



Tittensor CE (VC) First School

Staff Code of Conduct Policy



1. Introduction

The school is required to set out a Code of Conduct for all employees as stated by Staffordshire County Council.

The Code of Conduct outlines the expected conduct of staff at all times. All communication and interaction between members of staff, children, parents, carers, governors and visitors must reflect our Code of Conduct.

- Staff are expected to be conscientious and loyal to the aims and objectives of Tittensor Primary School.
- In addition, staff are required to develop and maintain the professional character of the school.

All staff employed by Tittensor First School are to follow the Code of Conduct. Staff should be aware that a failure to comply with the following Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including dismissal. Volunteers and governors are also expected to follow the code of conduct.

Throughout this document the term staff should be taken to include any adult in the school (and in particular teachers, teaching assistants, other support staff, governors and volunteers).

General

It is an expectation that all members of staff (and adult volunteers, governors and visitors) model courteous and respectful behaviour to the children through their appearance and all aspects of their conduct. This includes the way in which adults talk to the children as well as to each other. A number of other school policies make reference to expectations and these include the school policies on: Confidentiality; Equal Opportunities and Race Equality.

A Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all staff are expected to observe, and the school should notify staff of this code and the expectations therein.

Staff may be in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that models the highest possible standards. Each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school whether inside or outside working hours.

Staff rights

- To:
- Work in an atmosphere of mutual respect
 - Be treated fairly
 - Be listened to and for views to be respected
 - Be valued for the efforts and strengths of the work undertaken and to receive support for those areas that need developing
 - Work in a clean, safe, secure, unthreatening stimulating and well organised work place
 - Be kept appropriately informed through open channels of communication
 - Have a workload that is conducive to work-life balance

Staff Responsibilities

- To:
- Put children at the centre of all that we do
 - Separate personal and professional lives by creating clearly defined boundaries
 - Challenge prejudice in the workplace and support colleagues of all social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds
 - Listen to and respect the opinions of others

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- Support the development of others
- Promote positive relationships with pupils and the local community
- Safeguard the emotional and physical well-being of pupils
- Arrive on time for events/activities appropriately dressed
- Switch mobile phones off during teaching time, staff meetings and when on playground duty
- Raise concerns in a non-threatening manner before they become a more serious problem
- Take responsibility for the working environment leaving it as others would wish to find it
- Challenge unprofessional behaviour in an appropriate manner

The school will:

- To the best of its ability provide high quality CPD for all staff
- Ensure appropriate performance management procedures are in effect
- Value staff achievements and support their further development
- Treat the workforce both fairly and consistently
- Ensure the environment is clean, and that resources are well maintained and accessible
- Listen to the ideas and concerns of all staff
- Raise management concerns with staff appropriately
- Be aware of the requirement to ensure the work-life balance of staff
- Endeavour to make the school an enjoyable place to work.

2 Setting an example

- All staff who work at Tittensor must set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils. Staff must therefore not use inappropriate or offensive language at any time.
- All staff must, therefore, demonstrate the highest standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same.
- All staff must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.
- This Code helps all staff to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable.

3 Safeguarding Pupils

Staff, governors and volunteers have a duty to safeguard pupils from:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- neglect

The duty to safeguard pupils includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil to a school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for Child Protection.

The school's DSL will follow policy and procedures linked to safeguarding.

Copies of the school's Child Protection Policy and Whistleblowing Procedure are available from the school. Staff must be familiar with these documents.

Staff must not demean or undermine pupils, their parents or carers, or colleagues.

Staff must take the up most care of pupils under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.

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Staff must not use their personal mobile phone as a camera in school. Any photograph/ video must be taken using school equipment. Staff must only save images on school computers/devices.

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 harm 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
- Engaging in 1-to-1 activities where they can't easily be seen
- Humiliating pupils

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

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in our child protection and 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 child protection and safeguarding policy. This is available in the staff room and from the school office, as well as in the policies section of our school website.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

4 Pupil Development

- Staff must comply with school policies and procedures that support the well-being and development of pupils.
- Staff must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues, schools and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of pupils.
- Staff must follow reasonable instructions that support the development of pupils.

5 Honesty and Integrity

- Staff must maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money.
- All staff must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or if they request, agree or accept, or receive a bribe from another person. If you believe that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act, you should refer to the Whistleblowing procedure.

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- Staff have a duty to report any concerns they have about any adult or child in the school and
- the school has a duty to investigate and take appropriate action.
- But staff should also be aware that making a false accusation could lead to disciplinary action, clearly the school and governors would wish to differentiate between an honest mistake and wilful mis-conduct in this matter, making an honest mistake will not lead to disciplinary action.

6 Conduct outside Work

- Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school. Any such conduct could lead to dismissal.
- In particular, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable and could lead to dismissal.
- Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Staff must not use social media e.g. Facebook with pupils and parents.
- Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, schools or wider community into disrepute.
- Staff must only use their school email account for work purposes.

7 Confidentiality

- Where staff have access to confidential information about colleagues, pupils or their parents or carers, staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the individual.
- All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a pupil is bullied by another pupil (or by a member of staff), this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate schools procedure. It must not be discussed outside of the school, including with the pupil's parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the school except with a senior member of staff with the appropriate role and authority to deal with the matter.
- However, staff have an obligation to share with the Headteacher or school's Designated Senior Person any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a pupil/student. Staff must never promise a pupil/student that they will not act on information that they are told by the pupil.

8 Disciplinary Action

All staff need to recognise that failure to meet these standards of behaviour and conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

Dress Code

Staff Dress Policy

The governing body (GB) takes the view that all staff at the school should be dressed appropriately for their particular role. The GB is also mindful of the need to avoid direct or indirect discrimination against any employee on the grounds of their sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, or age. The GB is aware of its responsibility to consider possible health and safety issues in determining an acceptable dress code. The GB is also aware that dress is a sensitive issue and has agreed the following policy after consultation with all groups of staff in the school. Any future review of the policy will also be preceded by further consultation.

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Standard of Dress

In general the dress of all teaching and support staff must be tidy and smart, reflecting the business-like ethos that the governors wish to foster and maintain in staff and pupils.

The governors accept those engaged in caretaking, cleaning and lunchtime supervision will wear dress appropriate for their work.

In teaching and areas visited by pupils and visitors male staff will be expected to wear appropriate professional dress. Male staff will normally be expected to wear smart shirt and trousers and female staff would normally be expected to wear smart blouse and skirt/trousers or dress.

Jeans should not be worn except by premises and lunchtime supervising staff. If Jeans are worn by those members of staff who work with children, they should be smart in appearance.

Footwear should also be smart and safe. Shoes and not trainers should be worn for classroom activities.

(An exception is if teachers or other adults are involved in PE lessons – in which case it is appropriate for adults to wear sensible PE kit including trainers, please be mindful of where and when you get changed – it is very strongly suggested you use the staff toilets).

For safety reasons all footwear should be closed –flip-flops and open-toed sandals are not permitted. Any person choosing to wear open toed shoes does so at their own risk. No inappropriately casual clothing should be worn including any items deemed to be too revealing or carrying logos that could be offensive in any way. The Head Teacher is empowered to determine the standard of smartness that is acceptable.

Cleaning and Premises Maintenance

Staff working in these areas, where particular dress is necessary for health and safety reasons, must wear appropriate dress. Staff should note that it can be a criminal offence not to wear safety dress in certain situations. (E.g. headwear in kitchens, and hard hats in construction areas).

Failing to wear the correct safety dress can amount to gross misconduct which could lead to dismissal.

Religious Symbols, Ornaments and Dress

Staff are permitted to wear religious symbols and ornaments, but the governors expect these to be discreet and worn in a safe manner. The Head Teacher in consultation with the governors is empowered to determine whether a particular symbol or ornament is sufficiently discreet, and commensurate with health and safety standards.

Religious Garments

Garments which are generally considered as having an important religious (or racial) connotation (e.g. the Sikh turban, or headscarves worn by some religious sects) may be worn at all times.

However, note the governors' policy on head dress below.

Head Dress

No caps or hats may be worn in school, except where necessary on health and safety grounds, or have been permitted by the GB on religious or racial grounds. Head dress in line with the beliefs and traditions of various religions and sects are allowed, EXCEPT that the governors do not permit any head covering that covers a substantial part of a person's face.

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The reasons for this are:

- the governors take the view that in an institution where verbal communication and body language form an important and significant part of the work with children and young persons, it is not appropriate for any member of staff who comes into contact with pupils in teaching and learning situations to have a substantial part of their face covered; and
- the governors are concerned to ensure that the school remains vigilant about the safety and security of staff and pupils, and that no person employed by the school should have their faces covered, and that the identity of persons visiting the school wearing clothes that cover the face, should not be allowed to go beyond Reception until the Head Teacher has ascertained their identity. (All visitors must wear identity badges obtained in Reception).

Use of mobile phones

The use of personal mobile phones by staff is only permitted at break times and in areas to which children do not normally have access –staff room, PPA room etc. Mobile phones should never be used by staff while teaching or supervising children. Never use your own mobile devices to take pictures of children.

Social Media – See Social Media Policy

Members of staff should exercise extreme caution when using all forms of social media. The school expects all members of staff to set high professional standards and to act as role models for children. The posting of messages or pictures that undermines this expectation could lead to formal disciplinary measures.

Complaints

Any complaints about the operation of this policy should be made at first to the Head Teacher. If not satisfied, the complainant may take his/her complaint to the governing body via the Clerk to the Governing Body. The governors' decision will be final.

Monitoring and Review

The Head Teacher will report annually on the working of this policy, and any adult working or visiting the school may suggest amendments at any time to be considered by the governors.

Appendix 1 – aide memoire for all staff

Use your common sense and good judgement at all times – don't take any action (physical or verbal) in the heat of the moment. Always ask yourself "how will this look to others?"

When we speak to others we will:

- use a positive statement rather than a negative one so that children can learn what we expect of them in any situation.
- use a calm tone of voice at all times, to explain something to or instruct the children, so that they can follow our words without feeling threatened or uncomfortable.
- avoid using sarcastic words or phrases as these demean children and prevent them from developing high self-esteem.
- speak respectfully to other adults at all times, even if we disagree with them.

As professionals we will:

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- avoid workplace gossip and negativity as it breeds resentment and becomes a roadblock to effective communication and collaboration. We all have a duty to take active steps to divert conversations away from this if we come across it.
- maintain confidentiality about anything that we see or hear in the workplace or in schools, so that colleagues, parents, children and outside agencies can trust us, and as a way of showing respect to our fellow professionals.
- work as part of a team, contributing as well as learning from others and helping to build up a strong workforce.
- work within the policies and practices set out by Tittensor First School, so that what we do is consistent with what has been agreed between all members of the staff.
- treat everyone with respect.
- dress appropriately to show that we are here to work.
- behave in a positive way despite any personal problems that we may have, especially in front of children.

This policy will be reviewed during the Autumn term 2025.