



'Everyone is Someone at Foxes Piece School'

# Staff Code of Conduct

**Approved by PF&P Committee May 2023**

To be reviewed May 2024

## Introduction

The governing body of Foxes Piece School is required to set out a Code of Conduct for all school employees. A Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school staff are expected to observe, this Code of Conduct will be given out to all new employees at their Induction. School staff are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example and act as a role model to all pupils within the school. As a member of the Foxes Piece School community, each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside working hours.

Employees should be aware that a failure to comply with the following Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including dismissal.

The Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People (2020), Working Together (2018), Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2021) and Inspecting Safeguarding in Maintained Schools and Academies (Ofsted September 2021).

## Scope

A 'Code of Conduct' applies to all staff by which is meant **ALL** adult staff on site, including permanent, temporary, supply and ancillary staff and volunteers working with children.

Governors are expected to conduct themselves in a way consistent with the provisions of their own Code of Conduct and, where applicable, this guidance.

## Duty of Care

As a minimum all staff need to have read and understood their roles and responsibilities under Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2021). All staff have a duty to keep pupils safe and are accountable for the way in which they use their authority and positions of trust. This duty can best be exercised through the development of caring but professional relationships.

## Principles

This Guidance on Code of Conduct in Schools is founded on the following principles:

- To ensure the highest standards of conduct and integrity from all employees
- To support the School's visions and values, mission, policies and procedures.
- To set out clear objectives and expectations for all employees and Teachers/Headteachers/Line Managers.
- To ensure all employees and Teachers/Headteachers/Line Managers treat colleagues and those they interact with during the course of their work with dignity and respect.
- Not to discriminate against any individual in the application of this guidance on any grounds including grounds of sex, race, trade union activities, disability, age, sexual orientation, trans-gender status, religion, belief or any other personal characteristic or quality.

## **Safeguarding**

The Governing Body has a duty to safeguard and promote the well-being of pupils from; physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. This includes the need to ensure that all adults who work with or on behalf of children, young people and vulnerable adults are competent, confident and safe to do so.

All employees who come into contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults in their work have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare. The duty to safeguard pupils includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil to the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) for Child Protection. The school's DSL's are Jane Byron and Karen Byer, the DDSL's are Nazia Khawaja and Anthony Putman.

It is essential that all employees are aware of and refer to the 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People', 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2021) and the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.'

## **Propriety and Behaviour**

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, students 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 so it is important to exercise due care and attention when outside of the school environment.

Membership of organisations whose goals are in conflict with the values and equality policies of the school is not acceptable.

## **Disclosure of Information and Confidentiality**

Employees may, in the course of their employment become aware of personal or other confidential information, some of which may fall within the scope of the Data Protection Act 1998. The Governing Body requires that the confidentiality of this information be respected.

Employees must not use information obtained in the course of their employment for personal gain or benefit, nor should they pass it on to others who might use it in such a way unless it is necessary and within the law to do so i.e. where a police investigation is necessary.

Information concerning an employee's private affairs will not be supplied to any person outside of Foxes Piece School unless the consent of the employee is obtained first. This includes inappropriate posting on social networking websites such as Facebook, Twitter, Bebo, Whatsapp, Instagram, Myspace etc.

## **Commercial Practices including Gifts and Hospitality**

The principal aim of the Code of Conduct on Commercial Practices is to ensure that the School's business is conducted in accordance with the very highest standards.

Employees should never use their position for personal gain and should seek to uphold and enhance the reputation of Foxes Piece School by:

- a) maintaining a high standard of integrity in all professional relationships;
- b) fostering the highest possible standards of professional competence amongst those for whom they are responsible;
- c) complying both with the letter and the spirit of:
  - i. the law;
  - ii the Governing Body Standing Orders;
  - iii any additional guidance supplied by the Governing Body;
  - iv the Conditions of Service of Employees of the Governing Body.
- d) rejecting any business practice which might reasonably be deemed improper.

### **Prevention of Fraud & Corruption**

The Governing Body is committed to ensuring the highest standards of propriety in the delivery of its services and management of its resources and assets.

All employees are expected to act with integrity at all times and to comply with legal requirements, rules, procedures and good practice.

### **Raising Concerns in the Workplace – Grievances and Whistleblowing**

The Governing Body believes that an employee should report any significant concern they may have about any aspect of service provision, or the conduct of employees, Governors, or others acting on behalf of the school without fear of victimisation.

In the first instance, employee concerns should be raised via the school's internal complaints procedure which can be found on the Foxes Piece School website or via the school office.

Where concerns have not been addressed satisfactorily through the internal complaints procedure, employees can report unresolved issues under the school's 'Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure'.

If an employee has a concern regarding their own employment they should raise this under the school's Grievance Policy and Procedures.

### **Dignity and Equality at Work**

The Governing Body wishes to create an environment where all employees are treated with dignity and respect.

The Governing Body is committed to achieving equality of choice as an employer of people, provider of services, educator and community leader.

All employees are expected to adopt the school's vision of equality of opportunity.

The school's Anti-Harassment & Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures must be adhered to.

### **Close Personal Relationships at Work**

The Governing Body will not interfere unduly in the private lives of employees but with the public interest in mind will take legitimate action when close personal relationships at work have an actual or potential impact on school services.

The Governing Body will regard as wholly unacceptable any close personal relationship between an employee and a child or young person who is under the age of 18 whom they meet as a result of their employment.

Issues involving close personal relationships at work will be approached sensitively and managed promptly, effectively, fairly and lawfully.

Further guidance can be found in the Close Personal Relationships at Work documentation from Buckinghamshire County Council, there is a copy in the school office.

### **Staff Who Have Children at Foxes Piece School**

Please see the guideline 'A Policy Statement for Staff with Children at Foxes Piece School'. All children will be treated equally. If a child has SEND the child's needs should be taken into consideration as they may require more support in certain areas than their peers.

### **New Appointments**

Employees involved in appointing new staff must ensure that appointments are made on the basis of merit alone. There is a strong risk of illegality if an employee makes an appointment based on anything other than the ability of the applicant to undertake the duties of the post. To avoid accusations of bias, employees must not be involved in appointments where they are related to an applicant or otherwise have a close personal relationship with them or have knowledge of them in another context e.g. business associates.

Similarly, employees should not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, promotion, recruitment or pay and conditions for any other employee who is a relative, partner, close friend etc.

All applicants will be asked to declare any relationship to the Chair of Governors. Failure to do so could result in the withdrawal of the offer of appointment, or dismissal if already appointed.

[http://intranet/svc\\_hrod/policies\\_and\\_procedures/bucks\\_pay/section1.htm](http://intranet/svc_hrod/policies_and_procedures/bucks_pay/section1.htm)

### Work for Other Employers

Applicants for employment with the Governing Body will be asked to disclose to the Headteacher/Chair of Governors, any employment they may have with other employers. Failure to do so could result in the withdrawal of the offer of appointment, or dismissal if already appointed.

All employees must notify their Headteacher/Chair of Governors if they are undertaking work for another employer.

Employees should refer to the Government Working Time Regulations that came into effect in 1998, when considering additional appointments or employment.

### Communication – internal between staff

Effective communication is a two-way process. Information needs to be disseminated and read to be effective. All staff are to be expected to:-

Action	How often
Read the noticeboard and the weekly diary in the staffroom	On each working day
Staff are expected to check their individual email inbox at the start of each day and to monitor this throughout working hours.  Staff are expected to use "schedule send" when working outside of our core hours to ensure communication arrives the following morning or during working hours.	Daily  <b>Please do not send Emails after 6pm unless urgent.</b>
Read staff meeting minutes	Weekly
Read parent email (sent to all staff by email)	Weekly
Log on to CPOMS daily	On each working day
Check blue staff tray (in staffroom)	On each working day
School Teachers and LSA Whatsapp groups.  All staff are expected to be part of either the Teachers or LSA WhatsApp group. This group is used for sending quick questions and updates, and on occasion, sharing positive news.	Staff are expected to check the WhatsApp regularly for updates.  The amount of access to the group is to be managed by the individual member of staff (whether they mute the group and check in, turn notifications on or off and if messages appear on a locked screen or not).

## **Emergency School Communication**

Teachers and LSA Whatsapp groups are used to notify staff of emergency situations e.g. snow closures.

Staff are expected to be available to communicate electronically when appropriate. This includes email and WhatsApp messaging. If you are not able to use these tools please ensure that our SLT team are aware.

### **Communication, Computer Usage and the Internet**

Use of the school's equipment, systems and network is provided as part of an individual's work role.

Employees should be familiar with the relevant school policies surrounding computer usage, Internet access and electronic communications.

Misuse of the equipment, systems and network may be grounds for disciplinary action under the School's Conduct & Discipline Policy & Procedure, which, if found to constitute serious misconduct, could render an individual liable to dismissal.

Use of technology to contact students can suggest an informality which is inappropriate. Great care should be exercised over the use of communications technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, emails, digital cameras, videos, web cams, websites and blogs unless contact via these routes is required and for which permission has been given by a senior manager e.g. field trips and expeditions.

### **Communication, Social Networking Sites and Online Gaming**

Communication between pupils and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites, social networking sites, online gaming and blogs. Adults should not share any personal information with a pupil. They should not request or respond to any personal information from the pupil other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. Adults should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny. Be aware that actions that bring the school into disrepute could lead to disciplinary procedures being taken.

Staff must deny current or recent students access to their profile so they are not put into a vulnerable position. Staff should ensure that their profile and photos are 'locked down' as private so that students or parents do not have access to personal data or images.

Staff should be aware that they leave themselves open to a charge of professional misconduct if images of a member of staff in a compromising situation are made available on a public profile by anyone.

Where relationships exist between staff and parents of the school or personal friends who are parents at the school, social networking (i.e. having 'friends' on social media who are parents

at our school) is not advisable, caution must be exercised so that professional standards are maintained and staff do not compromise themselves or the school.

Under no circumstances should staff seek out pupils and/or share their own gamer tags/ID with pupils or use school equipment to play online games.

Staff should refrain from posting anything about the school on social media without the express permission of the Headteacher. Confidentiality needs to be a priority at all times.

## **Internet Use**

Under no circumstances should adults in the school access inappropriate images. Accessing child pornography or indecent images of children on the Internet and making, storing or disseminating such material is illegal and if proven will invariably lead to the individual being barred from work with children and young people.

Using school equipment to access inappropriate or indecent material including adult pornography would normally lead to disciplinary action particularly if as a result pupils might be exposed to inappropriate or indecent material.

## **Social Contact**

Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with students or their families for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. Even if a young person seeks to establish social contact or if this occurs coincidentally the member of staff should exercise her/his professional judgement in making a response but should always discuss this with the Headteacher. Staff must be aware that social contact in certain situations could be misconstrued as grooming.

Staff should not give their personal details such as their home or e-mail address, social networking sites, gamer tags or web pages to student unless the need to do so is agreed with senior leadership.

## **Sexual Contact**

Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a pupil is both inappropriate and illegal. 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 and manipulate that relationship so sexual abuse can take place. Staff should be aware that conferring special attention and favour upon a child might be construed as being part of a 'grooming' process which is an offence.

## **Physical Contact**



Please refer to our Positive Touch Policy. 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.

## Dress and Appearance

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression and some individuals will wish to exercise their own cultural customs. However, staff should select a manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role. They should ensure that they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the task they undertake. Those who dress or appear in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate (which might include tattoos or piercings) could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegation. Appropriate presentation is expected of staff. With this in mind we;

<p><b>Dress Code</b></p> <p>Tops cover upper arms/shoulders          Skirts or shorts are knee length          Trousers or shorts are smart and not tight fitting.          No denim          Smart shoes</p> <p><b>Summer Specific</b></p> <p>Summer tops cover upper arms/shoulders          Summer skirt bottoms are smart and no shorter than just above the knee          No skintight fitting clothes          No flip-flops          Feet need to be covered</p> <p><b>PE Days</b></p> <p>School T-shirt or plain T-shirt (no football shirts)          Dark sports bottoms          No skin-tight leggings or ones that underwear can be seen through</p>
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## Behaviour Management Strategies

Please refer to our Behaviour and Discipline Policy. All pupils have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Staff should not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a pupil. The use of humour can help to defuse a situation. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards students is not acceptable in any situation.

## Providing Personal or Intimate Care

All children have a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of an intimate nature is required (for example with toileting or removing wet/soiled clothing). A care plan should be drawn up and agreed with parents for all children who require intimate care on a regular basis.

Children should be encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their own personal care as is practicable. When assistance is required, staff should ensure that another appropriate adult is in the vicinity and is aware of the task to be undertaken.

Additional vulnerabilities that may arise from a physical disability should be considered with regard to individual teaching and care plans for each child. As with all arrangements for

intimate care needs, agreements between the child, their parents and the organisation must be negotiated, agreed and recorded.

### **Lone Working and 1:1 Situations**

Please refer to the school's Lone Working Policy. Staff working in one to one situations with pupils are more vulnerable to allegations. Teachers and others should recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure the safety and security needs of both staff and pupils are met.

### **Transporting Pupils**

In certain situations, for example out of school activities, staff or volunteers may agree to transport children. A designated member of staff should be appointed to plan and provide oversight of all transporting arrangements and respond to any difficulties that may arise.

Wherever possible and practicable it is advisable that transport is undertaken other than in private vehicles, with at least one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort. **The driver must also have appropriate insurance.**

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

### **Gifts, Rewards and Favouritism**

Staff should be aware of the school's policy regarding arrangements for the declaration of gifts received and given. Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.

There are occasions when students or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff (Christmas/thank you) and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value. Any member of staff concerned about whether they or their colleagues may be at risk of giving or receiving a bribe (financial or otherwise) should contact the Senior Leadership Team. Any member of staff receiving gifts or entertainment valued at more than £100 must disclose this to the Senior Leadership Team.

Members of staff may not give personal gifts to pupils. It is acceptable for staff to offer prizes of small value in certain tasks or competitions.

### **Infatuations**

Staff need to be aware that it is not uncommon for students to be strongly attracted to a member of staff and/or develop an infatuation. Staff should be aware that such circumstances always carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against staff.

A member of staff who becomes aware that a pupil may be infatuated with themselves or a colleague should discuss this at the earliest opportunity with a senior colleague so that appropriate action can be taken. In this way, steps can be taken to avoid hurt and distress for all concerned.

## **Mobile Phones**

Mobile phones should not be seen or heard, they will not be used in any way during lessons or formal school time. They should be switched off or silent at all times. They can be referred to during break times in the staffroom and office but not in front of children.

Mobile phones and personally owned mobile devices brought in to school are the responsibility of the device owner. The school accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of personally owned mobile phones or mobile devices.

The Bluetooth function of a mobile phone should be switched off at all times and not be used to send images or files to other mobile phones.

## **Photography, Videos and Other Images**

Many educational activities involve recording images. These may be undertaken for displays, publicity, to celebrate achievement and to provide records of evidence of an activity. Under no circumstances should staff be allowed to use their personal equipment to take images of pupils at or on behalf of the school, unless express permission has been granted by the Headteacher.

Staff need to be aware of the potential for these aspects of teaching to be misused for pornographic or grooming purposes. Careful consideration should be given as to how these activities are organised and undertaken. This means that staff should;

- Be clear about the purpose of the activity and about what will happen to the photographs when the lesson/activity is concluded.
- Ensure that another 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 images of children in their possession
- Avoid making images in one to one situations

## Alcohol and Drugs Misuse

The Local Authority has a policy on Substance Misuse in the Workplace which is aimed at ensuring that all employees are aware of their responsibilities regarding alcohol and drugs at work.

Those representing Foxes Piece School are personally liable for their conduct, specifically in relation to consumption of drugs and alcohol.

Inappropriate behaviour as a result of substance misuse will be dealt with under the relevant policy; Buckinghamshire County Council's Substance Misuse Policy for the Workplace. A copy of this is in the school office.

## Working Hours

Members of teaching staff should arrive in school by 8.30am (unless their contract hours are different). All staff are expected to be punctual. For sickness;

- If staff are unable to work because of sickness they must inform the Headteacher/Senior Leadership Team before the start of the school day via the school office. You will need to give an explanation for your absence including the nature of the sickness.
- On their day of sickness staff must phone the school office by 3pm to inform the Headteacher of their indication to return to work.
- After one or more days of sickness from school, a 'Return to Work Interview' will be conducted by a member of the leadership team. If there are three sessions of sickness within a six month period this will trigger a concern which would mean a return to work interview with the Headteacher and a discussion about a possible referral to County's Occupational Health department.
- For less than eight days absence you should complete a self-certification form (from the school office). For any longer period you must have medical certificates from your GP. Time off for leave or appointments must be agreed in advance with the Governors and is at the Governors' discretion. Routine medical appointments should take place out of school hours in order to minimize the disruption to our pupils' education. If proper procedures are not followed any absence could be considered to be unauthorized and absence and pay may be withheld.

## Whistleblowing

Please refer to the school's Whistleblowing Policy. Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns made in good faith without fear of repercussion. Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior leadership and/or relevant external agencies. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

## Low Level Concerns

The school is conscious of its duty of care to pupils and will always act, including if alerted to the possibility of abuse arising from situations or persons outside the school setting. The notification and prompt handling of all concerns about adults is fundamental to safeguarding children. Please refer to our Low-Level Concerns policy for more information.

### **Sharing concerns and Recording Incidents**

All staff need to be aware of the school's child protection procedures including procedures for dealing with allegations against staff. Staff who are the subject of allegations are advised to contact their professional associations or unions.

In the event of an incident occurring which may result in an action begin misinterpreted and/or an allegation being made against a member of staff, the relevant information should be clearly and promptly recorded and reported to the Headteacher. Early discussion with a parent could avoid any misunderstanding.

Members of staff should feel able to discuss with their Headteacher or member of the leadership team any difficulties or problems that may affect their relationship with students so that appropriate support can be provided or action can be taken.

**Headteacher** – Mrs Jane Byron 01628 483455 ([Head@foxespiece.bucks.sch.uk](mailto:Head@foxespiece.bucks.sch.uk))

**Chair of Governors** – Mrs Lynne Davern via [office@foxespiece.bucks.sch.uk](mailto:office@foxespiece.bucks.sch.uk)

### **Breach of the Guidance on Code of Conduct**

Failure to comply with this guidance and associated school policies may result in disciplinary action being taken.

The Governing Body reserves the right to take legal action against employees where breaches of the guidance warrant such action.

All policies are held in the school office.

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**School Office Received and Filed in Staff File**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**By:** \_\_\_\_\_