



Staff Code of Conduct

Last reviewed on: September 2024

Next review due by: September 2025

1. Aims, scope and principles

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect staff, supply teachers, volunteers, students, contractors and governors to follow. By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our school and nursery is an environment where everyone is safe and treated with respect. Many of the principles in this code of conduct are based on the **Teachers' Standards**.

Staff, supply teachers, volunteers, students, contractors and governors have an influential position in the school and will act as role models for children 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, volunteers, students, contractors and governors to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others. 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 children.

2. 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 (KCSIE), September 2024**, we should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

3. General obligations

Staff, supply teachers, volunteers, students, contractors and governors set an example to children. 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

4. Safeguarding

Staff, supply teachers, volunteers, students, contractors and governors have a duty to safeguard children from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect.

During induction staff, supply teachers, volunteers, students, contractors and governors are familiarised by a designated safeguarding lead with our child protection and associated safeguarding policies and

procedures, and the Prevent initiative, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

4.1 Low-level concerns about members of staff

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by staff, supply teachers, volunteers, students, contractors and governors that does not meet the harms threshold (see KCSIE September 2024) 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 – emotionally/age inappropriate
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- Humiliating children, or
- Using inappropriate language

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

Staff, supply teachers, volunteers, students, contractors and governors should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in our safeguarding: child protection policy. We also encourage staff, supply teachers, volunteers, students, contractors and governors to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff, supply teachers, volunteers, students, contractors and governors are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage them to report it.

All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way.

Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed, and the staff member, supply teacher, volunteer, student, contractor or governor supported to correct it, at an early stage.

This creates and embeds a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our core 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 safeguarding: child protection policy. A copy of this policy is available in the safeguarding section of our school website. The low-level concerns form is available on the safeguarding display board in the staffroom (see Appendix A for a copy of this form).

5. Staff-pupil relationships

Staff, supply teachers, volunteers, students, contractors and governors will observe proper boundaries with children 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, supply teachers, volunteers or students and children must spend time on a one-to-one basis, they 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, supply teachers, volunteers, students, contractors and governors should avoid contact with children outside of school hours if possible.

Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff, supply teachers, volunteers, students, contractors and governors and children. This includes social media profiles.

While we are aware many children and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school year, personal gifts from staff, supply teachers, volunteers, students, contractors and governors to individual children are not acceptable (this is not the same as class/individual rewards - see the school's **Attitudes & Behaviour Policy**).

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

6. Communication and social media

Staff, supply teachers, volunteers, students, contractors or governors social media profiles should not be available to children. 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. They should consider using a first and middle name instead and set public profiles to private.

Staff, supply teachers, volunteers, students, contractors or governors should not attempt to contact children or their parents via social media, or any other means outside school, to develop any sort of relationship. They will not make any efforts to find children's or parents' social media profiles. Staff, supply teachers, volunteers, students, contractors or governors will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at the school without their consent.

Staff, supply teachers, volunteers, students, contractors or governors should be aware of the school's **Online Safety policy**.

7. Acceptable use of technology (including mobile phones)

Staff, supply teachers, volunteers, students, contractors or governors will not use technology in 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, supply teachers, volunteers, students, contractors or governors will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school equipment for personal use, during lessons or in front of children. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of children.

We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system. For further details see **Acceptable Use of Technologies (Including Mobile Phones)** policy.

8. Confidentiality

As part of their role, staff, supply teachers, volunteers, students, contractors or governors are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the school, staff, children 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, supply teachers, volunteers, students, contractors or governor'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.

9. Honesty and integrity

Staff, supply teachers, volunteers, students, contractors or governors should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with children, handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities.

Staff, supply teachers, volunteers, students, contractors or governors will not accept bribes. Gifts that are received outside of Christmas and the end of academic year must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register. Staff, supply teachers, volunteers, students, contractors or governors should report this to the School Business Manager.

Staff, supply teachers, volunteers, students, contractors or governors 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

Staff, supply teachers, volunteers, students or governors will inform the school as such as soon as reasonably-possible, if there are any updates or changes in circumstances to the information they have provided to the school. Consideration will then be given to the nature and circumstances of the matter and whether this may have an impact on the on a member of staff's employment or supply teacher, volunteer, student, contractors or governor role within the school.

10. Behaviour Management

All children have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Corporal punishment is unlawful in all schools. Staff must not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a child. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards child is not acceptable in any situation. Deliberately intimidating pupils by shouting aggressively, hectoring or overbearing physical presence is not acceptable in any situation.

'There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to use 'reasonable force' to safeguard children. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a child needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is needed'. The use of force may involve either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of classroom.'

(KCSIE 2024)

The decision on whether or not to use 'reasonable force' to control or restrain a child is down to the professional judgement of the staff concerned within the context of the law and should always depend on individual circumstances.

When using 'reasonable force' in response to risks presented by incidents involving children with SEND, mental health problems or with medical conditions, staff should in considering the risks carefully recognise the additional vulnerability of these groups. They should also consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Staff should be proactive and follow individual behaviour plans for more vulnerable children (these will have been agreed with parents/carers) to reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviour and the need to use 'reasonable force'.

The school follows advice from the Use of Reasonable Force in Schools (2013). The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force can be used:

- remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;
- prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;
- prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground; and
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

Staff cannot use force as a punishment - it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

All staff must follow the school's **Attitude and Behaviour** policy.

11. Physical Contact and Personal Privacy

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff, supply teachers, volunteers, and or students to have physical contact with children, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. When physical contact is made with children this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate given their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity, culture and background. It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child.

Physical contact should never be secretive or casual, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff, supply teacher, volunteer or student believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported as soon as possible to the Headteacher or in their absence the Deputy Head.

Physical contact, which occurs regularly with a child, is likely to raise questions unless the justification for this is part of a formally agreed plan (for example in relation to pupils with SEN or physical disabilities). Where feasible, staff should seek the child's permission before initiating contact. Staff should listen, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and – so far as is possible - use a level of contact which is acceptable to the child for the minimum time necessary.

There may be occasions when a distressed child needs comfort and reassurance. This may include emotionally/age-appropriate physical contact. Staff, supply teachers, volunteers or students should always remain self-aware in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

Where a member of staff, supply teacher, volunteer, student or governor has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance s/he should seek further advice from the designated safeguarding leads.

Some staff, for example, those who teach PE and games, or who provide music tuition will on occasions have to initiate physical contact with children for example: to support a pupil so they can perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument or assist them with an exercise. This should be done with the child's agreement. Contact under these circumstances should be for the minimum time necessary to complete the activity and take place in an open environment. Staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the child.

Children are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision to safeguard child, satisfy health and safety considerations and ensure that bullying or teasing does not occur. This supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the children concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

Staff who work with children who require intimate care duties will have appropriate training and follow procedures as set out in our **Intimate Care Policy**.

12. Dress code

Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner.

Outfits will not be overly revealing, and we ask that tattoos are covered up.

Clothes will not display any offensive or political slogans.

It is expected that staff working in the school building meet the following expectations:

- smart and practical clothing
- for male staff – collared shirts, trousers, smart shorts or suitable shoes
- for female staff – suits, trousers, dresses, or skirts (minimum length at the knee or just above) and suitable shoes

Some clothing is not suitable:

- denim, coloured denim, combat trousers or leggings
- crop tops
- visible underwear
- trainers (see below), flip flops

Additional information:

- For Physical Education lessons only, staff should wear suitable PE Kit, including the Cedars' t-shirt and trainers
- For trips and visits – phase teams should decide on appropriate clothing and whether children should wear school uniform
- For inset days 'smart-casual' wear is permitted

- Lunchtime supervisors should meet the above expectations including wearing the Cedars' t-shirt and jacket, shoes or trainers

13. Educational Visits and School Clubs

Staff, supply teachers, volunteers, students or governors should take particular care when supervising children in the less formal atmosphere of an educational visit, particularly in a residential setting, or after-school activity. Staff, supply teachers, volunteers, students or governors remain in a position of trust and the same standards of conduct apply.

All paperwork and risk assessments must be completed by staff and signed off by the school's Educational Visits Coordinator, Headteacher and governor before the trip of visit commences.

14. Transporting Children

In an emergency situation (where not to provide transport for a child would place them at risk), staff may provide transport. This must be agreed in advance by the Headteacher or in their absence the Deputy Head. The Headteacher/Deputy will make a record of it. Staff should ensure that their behaviour is safe (e.g. where possible at least one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort, booster seats are used, seat belts are fastened). They must ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded. For this purpose only, staff are insured through school insurance.

In an exceptional circumstance where a parent/carer is unable to transport their child to and from school or to provide transport for a child to an outside of school event (e.g. music festival, sports tournament), with permission from the Headteacher or in their absence the Deputy Head, a member of staff (with an additional adult present) may transport a child. The member of staff will require their own Business Insurance for this purpose.

15. Conduct outside of work

Staff, supply teachers, volunteers, students, contractors or governors 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.

16. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually or revised as needed. It will be approved by the Full Governing Body.

Our Governing Board will ensure this code of conduct is implemented effectively and will ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard children and deal with any concerns.

Low Level Concern Form

Please use this form to share any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than a ‘nagging doubt’ – that an adult may have acted in a manner which:

- *is not consistent with Cedars Staff Safer Code of Conduct, and/or*
- *relates to their conduct outside of work which, even if not linked to a particular act or omission, has caused a sense of unease about that adult’s suitability to work with children*

You should provide a concise record – including brief context in which the low-level concern arose, and details which are chronological, and as precise and accurate as possible – of any such concern and relevant incident(s) (and please use a separate sheet if necessary). The record should be signed, timed and dated.

Name of Staff Member:
Role:
Date of Incident:
Time of Incident:
Details of concern

Submitted by (signed):
Submitted Date:
Submitted Time:
Received by:
At: (time)
On: (date)

Action Taken: (specify)

Signed:

Date:

Time:

This record will be held securely in accordance with the school's low-level concerns policy. Please note that low-level concerns will be treated in confidence as far as possible, but Cedars may in certain circumstances be subject to legal reporting requirements or other legal obligations to share information with appropriate persons, including legal claims and formal investigations.