable. It may be, for example, that alternative methods involving demonstrations of particular techniques by the teacher or a particularly competent pupil may be more appropriate than modifying a pupil's technique by physical contact.

In cases of doubt or uncertainty staff should seek advice from the Headteacher or Senior Leadership Team. There are other occasions when physical contact may be questioned even if innocent or unintentional. Employees should therefore ensure that their actions recognise the possibility of misinterpretation and are open to the scrutiny of colleagues. Individual professional judgments will be required about the level of physical contact with individual children, which will take account of their age, circumstances and background.

#### *Corporal Punishment*

Any form of physical punishment is prohibited under disciplinary procedures and potentially actionable in law. This also applies to any form of physical response to misbehaviour, with the exception noted above.

### **Physical Contact with Adults**

In the workplace, physical contact between adults is rarely necessary. There are three main reasons why those working in school should be very careful about how they come into physical contact with other adults.

#### *Rumours*

As with physical contact with children, contact with other adults may be misconstrued by children, parents and other observers. This may lead to rumours circulating the community and as a result bring about an attitude that there is a lack of professionalism.

#### *Personal Space*

It is important to be aware that the boundaries of personal space are different for different people. What contact may seem appropriate for some, will be considered inappropriate by

others. As a result, some will feel uncomfortable in the working environment not only if they are involved in a situation but also if they are observing others in this type of situation.

### *Sexual Harassment*

Allegations of sexual harassment are possible if there has been regular physical contact made. Although actions such as a hand on the shoulder, or hip when passing, may seem innocuous, they could be misinterpreted and used as examples of sexual harassment.

Any staff feeling uncomfortable in a situation involving themselves or others should raise it with the Headteacher or an appropriate member of the Senior Management Team.

## **Outside of School**

There are times when staff will come into contact with each other and with parents outside of school hours whether face to face or in an online capacity. It is important to understand that information about children and staff is confidential must not be discussed in public or private settings.

Staff may develop friendships with colleagues however, this should not conflict with the expectations regarding a colleague to colleague professional relationship. The confidentiality of any school information must not be compromised by this relationship.

Relationships between adults and children should not be cultivated outside of school.

Where staff live in the local community, it is essential that they are careful in how they are perceived. Teaching staff should continue to be seen in the role of teacher to the children from White Mere Community Primary School.

When children move on to secondary school, it is normal for the teacher/pupil relationship to continue. Teachers should still perceive ex-pupils as school children whilst they are in education and follow the same conduct with regards to appropriate relationships as if they were attending White Mere Community Primary.

## **Private Meetings**

Private meetings, by their very nature, provide opportunities for pupils to make malicious allegations. Teachers and others must therefore recognise this possibility and plan such meetings accordingly.

It is advisable to avoid remote areas of the school and to ensure that wherever possible the door is left open or visual contact with others is maintained.

In exceptional circumstances, where it is not possible to meet in the circumstances referred to above, another member of staff should be told of the meeting beforehand. Steps to prevent others entering a room by the use of 'Meeting in Progress' are especially likely to be open to misinterpretation. In many cases, it will be advisable for another pupil or adult to be present or in a position to minimise risk during the interview.

Under no circumstances should meetings with individual pupils be arranged off the school premises.

## **Comments and Discussions with Pupils**

Adults must avoid comments to or about pupils, which could be taken to have sexual overtones. It is equally unacceptable for adults to encourage debate and discussion between groups of students, which could be interpreted as having sexual overtones, which are not justified in the context of the teaching programme. This will call for the exercise of careful judgment in responding to questions raised by pupils.

Notwithstanding the advice given above, it is recognised that, in order to discharge particular pastoral responsibilities, adults may from time-to-time need to engage in conversation with pupils and students which cover sensitive matters. Adults must use their professional judgment to ensure that they are not drawn into areas inappropriate to their duties or their relationship with the pupils concerned.

In responding to individual students' distress, adults will need to consider carefully whether they should offer advice, sympathy or counseling if a discussion enters a sensitive area or, alternatively, refer them to a colleague or agency who is better placed to offer appropriate advice.

The persistent and hurtful use of sarcastic, demeaning or insensitive comments towards young people may also be regarded as a form of abuse, which is potentially very damaging and is unacceptable.

### **Personal Letters and Online Communication**

It is unnecessary for adults to write personal notes or letters, or to send e-mail, to individual students. Communication should always be between adults. If a message concerning a child needs to be communicated it should be done so in person with the child's parent or via Class Dojo.

Adults 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. Ideally, both adults and pupils should use an email address provided as part of an official school or LA Internet service, even if they are sending messages while working at home. Since these services can be monitored, they provide a measure of protection for both parties.

If an inappropriate e-mail or message has been received from any source this must be brought to the attention of the Headteacher or senior member of staff immediately.

### **Social Networking Sites**

The use of Social Networking sites such as *Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok and WhatsApp* are a common aspect of communication. The use of these sites is personal and should in no way be influenced by school. However, it is essential that these sites are not used to communicate information about school, both with regards to official information (e.g. changes in provision, OFSTED details, staff or pupil information etc.) nor personal feelings about school life or staff including leadership. (e.g. decisions made, pupils and parents). This includes any social media communication between colleagues happening out of school.

Adults should also be careful when establishing their security settings in order that members of the school community do not get access to personal information/images that would undermine the adult.

If the use of such sites comes to the attention of the Headteacher and Governors, in ways in which confidentiality is broken, then disciplinary action may be taken. More information is outlined in the School's Social Media Policy.

### **Out of School and After-school Activities**

Adults should take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere of a residential setting or after-school activity. Young people can misinterpret the more relaxed relationships that may promote successful activities. It is important to emphasise that the standards of professional conduct and behaviour expected of adults should be no different to that which applies within school. Adults should be aware of the particular care, which should be taken with older, more mature students in these circumstances.

### **Infatuations and Crushes**

These, unfortunately, do develop and can involve pupils and adults of both sexes on both a heterosexual and homosexual basis. They of course need to be handled sensitively. Careless and insensitive reactions have been known to provoke false accusations. It is therefore in the interest of all parties to avoid adding to the pupil's problems by encouraging the crush or making jokes about the situation. In such situations, the advice of a senior leader or a Designated Safeguarding Lead must be sought.

All adults have a part to play, too, in alerting a colleague to the possibility of an infatuation in order that appropriate steps can be taken to minimise hurt and distress and the risk to the adult concerned. Whilst the risk of infatuation is not limited to younger members of staff, Early Career Teachers must recognise their particular vulnerability to adolescent infatuation.

### **First Aid**

The existence of any life-threatening or serious condition will determine the suitability and necessity of physical contact. In the absence of such justification employees who administer first aid should ensure that, wherever possible, other children or another adult should be present if there is any doubt over the possibility of any physical contact being misconstrued.

### **Pupils with Special Needs**

If pupils require assistance with toileting, staff should arrange for the presence of another adult in the vicinity. Where this is not possible employees should discuss with the Head Teacher what arrangements will be reasonable in all the circumstances. The Head Teacher may refer the matter to the relevant agency for further advice.

Adults providing support in Nursery will adhere to the Intimate Care Policy.

### **Reporting Incidents**

Adults should report any concerns they may have following any incident where s/he feels that his/her actions may have been misinterpreted. This report should be made to the Head Teacher (unless it is regarding the Head Teacher. See Whistle-blowing Policy) as soon as possible after the incident and should include, as an immediate follow-up, the preparation of a written record of the incident, a copy of which should be given to the Head Teacher. The

adult may also wish to seek advice from his/her professional association. Head Teachers who face similar situations are advised to contact the School's Link Inspector.

## **Health & Safety**

All adults have the right to work in an environment where risks to health and safety are properly managed and controlled. Health & Safety is about prevention of injury and illness which could occur in the workplace. The school is responsible for Health & Safety management in the workplace but it is the responsibility of all adults to understand the measures in place and to implement the policies, advice and procedures.

Health & Safety Law must be adhered to at all times.

For the full information please refer to the Health & Safety Policy.

## **Personal Issues**

Generally, issues outside of school should not impact upon working practices. However, there will be times when events, outside the control of an individual, will have greater magnitude than usual and can have more severe outcomes. If staff feel that they have personal/private issues which may impede their work or that are just creating additional stress, they should feel that this can be shared with the Headteacher. By sharing issues with the Headteacher, who will listen in full confidentiality, there may be ways in which individuals can be supported/helped either by the school or potentially by outside agencies where applicable.

## **School Resources**

During a teacher's practice they will be involved, alongside TAs, in creating resources such as display material, games and activities. These products are created using school resources (e.g. card, laminates, photocopying) as well as time and paid for by the school. As a result, the materials created are property of the school and are not to be taken once staff have left their post.

Additionally, when staff leave one year group to move to another, some of these materials should be left in the year group/class as they will be relevant for the pupils of that age/ability. A discussion with senior leadership should occur in relation to any requests to take school made resources.

If employees donate personal resources to school and place them in a communal area there are no restrictions to be placed upon them as to who can use them.

If employees bring personal teaching resources into school to avoid potential conflicts there should be a clear distinction as to which resources are school owned and which are personal eg in classroom storage cupboards.

If you source/purchase resources from your own personal money you are of course at liberty to make decisions around their use. However please give consideration to how this may impact on the children if you remove them from their classroom/familiar routine part way through the year.

## **Giving and Receiving Gifts**

Within the context of the school community there are occasions where relationships are such that gifts may be given or received. However, the school makes clear that there is no expectation for this to be the case and anything that is given or received is done from the willingness of individuals. The following seeks to give guidance in relation to this aspect:

Adults must generally not seek to purchase gifts for children. On some occasions, a small gift (e.g. Cream Egg at Easter, a pack of Jelly's at Christmas or a key ring at the end of Year 6) may occur, but this will be for a whole class/cohort and never for an individual. It will also be open for parents and other staff to see.

Parents/carers are discouraged from giving gifts but may feel that a gift for an adult working in school is appropriate for instance at Christmas or the end of the school year. These will be accepted as the decision to give a gift has been based on the parent/carers personal choice.