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# Staff Code of Conduct

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2023 - 2024

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Inspiring Everyone to Shine

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**Fairfields School**  
Helping children to help themselves

Approved 17.10.2022

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# Staff Code of Conduct

## THE FAIRFIELDS CODE

At Fairfields School we foster a culture of mutual respect between all members of our community; pupils, parents, staff, volunteers, governors and visiting professionals. It is important to remember that at all times, the needs and safety of the child are paramount.

- Pupils are protected by a culture in which unacceptable adult behaviour is not tolerated.
- Pupils' emotional needs are met.
- Pupils are supported to conform as closely as possible to social boundaries so as to open up as many opportunities as possible for them.
- Pupils are supported in developing age appropriate social skills.
- Pupils are supported by staff who help to increase their inclusion and safety in the wider community by providing good role models.

We recognise that all staff in school are in a position of power and trust. It is the duty and responsibility of all staff to support one another in adhering to the high standards set out in this document by addressing issues with colleagues as they arise.

## HANDLING PUPILS

### a) When comforting or working with pupils.

'Positive touch' should be used to comfort and build relationships with pupils. This is defined as touch on those parts of the body where we as adults would be comfortable for acquaintances to touch us and which the individual pupil responses have indicated are acceptable to them. Embraces are to be discouraged, except for distressed pupils.

Acceptable Contact	Unacceptable Contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shaking hands</li><li>• Holding hands to guide</li><li>• Physical prompting of tasks</li><li>• High fives</li><li>• Friendly pat on the arm, back or shoulder</li><li>• Arm across shoulders to comfort</li><li>• Use of touch signals</li><li>• Touch as part of an agreed and monitored Intensive Interaction programme</li><li>• As part of teaching programmes such as body awareness or massage</li><li>• Conductive Education, OT and Physio programmes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Initiating cuddling/hugging (except when a child is distressed)</li><li>• Tickling on body trunk and upper legs</li><li>• Sitting on laps (except EYFS). If a child approaches you in this way you should gently move them away and teach more appropriate approaches</li><li>• Touching upper parts of legs</li><li>• Pupils should be discouraged from embracing staff on meeting and taught how to say 'hello' in a way appropriate to their age</li></ul>

## b) When moving pupils

Pupils should be moved with dignity and respect at all times and treated as we would wish to be treated ourselves. As pupils progress through the school they should be encouraged to develop independence and, therefore, any touch should be at the minimum level required. Wherever possible pupils should move independently.

Acceptable /Desirable Actions if needed	Unacceptable Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talking to and encouraging or praising pupils as they move</li> <li>• Holding hands to guide</li> <li>• Hand on shoulder to guide</li> <li>• Walking alongside a pupil</li> <li>• Support aimed at giving maximum independence for pupils with physical difficulties</li> <li>• Providing aids to support independent movement</li> <li>• Moving pupils in a way mindful of their physical and emotional comfort</li> <li>• Positive Physical Intervention techniques if risk assessment criteria are fulfilled</li> <li>• Always inform a pupil of where they are going before moving them using orientation cues if appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive Physical Intervention techniques if used <u>only</u> because a pupil refuses to move</li> <li>• Handling pupils by their clothing, unless in imminent danger</li> <li>• Dragging pupils</li> <li>• Pushing pupils</li> <li>• Pulling pupils up from the floor by pulling their arms</li> <li>• Holding shorter pupils' hands above their heads, whilst moving or walking, so putting arms at an unnatural or uncomfortable angle</li> <li>• Moving at a pace which is inappropriate for the pupil concerned</li> <li>• Giving support which is insufficient to meet the physical needs of the pupil</li> <li>• Moving pupils with physical difficulties without adherence to risk assessment advice and manual handling guidelines</li> <li>• Moving a non-ambulant pupil without talking to them first</li> <li>• Pushing a pupil in a wheelchair without talking to them first</li> <li>• Picking up and carrying pupils</li> <li>• Pupils pushing peers in their wheelchairs</li> </ul>

## c) When meeting pupils' personal care needs

Many of our pupils need partial or total support for their personal care needs. This needs to be achieved with minimum fuss, maximum discretion and respect for the pupil's dignity.

Acceptable Actions	Unacceptable Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educating pupils to close the door when using the toilet and withdrawing as far as possible to give privacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wiping faces without care</li> <li>• Referring to a soiled child as "dirty"</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carrying out personal care activities quickly and efficiently</li> <li>• Talking to and reassuring pupils whilst fulfilling care needs</li> <li>• Following school's bathroom protocol</li> <li>• Following pupils' individual care plans e.g. feeding programme &amp; toileting programme</li> <li>• Offering choices and respecting informed choices at meal times</li> <li>• Keeping pupils and their eating area as clean as possible during meal times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Going into a toilet cubicle to check on a pupil without first knocking, speaking, listening and pausing for a response</li> <li>• Leaving a pupil unsupervised on a changing bed</li> <li>• Carrying out any care programmes without talking to the pupil</li> <li>• Leaving the bathrooms in a poor state</li> </ul>
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#### **d) When restraining pupils**

On the rare occasion when restraint is needed, this should only be carried out in adherence to Team Teach principles by trained staff. Maximising the dignity of all concerned should be uppermost at all times. Remember, you have a duty of care to all pupils, which requires you to minimise the use of restraint.

What is Acceptable	What is Unacceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asking for help</li> <li>• Using Positive Physical Intervention following a behaviour plan drawn up and agreed with all staff concerned and the pupil's parents or carers</li> <li>• Using Positive Physical Intervention in an emergency when a pupil is endangering themselves or others (a full risk assessment meeting must follow a.s.a.p.)</li> <li>• Using Positive Physical Intervention when equipment essential to the well-being of another pupil is being damaged</li> <li>• Using chairs with straps only for physical safety or where recommended by an OT as a means of deep pressure/comfort</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using restraint as a means to make a pupil conform to staff instructions</li> <li>• Using restraint when other strategies have not been tried</li> <li>• Using any restraint other than those recommended by Team Teach</li> <li>• Maintaining a restraint without trying de-escalation techniques</li> </ul>

### **USE OF LANGUAGE**

Having a shared understanding of language and an agreement about how words are used is very powerful. It can also result in more effective and meaningful communication.

#### **a) Greeting pupils**

Pupils should be greeted in a positive and friendly manner. We should be teaching pupils how to greet adults outside their family circle in an appropriate way.

What is Acceptable	What is Unacceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate communication for pupils' needs e.g. signing, symbols</li> <li>• Pupils should be addressed by the name used at home</li> <li>• Positive body language e.g. calm stance</li> <li>• Modelling grammatically correct language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Derogatory terms, e.g. 'little monkey', 'you lazy...' (however affectionately used)</li> <li>• Negative body language e.g. hands on hip, crossed arms</li> <li>• Slang language</li> <li>• Swearing</li> </ul>

## b) Pupils and staff addressing one another

The way we address one another should convey mutual respect and build the self-esteem of pupils and staff.

### RELATIONSHIPS / BEHAVIOUR

Pupils learn from our example and staff reactions so we should always endeavour to be good role models. This applies to our relationships with one another and visitors to school as well as with pupils. Internal and external working relationships are formed on a daily basis with colleagues, fellow professionals, pupils, parents and contractors. These should be conducted in a professional, friendly and respectful manner.

#### a) General

What is Desirable	What is Unacceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To treat all members of the school community with respect by listening to their contributions</li> <li>• To offer praise and encouragement to pupils, staff and parents</li> <li>• To be friendly and welcoming to all visitors</li> <li>• To enter into all opportunities to have an open and professional dialogue which respects one another's perspectives and group decisions</li> <li>• To talk about any concerns or issues with line manager and possibly senior staff so that they can be dealt with quickly and any emotional needs met</li> <li>• To model and encourage good manners</li> <li>• To focus on the task in hand at all times when on duty</li> <li>• To maintain good time keeping throughout the day as this supports our colleagues and ensures the pupils' full access to activities</li> <li>• All areas of school are clean and tidy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To laugh at swearing or unacceptable pupil behaviour</li> <li>• To talk about a pupil's personal issues in a public place, e.g. the classroom</li> <li>• To talk about confidential pupil or school issues out of school (this includes talking about private issues with partners)</li> <li>• To tell a colleague that they are too ill to work – this is their decision. If concerned, talk to their phase leader or a senior member of staff who will discuss it with them</li> <li>• For staff to eat or drink in class unless this is a shared activity with the pupils</li> <li>• To chew gum in class</li> <li>• To gossip in school</li> <li>• To hold a conversation with a colleague about one's private life whilst in the classroom</li> <li>• To be late to class, not being ready when the children arrive or at the start of a session</li> <li>• Areas of school are left untidy</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resources are looked after and returned to the correct place</li> <li>Mobile phones are kept on silent or are off and are kept in cupboards or lockers during the school day</li> <li><i>Staff may create groups on instant messaging sites in their class teams or as groups of colleagues to aid communication, networking and support. However, it is essential that they do not discuss wider school issues or pupils in this forum. Staff need to ensure that they are following our code of conduct when communicating in this manner.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resources aren't returned or are dumped in resource cupboards</li> <li>Resources are left in a broken state so are unable to be used by others</li> <li>Mobile phones are on and used during time with pupils</li> <li>Use of derogatory language including swearing</li> <li>Bullying and harassment</li> </ul>
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## b) With pupils

Pupils need to be respected and to respect you. They need to have a clear idea of the parameters of their relationship with you, particularly as they get older and their sexuality is developing. This should be reflected in your language, body language and behaviour in their company. Any out of school contact with pupils must be planned and agreed with senior staff and parents. This includes home visits and any respite offered by staff to families.

What is Desirable	What is Unacceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respect a pupil's personal space and support them in doing the same</li> <li>Focus all classroom conversations on the pupils</li> <li>Talk quietly to avoid interrupting the flow of the lesson</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To talk about pupils in their presence unless they are included in the conversation</li> <li>To shout at a pupil unless it is to warn them of danger</li> <li>Swearing or using inappropriate language in the presence of pupils</li> <li>Using phrases such as 'kicking off' or 'having a tantrum' when addressing pupils' behaviour challenges</li> <li>Befriending pupils on social media or texting/messaging pupils</li> <li>Using any personal devices eg. Mobile phones &amp; cameras to capture images of pupils</li> </ul>

## c) With parents

Parents need your support. This can be achieved by being a friendly professional rather than a friend. This needs to be reflected in your professional language and behaviour. It is important to remember that on occasions you might be the first person they see in school. It is important not to take what is said personally; it is just that you are the first person they may have to talk to.

What is Desirable	What is Unacceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To inform, advise and support parents as fully as possible</li> <li>• To give parents opportunities to discuss their child's progress and needs</li> <li>• To involve parents in their child's education as fully as they have indicated that they can be</li> <li>• If you feel that a pupil is unfit for school, consult with the class teacher and then a senior member of staff before possibly sending the pupil home</li> <li>• Report any concerns to either the class teacher, family support worker or leadership team</li> <li>• Any need for medical advice, e.g. changes to medication, advice re seizures, should be referred to the school nurse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Judging parents or telling them what to do. You do not know what other difficulties they may be encountering</li> <li>• To give advice outside your area of expertise, e.g. you should inform a parent of any symptoms of their child's illness, but not tell them what to do about it</li> <li>• Befriending parents on social media, sharing personal contact details (unless providing respite care which has been notified to the Headteacher)</li> <li>• Talking about other pupils with parents</li> </ul>

**d) With any other adult in school, including multi-agency professionals and external contractors and visitors**

This should be a relationship based on respect and co-operation to foster positive working relationships. Different people will come to a situation from different perspectives. These can sometimes be seen to be in conflict, but an open professional debate will enrich both our understanding and the quality of the service that we offer our pupils and staff.

**DRESS CODE**

As a general rule, staff should wear clothes that are comfortable and practical whilst maintaining a smart professional appearance. Remember that you will be seen as representing Fairfield's School. School staff are seen as role models and therefore should dress accordingly. Adults wearing jewellery do so at their own risk.

What is desirable	What is Unacceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Giving consideration to the appropriateness of an outfit for a professional setting</li> <li>• Wearing clothes which are practical for the day's tasks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low necklines, bare midriffs, short skirts, visible bra straps, strappy tops or low cut trousers</li> <li>• Blue denim jeans or other blue denim clothing</li> <li>• Holey or ripped trousers</li> <li>• Open toed shoes and Crocs</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shorts are not permitted except knee length shorts that are not overly casual, such as beach shorts / surfer shorts</li></ul>
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### **Safeguarding concerns regarding staff conduct that does not meet the harm threshold (low level concerns)**

In the event that there is a safeguarding concern about a member of staff, we will adhere to guidance outlined in Part 4, Section 2 of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2023) and Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance.

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant; it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the harms threshold. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer)

It is essential that low level concerns are reported. Such behaviours can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- Being overly friendly with children eg. hugging, using pet names
- Having favourites
- Staff taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- Humiliating pupils

We will act quickly, proportionately and appropriately in the event of a low level concern, to prevent abuse or harm of a child and to promote a culture of safeguarding. Dealing with low level concerns also protects those working in school from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.

Staff will receive training about what may constitute a low-level concern. More information can be found in Part 4 of KCSIE (2023).

### **Reporting low level concerns**

Low level concerns should be reported to the headteacher.

All low-level concerns should be recorded in writing. Report forms can be found on SharePoint in the 'Whole School Safeguarding' folder and on the Safeguarding board in the staff room. The record should include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, and action taken. The name of the individual sharing their concerns should also be noted. If the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should

be respected as far as is reasonably possible. These records will be kept until the member of staff concerned is no longer employed by the school.

The headteacher may:

- Speak directly to the person who raised the concern (unless it has been raised anonymously).
- Speak to the individual involved and/or witnesses.

The headteacher will then categorise the type of behaviour and decide on an appropriate course of action. This will be recorded, along with rationale for any decisions made and details of action taken.

Records will be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. In the event that patterns and/or wider cultural issues within the school are identified, the school will either:

- take action through its disciplinary procedures;
- refer behaviour to the local authority designated officer/s where a pattern of behaviour moves from a concern to meeting the harms threshold; and/or
- revise policies or implement extra training as appropriate, to minimise the risk of behaviour happening again.