



# HOOK JUNIOR SCHOOL

## Staff Code of Conduct 2023-2024

<b>Date Reviewed:</b>	September 2023
<b>Next Review:</b>	September 2024
<b>Review Cycle:</b>	Annual
<b>Reviewing committee:</b>	Full Governing Body
<b>Safeguarding Governor:</b>	Chris Bass
<b>Reviewers:</b>	HT (DSL)
<b>Linked Policies:</b>	All school policies, ethos, practice & procedures.
<b>Policy is based upon:</b>	HCC Model Policy and MOPP Guidelines KCSIE 2023 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
<b>Ratification Date:</b>	September 2023
<b>Signed by Headteacher:</b>	L. Martin
<b>Signed Chair of Governors:</b>	Gareth Evans

### 1. Purpose

This Code of Conduct aims to establish a set of principles which underpin the expected conduct of staff at Hook Junior School with the intention of encouraging staff to achieve the highest standards of conduct at work and of minimising the risk of improper conduct occurring.

The school requires that all staff have read and comply with the Code of Conduct. Where clarification is needed on any aspect of this document, this should be sought from the Headteacher.

Breach or failure to observe the provisions of this document may lead to action being taken under the school disciplinary procedure.

This document is available to all staff from the school office as well as being provided on induction to all new members of staff.

The Code of Conduct is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of conduct and behaviour and in circumstances where guidance does not exist individuals are expected to use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils.

## 2.Aims, scope and principles

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

Many of the principles in this code of conduct are based on the [Teachers' Standards](#).

School staff have an influential position in the school and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards.

We expect all support staff, governors and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

We expect staff to treat each other, pupils, parents and the wider school community with dignity and respect at all times.

We expect all staff behaviour to be in line with and embody the ethos, values and vision of the school.

Furthermore, staff must have regard for school policies and procedures and act in accordance with these at all times, including in their dealings with those who come into contact with the school e.g. visitors.

Staff must act in accordance with their duty of care to pupils and ensure that the safety and welfare of the children and young people at the school are accorded the highest priority. In this and other ways staff should always maintain standards of conduct and behaviour which sustain their professional standing and that of the school.

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

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

## 3.Legislation and guidance

We are required to establish procedures for the regulation of staff conduct under regulation 7 of [The School Staffing \(England\) Regulations 2009](#).

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), we should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistleblowing, as well as acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

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

## 4.General obligations

Staff set an example to pupils. They will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school
- Treat pupils and others with dignity and respect
- Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

- Not express personal beliefs in a way that exploits pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within
- Adhere to the Teachers' Standards

References to 'staff' throughout the Code of Conduct refer to all of the above groups.

Any links within this document to other documents are for ease of use and do not form part of this Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct exists in addition to Hampshire County Council's [Local Government Code of Conduct](#).

## 5. General obligations

Staff set an example to pupils. They will:

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- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school
- Treat pupils and others with dignity and respect
- Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Express personal beliefs in a way that will not overly influence pupils, and will not exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within
- Adhere to the Teachers' Standards
- Teachers are reminded of, and are expected to uphold, their wider responsibilities as set out in the [Teachers' Standards](#), including an understanding of, and acting within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

## 6. Safeguarding

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

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

Our child protection policy, safeguarding policy, low level concerns policy, online safety policy, KCSIE 2023 and procedures are available on the school system and via the school website. New staff will also be given copies on arrival.

Hook Junior School recognises its statutory and moral duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and understands that staff play a vital role in meeting these responsibilities. Staff must be aware of their individual safeguarding responsibilities, including to provide a safe environment in which children can learn, to be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect, to identify children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm and to take appropriate action in such cases to prevent concerns from escalating.

Staff must be aware of the school's systems for supporting child safeguarding, including the role of the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and DDSs.

Staff have a professional duty to report concerns about the welfare of a child. Any such concerns must be raised without delay to any of the school's DSL in the first instance. In the event that none of

the above are available contact Hampshire County Council's Safeguarding team (01962 876364). There should be no delay in reporting a concern if there is risk of immediate serious harm to a child.

## 7. Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

This section is based on 'Section 1: Allegations that may meet the harm threshold' in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that anyone working in the school, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place inside or outside of school

We will deal with any such allegation quickly and in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be the headteacher, or the chair of governors where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation.

## 8. Low-level concerns about members of staff

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by a member of staff or volunteer 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 Low Level concerns 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 Low Level concerns Policy.

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

## 9. Whistle-blowing

The [Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998](#) (as amended) gives protection to people who disclose reasonable concerns about serious misconduct or malpractice at work. This is sometimes known as

Whistleblowing. The Governing Body of the school will treat all matters of malpractice very seriously and allegations about such matters will be dealt with quickly and with appropriate confidentiality.

Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibilities in bringing matters of concern to the attention of senior leadership in the school. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

Whistle-blowing reports wrongdoing that it is “in the public interest” to report. Examples linked to safeguarding include:

- Pupils’ or staff members’ health and safety being put in danger
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement
- Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest

Staff are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. Their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and their confidentiality will be respected.

Staff should consider the examples above when deciding whether their concern is of a whistle-blowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or school procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

Staff should report their concern to the Headteacher. If the concern is about the Headteacher, or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the chair of the governing body.

Concerns should be made in writing wherever possible. They should include names of those committing wrongdoing, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter.

For our school’s detailed whistle-blowing process, please refer to our whistle-blowing policy.

## **10. Staff-pupil relationships**

Individuals who work or volunteer in a school environment are in a position of trust. Staff should be mindful of the need to maintain professional boundaries appropriate to their position and must always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably.

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

If staff members and pupils must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

- This takes place in a public place that others can access
- Others can see into the room
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

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

Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes social media profiles.

While we are aware many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to pupils are not acceptable.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, or if a staff member is concerned at any point about a fellow staff member and a pupil, this should be reported in line with the procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

Staff and governors are to adhere to the code of confidentiality regarding school business, individual pupils, individual members of staff and their personal views.

Staff must avoid unnecessary physical contact with children. Where physical contact is essential, e.g. for safety reasons, the pupil's permission must be gained for that contact wherever possible.

If physical contact is made to remove a pupil from a dangerous situation or an object from a pupil to prevent either harm to themselves or others, then this should be recorded and reported to the Headteacher.

In cases where accidental physical contact was made, it should be reported to Headteacher.

## **11. Communication and social media**

Staff and governors are to use only formal school channels of communication to contact parents, conduct school business or contact the wider community (school email, personal school email or governor email or school phone number) to conduct school business.

Internal e-mail and internet systems must be used only in accordance with the school's acceptable use of ICT policy.

Social networking sites offer the opportunity for communication with children, young people and their parents outside normal professional boundaries. School staff must take care to protect their privacy and protect themselves from risk of allegations in relation to inappropriate relationships and cyberbullying.

Staff must not have any unauthorised contact or accept 'friend' requests through social media with any pupil (including former pupils and/or those who attend other schools) unless they are family members.

Staff must exercise caution when having contact online through social media with parents so as not to compromise the school's reputation or school information. School staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name, as pupils may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead, and set public profiles to private.

Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship. They will not make any efforts to find pupils' or parents' social media profiles.

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

Staff should be aware of the school's online safety policy

## **12. Acceptable use of technology**

Staff will not use technology in school or belonging to the school to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.

Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school equipment for personal use, in school hours or in front of pupils. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.

We have the right to monitor emails, AI tools and internet use on the school ICT system.

Staff will adhere to the acceptable use of ICT policy.

## **13. Confidentiality and disclosure of information**

Staff must ensure that they do not disclose confidential information to anyone who does not have the right to receive it. Where information is disclosed this should be in line with the principles of the [General Data Protection Regulations \(GDPR\) 2016](#) and the [Data Protection Act 2018](#). Equally staff should not prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled

by law. If there is doubt about whether or not to share information, advice must be sought from an appropriate senior member of staff (Chris Grant – School Business Manager and GDPR Officer)

Information obtained during the course of an individual's work should never be used for personal gain or benefit, nor should it be passed onto others who might use it in such a way.

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

This information should never be:

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

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

## 14. Honesty and integrity

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities.

Staff will not accept bribes. Gifts that are worth more than £30.00 must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register.

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

- Background information (including any past or current investigations/cautions related to conduct outside of school)
- Qualifications
- Professional experience

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

## 15. Dress code

An individual's dress and appearance is a matter of personal choice; however, staff should ensure that they dress appropriately, decently and safely for a school environment and for the role they undertake, as well as setting a good example to both pupils and visitors.

Staff should have particular regard to the health and safety risks involved with certain lessons i.e. physical education/food technology and the need to dress appropriately and safely when undertaking these activities, such as wearing appropriate footwear, removing jewellery etc.

The school recognises equality laws and the diversity of cultures and religions of its staff and will take a sensitive approach when this affects dress. However, priority will be given to health and safety, security and other similar considerations of other staff, pupils and the school.

- Casual wear will only be permitted when an occasion warrants it and permission is given by the Headteacher. If there is a medical condition that requires deviation in dress code from this policy, permission must be sought from the Headteacher.
- Staff are expected to dress in an appropriate way adopting a smart, formal, professional style.
- Clothing will not display any offensive or political slogans
- Staff must be aware when working with children that decorum must be exercised at all times as part of their duty to safeguard children and themselves. Outfits must not be overly revealing. Therefore, the showing of any underwear, midriffs, cleavage is not permitted.



- Jewellery should be discreet, minimal and reflect the formality of the dress code required. It should be removed when undertaking PE or any activity where it might pose a personal risk to health and safety.
- When attending or delivering any activity off school site on behalf of the school staff and should dress in line with this dress code.
- All footwear, in any season must cover toes.

## 16. Conduct outside work

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

Care must be taken by staff to avoid any conflict of interest between activities undertaken outside school and responsibilities within school. In no case should actions or activities undertaken outside of work (including but not limited to relationships and social media contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults) bring the school into disrepute.

Staff must disclose any misconduct or alleged misconduct made against them, including any incidents arising from alternative or additional employment outside of this school. Disclosure must be made to the Headteacher without delay, after which consideration will be given to the relevance or otherwise of the misconduct to their role in the school.

Teachers are reminded that the [Teachers' Standards](#), and specifically Part Two: Personal and Professional Conduct, set out their responsibilities in relation to upholding public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school.

## 17. Declaration of interests

Staff should consider carefully whether they need to declare to the school any relationship with an individual where this might cause a conflict with the school's activities, for example, a relationship with a Governor, another staff member or a contractor who provides services to the school. Where such a declaration is necessary this should be made to the Headteacher.

Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided it does not conflict with the interests of the school nor be at a level which may contravene the [Working Time Regulations](#) or affect an individual's performance at work.

## 18. Health and safety

Staff must adhere to the school's Health and Safety policy and should ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and others in the school environment safe.

Please refer to the school's Health and Safety policy for further information.

## 19. Gifts and hospitality

There may be occasions where children or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff, for example as an end of year 'thank-you', and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value or to suggest to pupils that gifts would be appropriate or desired. Money should never be accepted as a gift.

It is not acceptable for staff to give gifts to pupils and any rewards given to children must be given in agreement with the declared reward practice of the school.

Staff should not solicit or accept any gift, hospitality or other reward from external parties which influences the way in which they carry out their duties or leads the giver to expect preferential treatment.



Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities.

Staff will not accept bribes.

Gifts that are worth more than £30.00 must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register.

## **20. Use of school resources and funds**

The use of school resources, property and equipment is for school-related activities only, except where otherwise agreed by the governing body.

All members of staff must use any public or school funds entrusted or handled by them in a responsible and lawful manner.

## **21. Links with other policies**

This policy links with our policies on:

- Staff disciplinary procedures, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct. It also sets out examples of what we will deem as misconduct and gross misconduct
- Staff grievance procedures
- Child protection and safeguarding
- Gifts and hospitality
- Online safety
- Whistle-blowing
- Acceptable use of ICT
- Low level concerns policy

## **Appendix 1**

### **Do's & Don'ts when Working with Children**

Staff and volunteers must be aware of how to conduct themselves to minimise the risk of becoming the subject of any child protection processes. This list summarises what to do and not to do. It is not exhaustive and schools may wish to add to the list.

#### **Do:**

- Read and follow the school's child protection procedures
- Report to the Headteacher/DSL any concerns about child welfare/safety
- Report to the Headteacher any concerns about the conduct of other school staff/volunteers/contractors
- Record in writing all relevant incidents
- Work in an open and transparent way
- Discuss and report any incidents of concern or that might lead to concerns being raised about your conduct towards a child
- Report to the Headteacher any incidents that suggest a pupil may be infatuated with you or taking an above normal interest in you

- Dress appropriately for your role
- Only use e-mail contact with pupils via the school's system
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with children
- Ensure you understand the rules concerning physical restraint
- Where physical contact is essential for educational or safety reasons, gain pupil's permission for that contact wherever possible
- Allow children to change clothes with levels of respect and privacy appropriate to their age, gender, culture and circumstances
- Avoid working in one-to-one situations with children where possible, except where this is explicitly part of your role.
- In certain one-to-one situations, ensure that you are within sight of another adult, e.g. by having a door open/being behind a glass partition/working in one corner of a room whilst another adult is operating elsewhere in the room.
- During the provision of personal/intimate care, which is part of the post holder's normal responsibilities, maintaining the child's dignity and privacy should be of paramount importance, which may warrant the care to take place on a one-to-one basis, ensuring privacy is appropriate to the child's age and situation.
- Ensure an appropriate member of staff is aware of when and where you are holding a one-to-one.
- If you are unhappy about the venue arrangements, take this up with your Headteacher before entering into these.
- Avoid volunteering to house children overnight
- Ensure that areas of the curriculum that may involve sexually explicit information are taught in accordance with school policies
- Be careful about recording images of children and do this only when it is an approved educational activity
- Contact your professional association or trade Union if you are the subject of concerns or allegations of a child protection nature
- Fully co-operate with any investigation into child protection issues in the school. Listen to pupils when they express concern (rumours) about staff which might appear to be just, and check facts v fiction

**Don't:**

- Take any action that would lead a reasonable person to question your motivation and/or intentions
- Misuse in any way your position of power and influence over children
- Use any confidential information about a child to intimidate, humiliate or embarrass a child
- Engage in activities out of school that might compromise your position within school
- Establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils outside of school
- Accept regular gifts from children
- Give personal gifts to children
- Communicate with pupils in inappropriate ways, including personal e-mails and mobile telephones.
- Pass your home address, phone number, e-mail address or other personal details to pupils/children.
- Make physical contact secretive

- Assist with any personal care task which a child can undertake themselves
- Arrange to meet with pupils in closed rooms without senior staff being made aware of this in advance.
- Use physical punishment of any kind
- Confer special attention on one child unless this is part of an agreed school plan or policy
- Transport pupils in your own vehicle without prior management approval
- Take, publish or share images of pupils or other children without their parents' permission.
- Access abuse images (sometimes referred to as child pornography) or other inappropriate material
- Abuse your position of trust with pupils
- Allow boundaries to be unsafe in more informal settings such as trips out, out of school activities etc.