

# Kings Lynn Nursery School

## Code of Conduct for Staff, Governors and Volunteers

### **1. Introduction**

1.1 The governing body of Kings Lynn Nursery School will foster a culture of the highest professional standards. This Code of Conduct sets out the standards expected and the duty upon staff, volunteers and governors to abide by it.

All staff, governors and volunteers have a duty to keep pupils and themselves safe and to protect them from physical and emotional harm. This duty is, in part, exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between adults and pupils and behaviour by adults that demonstrate integrity, maturity and good judgment.

Following this Code of Conduct will help to safeguard staff, governors and volunteers from being maliciously, falsely or mistakenly suspected or accused of professional misconduct in relation to pupils.

1.2 Staff, governors and volunteers must feel able to raise issues of concern and everyone must fully recognise the duty to do so particularly in terms of child protection. A member of staff who, in good faith, “whistleblows” or makes a public interest disclosure will have the protection of the relevant legislation.

1.3 This Code of Conduct cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for staff. However, it does highlight behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable in relation to pupils. There will be occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or take action in the best interests of the pupil where no specific guidance has been given. Adults are expected to make responsible and informed judgements about their own behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the pupils in their charge.

1.4 Teachers should be familiar with and comply with the Teachers’ Standards 2013. The document Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings March 2009 is also incorporated into this Code of Conduct.

1.5 This Code of Conduct forms part of the school’s disciplinary rules for staff. A serious breach of the Code will be regarded as gross misconduct. A less serious breach may result in a disciplinary warning. Staff can refer to the school’s disciplinary policy for further information and guidance.

### **2. Principles of Professional Practice**

2.1 All staff must:

- place the well-being and learning of pupils at the centre of their professional practice.
- have high expectations for all pupils, be committed to addressing underachievement, and work to help pupils progress regardless of their background and personal circumstances.
- treat pupils fairly and with respect, take their knowledge, views, opinions and feelings seriously, and value diversity and individuality.

- model the characteristics they are trying to inspire in pupils, including enthusiasm for learning, a spirit of enquiry, honesty, tolerance, social responsibility, patience, and a genuine concern for other people.
- respond sensitively to the differences in the home backgrounds and circumstances of pupils, recognising the key role that parents and carers play in pupils' education.
- seek to work in partnership with parents and carers, respecting their views and promoting understanding and co-operation to support the young person's learning and well-being in and out of school.
- reflect on their own practice, develop their skills, knowledge and expertise, and adapt appropriately to learn with and from colleagues.

### **3. Confidentiality**

3.1 Members of staff may have access to confidential information about pupils in order to undertake their responsibilities. In some circumstances the information may be highly sensitive. Confidential or personal information about a pupil or her/his family must never be disclosed to anyone other than on a need to know basis. In circumstances where the pupil's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the pupil.

3.2 There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a pupil, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a duty to pass information on without delay to those with designated pupil protection responsibilities.

3.3 Confidential information about pupils must be held securely. Confidential information about pupils must not be held off the school site other than on security protected school equipment. Information must only be stored for the length of time necessary to discharge the task for which it is required.

3.4 If a member of staff is in any doubt about the storage of sharing of information s/he must seek guidance from a senior member of staff. Any media or legal enquiries must be passed to senior management.

### **4. Propriety, Behaviour, Reputation and Appearance**

4.1 All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of pupils. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their peers, pupils and the public in general. An individual's behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, should not compromise her/his position within the work setting or bring the school into disrepute.

4.2 A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However staff must ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake. Those who dress or appear in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations of misconduct.

4.3 Personal property of a sexually explicit nature such as books, magazines, DVDs or such material on any electronic media must not be brought onto or stored on the school premises.

4.4 Social networking sites and blogging are extremely popular. Staff must not post material which damages the reputation of the school or which causes concern about their suitability to work with children and young people. Those who post material which could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations of misconduct.

## **5 Sexual Contact with Children and Young People and Abuse of Trust**

5.1 Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a child or young person is illegal. Children and young people are protected by the same laws as adults in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour. They are additionally protected by specific legal provisions regardless of whether there is consent or not. All adults working in the school who have contact with pupils are in positions of trust.

5.2 Sexual behaviour includes non-contact activities, such as causing a child or young person to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of indecent images of children. 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', defines sexual abuse as "forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening".

5.3 There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' where the sole purpose is to gain the trust of a child or young person, and manipulate that relationship so that sexual abuse can take place. Staff should be aware that conferring special attention without good reason or favouring a pupil has the potential to be construed as being part of a 'grooming' process, which is a criminal offence.

## **6 Gifts**

6.1 It is against the law for public servants to take bribes. Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed by others as a bribe, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. There are occasions when pupils or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff e.g. at Christmas 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.

## **7 Physical Contact and Personal Privacy**

7.1 There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. When physical contact is made with pupils this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate given their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one pupil in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different pupil.

7.2 Physical contact should never be secretive or casual, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff or volunteer believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported.

7.3 Physical contact, which occurs regularly with a pupil or pupils, is likely to raise questions unless the justification for this is part of a formally agreed plan (for example in relation to pupils with SEN or physical disabilities). Any such contact should be the subject of an agreed and open school policy and subject to review. Where feasible, staff should seek the pupil's permission before initiating contact. Staff should listen, observe and take note of the pupil's reaction or feelings and – so far as is possible - use a level of contact which is acceptable to the pupil for the minimum time necessary.

7.4 There may be occasions when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance. This may include age-appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

7.5 Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance s/he should seek further advice from a senior manager.

7.6 Staff with a job description which includes intimate care duties will have appropriate training and written guidance. Volunteer should not be involved in intimate care duties.

## **8 Behaviour Management and Physical Intervention**

8.1 All pupils have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Corporal punishment is unlawful in all schools. Staff must not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a pupil. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards pupils is not acceptable in any situation. Shouting aggressively or hectoring is not acceptable in any situation

8.2 The circumstances in which staff can physically intervene with a pupil are covered by the 1996 Education Act. Staff may legitimately intervene to prevent a pupil from injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property, engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline. Staff should have regard to the health and safety of themselves and others. Under no circumstances should physical force be used as a form of punishment. The use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence.

8.3 All schools must have trained first aiders/appointed persons. Staff must have had the appropriate training before administering first aid or medication except in an emergency.

## **9 One to One Situations and Meetings with Pupils**

9.1 Staff working in one to one situations with pupils are more vulnerable to allegations. Staff must recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure that the safety and security needs of both staff and pupils are met. Managers should undertake a risk assessment in relation to the specific nature and implications of one to one work for each worker and pupil. Any arrangements should be reviewed on a regular basis.

## **10 Transporting Pupils**

10.1 In certain situations e.g. out of school activities, staff, volunteers or governors may agree to transport pupils. Wherever possible transport arrangements should be made in advance by a designated member of staff. Wherever possible and practicable transport should be provided other than in private vehicles, with at least one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort.

10.2 Adults should ensure that their behaviour is safe and that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. They must ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.

## **11 Photography, Videos and other Creative Arts**

11.1 Many school activities involve recording images. These may be undertaken as part of the curriculum, extra school activities, for publicity, or to celebrate achievement. The Data Protection Act 1998 affects the use of photography. An image of a child is personal data and it is, therefore, a requirement under the Act that consent is obtained from the parent of a child for any images made such as those used for school web sites, productions or other purposes.

11.2 Staff need to be aware of the potential for such images to be misused to create indecent images of children and/or for 'grooming' purposes. Careful consideration should be given as to how these activities are organised and undertaken. Particular regard needs to be given when they involve young or vulnerable pupils who may be unable to question why or how the activities are taking place. Pupils who have been previously abused in this way may feel threatened by the use of photography, filming etc in the teaching environment.

11.3 Staff should remain sensitive to any pupil who appears uncomfortable and should recognise the potential for misinterpretation. It is also important to take into account the wishes of the child, remembering that some children do not wish to have their photograph taken.

11.4 Using images of pupils for publicity purposes will require the age-appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their legal guardians. Images must not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without such consent. The definition of a public place includes areas where visitors to the school have access.

11.5 When using a photograph the following guidance must be followed:

- if the photograph is used, avoid naming the pupil
- if the pupil is named, avoid using the photograph
- images must be securely stored and used only by those authorised to do so.
- be clear about the purpose of the activity and about what will happen to the photographs when the lesson/activity is concluded
- ensure that a senior member of staff is aware that the photography/image equipment is being used and for what purpose.
- ensure that all images are available for scrutiny in order to screen for acceptability
- be able to justify the images made
- do not make images in one to one situations.
- do not take, display or distribute images of pupils unless there is consent to do so.

## **12 Internet Use and Electronic Communication**

12.1 The school has a separate policy on internet use, electronic communication and security which forms part of this Code of Conduct.

12.2 Under no circumstances should adults in school access inappropriate images. Deliberately accessing pornography on school equipment will be treated as gross misconduct and may be a criminal offence. Accessing indecent images of children on the internet, and making, storing or disseminating such material, is illegal and is likely lead to criminal prosecution and may result in barring from work with children and young people.

### **13 Sharing Concerns and Recording Incidents**

13.1 All staff must be vigilant and share concerns and report incidents. Whistle blowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. The following are indicators of the kinds of situations which should be shared with a senior member of staff.

An adult who:

- Allows a pupil/young person to be treated badly; pretends not to know it is happening
- Gossips/shares information inappropriately
- Demonstrates inappropriate discriminatory behaviour and/or uses inappropriate language
- Demonstrates a lack of understanding about personal and professional boundaries
- Uses his/her position of trust to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine
- Appears to have special or different relationships with a pupil or pupils

### **14 Child Safeguarding Competences for staff and volunteers who work with Children and Young People**

14.1 The following competences are necessary:

#### **Emotional Awareness**

- Aware of the range of emotions in self and others
- Demonstrates empathy for the concerns of others
- Listens to and understands directly and indirectly expressed feelings
- Encourages others to express themselves openly
- Manages strong emotions and responds constructively to the source of problems
- Listens to personal comments without becoming defensive
- In highly stressful situations, keeps own feelings in check, takes constructive action and calms others down
- Has a range of mechanisms for dealing with stress, can recognise when to use them and does so
- Shows respect for others' feelings, views and circumstances

#### **Working within Professional Boundaries**

- Demonstrates professional curiosity
- Accepts responsibility and accountability for own work and can define the responsibilities of others
- Recognises the limits of own authority within the role
- Seeks and uses professional support appropriately
- Understands the principle of confidentiality

**Self-awareness**

- Has a balanced understanding of self and others
- Has a realistic knowledge of personal strengths and weaknesses
- Can demonstrate flexibility of approach
- Shows a realistic appreciation of the challenges of working with this client group

**Ability to Safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people**

- Appreciates the significance of safeguarding and interprets this accurately for all individual children and young people whatever their life circumstances
- Has a good understanding of the safeguarding agenda
- Can demonstrate an ability to contribute towards a safe environment
- Is up-to-date with legislation and current events
- Can demonstrate how s/he has promoted 'best practice'
- Shows a personal commitment to safeguarding children

Signed ...David Marien Chair of Governors

Dated ....25 April 2024

