

# **Huttoft Primary & Nursery School**

## **Code of Conduct for Members of Staff**

**Reflecting revised Government guidelines  
2016**

Huttoft Primary School

# **Huttoft Primary & Nursery School (Academy)**

*'Building Foundations, Enabling Discovery, Broadening Horizons'*

## A Governing Body Policy

### **Overview**

At Huttoft Primary School we seek to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the wellbeing and the very best outcomes for our children and our staff. Our school values and purpose statement underpin our policies and practices.

The purpose of this document is to clarify what is expected in terms of professional behaviour; it provides advice about what is expected of our staff and what constitutes unacceptable and/or illegal behaviour and what may be considered misconduct. In setting out the best safe practice, it also gives examples of behaviours that should be avoided.

Following this code of conduct is central to successfully fulfilling the role of a member of staff at Huttoft Primary School; thus any failure to follow it could initiate disciplinary procedures. There may be times when professional judgements are made in situations not covered by this document or which directly contravene the guidance given here. In these circumstances, staff should advise the Headteacher of the justification for the action already taken or that which is proposed.

A wide range of policies operate in the school and some are referred to specifically in this guidance. All staff are expected to be familiar with all the policies that the school operates and to follow them.

### **Core Principles**

- The welfare of our pupils is paramount
- Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions
- Staff should work and be seen to work in an open and transparent way
- Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from their line manager or another senior member of staff over any incident which may give rise to concern
- Records should be made of any such incident and of decisions/further actions agreed
- Staff should apply the same professional standards for conduct as detailed in Teachers' Standards and the other school policies such as those about Safeguarding and Child Protection, Equality, Dignity at Work, Inclusion, and Behaviour.
- All staff should know the name of the Designated Safeguarding Officer (Lead) Mr Davey, and in his absence Mrs Osborne or Mrs Denton and be familiar with Safeguarding arrangements and their responsibilities to safeguard and protect pupils
- Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them

## **1. Introduction**

This guidance has been produced to help all staff establish the safest possible learning and working environments. The aims are to safeguard young people and reduce the risk of staff being falsely accused of improper or unprofessional conduct.

### ***This means that these guidelines:***

*Apply to all adults working in education settings whatever their positions, roles or responsibilities*

## **2 Duty of Care**

All staff, whether paid or voluntary, have a duty to keep young people safe and to protect them from physical and emotional harm. This duty is in part exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between staff and students and by the behaviour of staff that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement.

There are high expectations about the nature of the professional involvement of staff in the lives of students. When individuals accept a role that involves working with children and young people, they need to understand and acknowledge those responsibilities and the trust inherent in that role.

The governors (as employers) have a duty of care towards their staff which requires them to provide a safe working environment and guidance about safe working practices.

### **This means that staff should:**

- Understand the responsibilities which are part of their employment or role and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached.
- Always act, and be seen to act, in the child's best interests.
- Avoid conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour.

### **This means that HPS should:**

- Ensure that safeguarding procedures are in place and reviewed.
- Ensure that systems are in place for concerns to be raised.
- Ensure that adults are not placed in situations that render them particularly vulnerable.

## **3 Exercise of professional judgement**

This guidance cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for staff. It does highlight behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable. There will be occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or take action in the best interests of their children which could contravene this guidance or where no guidance exists. Individuals are expected to make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best welfare for the children in their care and in so doing, will be seen to be acting reasonably.

### **This means that where no specific guidance exists staff should:**

- Discuss the circumstances that informed their action or proposed action with a senior colleague.
- Always discuss any misunderstanding, accidents or threats with the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors).
- Always record discussions and actions taken with their justifications.

#### ***4. Power and positions of trust***

All adults working with children are in a position of trust in relation to the young people in their care. A relationship between a member of staff and a pupil cannot be a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people; staff have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.

Staff should always maintain appropriate professionalism and wherever possible, they should avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others and report and record any incidents with this potential.

##### **This means that staff should not:**

- Use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine pupils.
- Use their status or standing to form or promote a relationship with a pupil which is inappropriate or of a sexual nature.

#### ***5. Confidentiality***

Members of staff have access to confidential information about pupils in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities. In some circumstances staff may be given additional highly sensitive or personal information about a pupil. This information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate or embarrass the pupil.

Confidential information about pupils should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need to know basis. In circumstances where the pupil's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.

If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential, they should seek guidance from the Headteacher. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the Headteacher. As outlined in our Safeguarding Policy, adults need to be aware that although it is important to listen and support pupils, they must not promise confidentiality or request pupils to do the same under any circumstances.

##### **This means that staff:**

- Are expected to treat information they receive about pupils in a discreet and confidential manner.
- If in any doubt about sharing information they hold or which has been requested of them, should seek advice from the Headteacher.
- Need to be cautious when passing information about a pupil to others.
- Need to know to whom any concerns or allegations should be reported.
- Cannot promise confidentiality to pupils and should not expect it from them either.

#### ***6. Propriety and behaviour***

All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of the children. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their peers, pupils and the public in general.

**This means that staff should not:**

- Behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or to act as a role model.
- An individual's behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, should not compromise their position within the work setting so it is important to exercise due care and attention when outside the school environment.
- Membership of organisations whose goals are in conflict with the values and equality policies of the school is not acceptable.
- Staff's personal, political opinions should not interfere with their work in any way. The Headteacher and governors must not compromise their political neutrality.
- Staff in the school are required to serve the school and therefore cannot be accountable to individual political groups.

**This means that staff should not:**

- Be involved in advising any political group nor in attending any of their meetings (without first discussing the matter with the Headteacher or Governing Body).

***7. Dress and appearance***

Staff should consider the manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role. We require pupils to be smart in their uniform. Smart and professional appearance is expected at all times for staff. Staff should ensure that they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake. This should reflect the business workplace they operate within.

Those who dress or appear in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate (which includes tattoos or piercings) could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegation. Appropriate personal presentation is expected of staff. Jewellery should not be ostentatious nor present a potential hazard to the staff member when fulfilling their duties, nor to a child e.g., when the staff member leans over them; this also applies to scarves. Footwear must be practical.

**This means that staff should ensure that their appearance and clothing:**

- Promotes a positive, professional image. No jeans for teachers – other than for a field trip.
- Is appropriate to their role.
- Is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing (including sheer and clingy type fabrics) or sexually provocative (e.g., 'gaps' between a top and trousers/skirt/).
- Does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding.
- Dresses, tunics and skirts should be no shorter than 7cms above the knee (all the way round). Knitwear and shirt-dresses when worn with leggings should also be no shorter than 7cms above the knee (all the way round).
- Shorts (with the exception of PE activities) should be tailored and no shorter than 7cms above the knee

***8. Personal living space***

No pupil should be invited into the home of an adult who works with them unless the reason for this has been firmly established and agreed with parents and senior leaders (e.g., in the case of parent/staff member friendship or family connection). Staff should refrain from sharing intimate details of their personal life with pupils.

**This means that staff should:**

- Be vigilant in maintaining their privacy and mindful of the need to avoid placing themselves in vulnerable situations.
- Be mindful of the need to maintain professional boundaries.

**9. Communication with pupils**

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, webcams, websites, instant messaging, social networking sites, online gaming, blogs etc. Adults should not share any personal information with a pupil. They should not request or respond to any personal information from pupils 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.

**This means that staff should:**

- Never give their personal contact details to pupils including their mobile telephone number.
- Communicate with pupils in an appropriate and professional manner.
- Not use web-based communication channels to send personal (non-school related) messages to pupils.

**10. Social networking and online gaming**

Staff using social networking sites for personal use are advised to ensure their profile is private so that pupils and parents do not have access to personal data or images. Personal and professional lives must be kept separate.

Staff should deny current and recent pupils access to their profile, so they do not put themselves in a vulnerable position. 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 is made available on a public profile by anyone. Postings on social media sites can lead to complaints and may reflect negatively on the school. See also the School's Acceptable Use Policy.

If a pupil does gain access to the profile of a member of staff by fraudulent means, the Headteacher should be informed immediately.

Where relationships exist between staff and those who are also parents at the school, care should be exercised so that professional standards are maintained and staff do not compromise themselves or the school.

**This means that staff should:**

- Alter profile settings to ensure that data and images are not freely available; seek advice from the Network Manager if unsure how to do this.
- Not permit current or recent ex-pupils or parents to have access to their profile.
- Not to include HPS (the place of work) as part of any social media profile.
- Ensure that all passwords are kept strong and secure.
- Be aware that images of others should be protected and be treated as carefully as they would their own.
- Not have images of pupils stored on personal cameras, devices or home computers.
- If they become aware that they are in an online game with a Huttoft pupil, cease to play against that pupil and tell the Headteacher.

- Maintain professionalism about your place of work now and in the future. Retrospective comments are dangerous.

### ***11. Physical contact***

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils such as when administering First Aid, or in the event of an incident that compromises pupil safety e.g., a fight, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. Where physical contact is made with pupils this should be in response to the pupils needs at the time, of limited duration and be appropriate. Staff should use their professional judgement at all times about the appropriateness of any physical contact.

Physical contact should never be secretive or for gratification of the adult or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action could be or has been misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be told to the Headteacher.

During PE, staff may have to initiate physical contact with pupils in order to, for example, support them so they can perform a task safely, demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment, or assist them with an exercise. This should be done with the pupil's agreement and be for the minimum time necessary.

#### **This means that staff should:**

- Be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by a pupil, an observer or anyone to whom this action is described.

#### **This means that staff should:**

- Be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by a pupil, an observer or anyone to whom this action is described.
- Never touch a pupil in a way that may be considered indecent.
- Always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact is open to scrutiny.
- Always explain to a pupil the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take unless their safety is at immediate risk.
- Consider alternatives where it is anticipated that a pupil might misinterpret any such contact such as involving another member of staff or a less vulnerable pupil in the demonstration.

#### **This means that Huttoft should:**

- Have a system in place for recording serious incidents
- Provide staff with relevant information about vulnerable pupils in their care

### ***12. Pupils in distress***

There may be occasions when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance. This may include age-appropriate physical contact including sitting the pupil on a staff member's knee or giving a hug. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

#### **This means that staff should:**

- Consider the way in which they offer comfort to a distressed pupil.
- Always tell a colleague when and how they offered comfort to a distressed pupil.
- Record situations which may give rise to concern.

### ***13. Showers and changing clothing***

Young people are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes including at swimming, or taking a shower. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard pupils, satisfy health and safety considerations and ensure that bullying and poor behaviour does not occur. This supervision should be appropriate to the needs and the age of the pupils concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment. It applies on residential trips too.

The Nappy Changing Policy (Intimate Care) Policy and Procedure is explicit for situations involving routine nappy changing.

**This means that staff should:**

Avoid physical contact when children are in a state of undress.  
Avoid any visually intrusive behaviour.  
Remain in the room when groups are changing (e.g., at swimming).  
Offer sensitive pupils the opportunity to change privately

**This means that staff should not:**

Change in the same place as pupils or shower with pupils

#### ***14. Behaviour Management***

All pupils have the 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 a pupil is not acceptable in any situation.

Under no circumstances should physical force be used as a form of punishment. The use of unwarranted physical force is likely to be the subject of disciplinary action and may constitute a criminal offence. In rare events, physical intervention may be necessary to prevent a pupil from committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others or causing damage.

**This means that staff should:**

- Not use force as a form of punishment.
- Try to defuse situations before they escalate.
- Always use the minimum force for the shortest period possible.
- Adhere to the school's Behaviour Management Policy and 'Use of Force' Policy.
- Staff should apply their Team Teach training for positive behaviour management when needing to make contact with a pupil because of escalating behaviour.

**This means that Huttoft should:**

- Maintain staff CPD for positive behaviour management techniques

#### ***15. One to One situations***

Staff working in 1:1 situations with pupils are more vulnerable to allegations. There is a need to recognise this possibility and plan and conduct sessions accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure the safety and security needs of both staff and pupils are met.

Class teachers have timetables for all their children's activities.

**This means that staff should:**

- Avoid sessions with children in remote, secluded areas of the school.

- Ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in 1:1 situations.
- Follow timetables carefully.
- Report any situations where a child becomes distressed or angry to the Headteacher.
- Consider the needs and circumstances of the child involved.

### ***16. Transporting children***

In certain situations, such as when a child has missed a school bus, there are staff who have agreed to transport children and whose insurance is valid. The Headteacher has an overview of school transport and will make such arrangements, with the consent of parents. Staff need to have appropriate insurance and ensure that their behaviour is safe and that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. It is preferable to have one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort but that is not always possible or practicable.

#### **This means that staff should:**

- Plan and agree arrangements with all parties, especially the parent.
- Provide the school with a copy of their valid insurance certificate annually
- Be aware that the safety and welfare of the child is their responsibility.
- Report the nature of the journey, the route and ETA with the Headteacher.
- Be aware that providing a lift is a 'one off' type activity, and should not be or become a regular occurrence.
- Be aware that a 'one off' activity does not require a booster seat to be used.

### ***17. Internet Use***

The school already has a clear policy about access to and the use of the internet (The Acceptable Use Policy) and utilises software that monitors the use of the school's system. Under no circumstances should adults in the school access inappropriate images. Accessing child pornography or indecent images of children and making, storing or disseminating such material is illegal and a criminal offence.

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 such material.

#### **This means staff should:**

- Read the school's Acceptable Use Policy annually.
- Sign in the office to confirm that you have read it (annually).
- Follow its direction.
- Report any issues or incidents regarding the potential misuse of the internet or school's equipment to the Designated Safeguarding Officer/Headteacher.

### ***18. Whistleblowing***

Whistleblowing or confidential reporting is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion.

Each staff member has an individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of the Headteacher, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Chair of Governors, or the relevant external agencies. This is particularly important where the welfare of a child may be at risk.

All staff should be aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and be very familiar with

the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, have read the first chapter of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020 and undertake annual training.

**This means that staff should:**

- Be familiar and follow the Safeguarding Policy and the Whistleblowing Policy.
- Report any behaviour of work colleagues or any other adult that raises a concern to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors.

**19. Extra-curricular activities**

Staff should take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere of a residential setting or an after school/out of school activity.

During school activities that take place off the school site or out of school hours, a more informal atmosphere may be acceptable in terms of dress and language code. However, staff remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour cannot be interpreted as seeking to establish an inappropriate friendship or relationship. Where out of school activities include an overnight stay, careful consideration needs to be given to sleeping arrangements and these need to form part of the Risk Assessment process undertaken as part of the planning of the trip. Pupils, staff and parents need to be informed of the arrangements prior to the start of the trip.

**This means that staff should:**

- Always follow procedures including undertaking a full risk assessment when taking school trips and visits.
- Ensure that behaviour remains professional at all times.

**20. Intimate Care**

All children have a right to be safe and to have privacy and dignity when contact of an intimate nature is required. In our school setting this is likely to be following an accident of some description where clothing is wet or soiled and needs to be removed. Pupils need to be encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their personal care as is practicable at the time. When assistance is required, staff should ensure that another appropriate adult is in the vicinity and is aware of the task being undertaken.

**This means that staff should:**

- Make other staff aware of the situation if the pupil is going to need their help.
- Explain to the child what is happening and what is being done.
- Where a particularly vulnerable pupil needs assistance, consult with a colleague before starting to help.

**21. First Aid and administration of medication**

The school's policy should be adhered to at all times.

**This means that staff should:**

- Read and follow the school policy.

**22. Sharing concerns and recording incidents**

All staff should be aware of the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Everyone should feel able to discuss with a colleague whether it is their line manager,

Safeguarding Officer or Headteacher, any difficulties or problems that may affect their relationships with pupils so that appropriate support can be provided or action can be taken. It may be the case that a staff member or a close member of their family is having to manage a significant change in circumstances within their life outside of work. It is important to share that information so that they can be supported in sustaining positive and productive relationships with pupils. Such information sharing does not need to wait for the next 1:1/staff meeting – it should be dealt with as soon as possible through a specifically convened meeting.

**This means that staff should:**

- Read and follow the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- Discuss with a colleague any wellbeing concerns you have or that you have about a work colleague.

