

Staff code of conduct

This code of conduct has been drawn up in order to provide guidance and examples to staff working at Sheringham Nursery School and Children's Centre. It is based on Newham's model policy for schools (2014).

The Governors and the Leadership Team are very proud of the team and its high levels of professionalism and trustworthiness. At all times, we urge staff to use their judgement and consider whether their behaviour will enhance the high standing of the school and centre, and their own individual professional reputation. We expect staff to behave at all times with a high level of courtesy, sensitivity, and to uphold the values of the school and centre. This policy is not an exhaustive list of what should or should not be done. Staff are encouraged to seek guidance or advice as appropriate.

It is important that all adults working with children understand that the nature of their work and the responsibilities related to it, place them in a position of trust. This policy provides clear guidance on appropriate and safe behaviours for all adults working with children in paid or unpaid capacities.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of a colleague, volunteer or student, you must discuss your concerns with the headteacher or person deputising. Staff supervision sessions provide another opportunity for talking about and reflecting on how we are working together and difficult issues which might arise.

Briefer guidance on conduct for students and volunteers is given in the quick induction pack.

A decorative graphic at the bottom left of the page consisting of several overlapping, curved bands in shades of pink and blue.

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Aims

1. To keep children safe by clarifying which behaviours constitute safe practice and which behaviours should be avoided.
2. To help staff work safely and responsibly and monitor their own standards and practice.
3. To support the management of behaviour and give a clear message that unlawful / unsafe behaviour is unacceptable.
4. To support safer recruitment practice.
5. To minimise the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations made against staff.
6. To reduce the misuse / abuse of trust.

Guidance for Safe Working Practice

1. Context

These guidelines apply to all adults working in the Nursery School and Children's Centre, whatever their position, role or responsibilities. They support us to establish the safest possible learning and working environments which safeguard children and reduce the risk of false accusations of improper / unprofessional conduct being made.

2. Unsuitability

The guidance identifies what behaviours are expected of adults working with children. Staff must discuss any uncertainties with the Head Teacher or senior person deputising. Staff should understand what behaviours may call into question their suitability to work with children.

3. Duty of Care

All staff are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority, manage risk, use resources and protect children from discrimination and avoidable harm.

All staff have duty to keep children safe and protect them from sexual, physical and emotional harm. Trusted adults are expected to act in the child's best interests and failure to do so may be regarded as professional neglect.

The nursery will foster a culture of openness and support, ensure that systems are in place for concerns to be raised, ensure effective recording systems are used, ensure that staff are not placed in situations which render them particularly vulnerable, and ensure all staff are aware of expectations, policies and procedures.

The Governing Body should ensure that appropriate safeguarding / child protection policies are in place and reviewed regularly. They will monitor safeguarding procedures.

4. Confidentiality

Staff may have access to confidential information about children and this is governed by The Data Protection Act 1998. Staff must be clear about:

- Treating information in a discreet and confidential manner
- Knowing when and what information can be shared
- Seeking advice from the Head Teacher if they are in any doubt
- Who to report any concerns / allegations to

5. Making a Professional Judgement

Staff should always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate and safe and applied equitably. Where there is no specific guidance staff should inform the Head Teacher of the circumstances any actions which could be mis-interpreted, any misunderstandings, any disagreement about the course of action and records confirming decision, discussion and reasons should be made.

6. Power and Position of Trust

Staff should not use their position to gain access to information for their own or others' benefit. They should not intimidate, bully humiliate, threaten, coerce or undermine children. They should not promote relationships which are of a sexual nature. Staff should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others.

7. Propriety and Behaviour

Staff should:

- be aware that behaviour in their personal lives may impact on their work with children
- follow any codes of conduct deemed appropriate by the nursery
- understand that the behaviour of their family members may raise questions about their suitability to work with children

Staff should not:

- behave in a manner which would lead to a query about their suitability to work with children / act as a role model
- make unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate anyone.

8. Dress and Appearance

Staff are expected to wear clothing which:

- Is appropriate to their role e.g. smart casual, comfortable and practical
- Is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative
- Is absent of any political / contentious slogans
- Covers any personal body art (tattoos/ piercings)
- Does not cover your face or hide your facial expressions, which are vital for communicating with young children.

It is recommended that staff do not wear:

- Long / dangling jewellery
- Open-toed sandals / high heels

Please also refer to guidelines on preparing/serving food.

Protective clothing may be provided for health and safety reasons but staff must make the Head Teacher aware that it is needed.

9. The Use of Personal Living Space

No child should be invited into the home of an adult who works with them, unless the reason has been established with parents / carers and the Headteacher

10. Gifts, Rewards and Favouritism

Occasionally, parents express their gratitude to staff by the giving of small gifts which is acceptable. Any gift with a value in excess of £50 must be declared to the Head Teacher. It is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.

The giving of gifts / rewards to children may only be done as an agreed strategy, recorded and discussed with Senior Management Team. It should not be done by individual staff as this could easily be misinterpreted.

11. Use of Technology

Staff and Parents are aware of the Acceptable Use Policy and E-Safety Policy, and that these are reviewed and updated to reflect new and emerging technologies.

Staff should:

- ensure that personal social networking sites are set at private and children / parents (past and present) are never listed as approved contacts
- never give their personal contact details to parents (including their mobile phone no)
- only use equipment provided by the nursery to communicate with parents
- only make contact with parents for professional reasons
- not use text messaging, internet or web-based communication to a child / parent from a personal account
- only use school computers for personal use in their own time
- not use inappropriate websites or sites which may compromise the security of the school system
- use the staffmail system (LGFL) in accordance with the school policy
- not take photographs of children on their mobile phones or to keep images of children who attend the Nursery or Children's Centre on personal computers, tablets etc. (see18)
- not use their mobile phones when working with the children but with the consent of their line manager (usually the Head Teacher) may keep their mobile phone in the office on silent mode. It is preferable that family members use the school number in case of emergency.

12. Social Contact

Staff should act with care and discretion at all times, and:

- consider the appropriateness of the social contact according to their role at nursery
- always ask for approval for any planned social contact with children/parents with the Head Teacher
- advise the Head Teacher of any social contact, with a child/parents, which may give rise to concern
- report and record any situation, which may place a child at risk or compromise the nursery or their own professional standing
- be aware that sending personal communications e.g. birthday, faith cards, should be recorded/discussed with the Head Teacher
- understand that some communications may be called into question and need to be justified.

If you unexpectedly discover on a home visit that a child or family is know to you or related to you, you should immediately discuss this with the headteacher on your return.

13. Sexual Contact

Staff must NEVER

- have sexual relationships with children, including young people on work experience or other placements;
- have any form of communication with a child which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative
- make sexual remarks to, or about, a child
- discuss their own sexual relationships with/in the presence of children

Staff must

- ensure all relationships with children clearly take place within the boundaries of a respectful professional relationship
- take care that their language does not give rise to comment or speculation

14. Physical Contact

In the nursery there are times when it is entirely appropriate for staff to have physical contact with a child but it is essential to follow some simple guidelines so that such contact cannot be misconstrued. Staff should always:

- treat children with dignity and respect and avoid contact with intimate parts of the body if possible
- understand that children with SEN may require more physical contact to assist in their learning
- be familiar with the nursery guidance and protocols
- be aware of gender, cultural or religious issues requiring consideration before initiating physical contact
- conduct activities where they can be seen by others
- deter children from initiating inappropriate physical contact and report to the Head Teacher and parents

a) Children In Distress

The welfare of the child is paramount and if an embrace helps to pacify then this should be given. We must never neglect children's basic needs for care and comfort.

b) Toileting and Intimate care

Children who are soiled must be cleaned and changed immediately. This may happen to any child and isolated occurrences should be reported to the parent. Where a pattern develops this needs to be recorded and monitored. Where children are on agreed toileting programmes parents should be provided with regular updates.

Staff should use the nappy changing facilities in the hygiene room or Red Room, or the toileting areas in the classrooms/crèche. All of these areas are open and overlooked by other staff and this is an essential safer working practice: glass or sightlines must never be obscured. If you help a child in a toilet cubicle please leave the door open. You must not use the public or adult toilets for changing children or helping them with their toileting.

Children should be encouraged to develop self-care skills as appropriate to their stage of development.

c) Changing clothes

Children who are very wet or messy must be cleaned and clothing changed. Staff should ensure clothing is changed with a degree of privacy, to maintain the dignity of the child, but where staff can be overlooked. Staff should report this to parents.

d) Curriculum Development

Because we encourage children to take risks in all aspects of the curriculum this will mean there are times when physical intervention by staff is needed e.g. high climbing, use of tools, cycling, swimming, to maintain safety.

e) First Aid

All staff must be familiar with the arrangements for First Aid as detailed in the Health & Safety Policy. All staff have a responsibility to provide basic care and hygiene and are trained to deal with minor injuries, and ALL head injuries must be referred to a FIRST AID AT WORK trained staff member.

f) Health Care Plans

If a child has a chronic health condition, any condition that requires medication or specialist care, or an allergy, then a health Care Plans must be drawn up by the SENCO in conjunction with a health professional. These are discussed at regular staff meetings about the Provision Map and all staff need to be aware of the implications these may have for the children in their care. If you are in any doubt about the healthcare needs of a child or have any concerns then you must speak to the SENCO.

g) Administering Medication

Children must only be given medicine by a trained paediatric First Aider, and the medication form must be filled in each time. All doses given must be recorded in the Medicines Log and observation must be made of any adverse reactions. Parents must sign the log on each occasion.

h) Behaviour Management / Physical Intervention

The use of corporal punishment is unacceptable and is unlawful in schools. Staff must not use force as a form of punishment. They must work within the guidelines of the Behaviour Policy. Any behaviour management techniques/interventions must be recorded in the Incident Log and reported to the Head Teacher and parents. All staff should be mindful of factors which may impact on a child's behaviour, e.g. abuse, and take appropriate action where necessary.

15. Staff : Child Ratios in the Nursery

Appropriate staffing levels must be maintained at all times and staff shortages must be reported to the Head Teacher.

For 2 year olds	1 : 4
For 3 & 4 years old	1 : 13 (with teacher)

The large garden should be staffed by no fewer than 3 people.

All staff are always responsible for monitoring wellbeing, safety and behaviour across the room or zone they are in and checking areas like toilets or dens regularly. You should always position yourself so that you can see around you, e.g. if you are working with a small group or just one child.

16. Home Visits

Home visits are arranged prior to entry to nursery to support the transition into nursery and, for some children (e.g. in Red Room, children with particular needs) throughout the year.

Staff must always sign out and inform reception of the location and times of the home visit. The home visiting guidelines must always be followed.

17. Outings and Transport

A risk assessment must be completed by the lead member of staff in advance of the outing and in accordance with nursery guidance. Parental consent must be obtained before taking children off-site. If a family chooses not to give consent to educational visits when the admission form is filled in, this should be reported to the headteacher.

Staff must complete an ongoing risk assessment throughout the outing. Staff must adhere to all nursery guidance and keep the nursery informed of any emergency / change of plan.

If transport is necessary this should be:

- Public transport (preferred option)
- Hired bus/minibus

There may be occasions where a child in nursery requires emergency transport in a car and this must be recorded and reported to the Head Teacher and parents.

18. Photography and Videos

19. Access to Inappropriate Images and Internet Usage

Please refer to the e-safety policy for (18) and (19).

20. Whistle Blowing

Staff should be aware of the Whistle Blowing Policy and the procedures for dealing with allegations against staff which are in line with Newham's LSCB procedures.

They should report any behaviour by colleagues that causes concern regardless of the source.

21. Sharing Concerns and Recording Incidents

Please refer to the Safeguarding Policy. Please remember that you should record and discuss any incident of concern, including "near miss" incidents where a child might have come to harm but fortunately did not.