



Code of Conduct St Mark's CofE Primary School



All members of staff and frequent volunteers will be asked to agree to this code of practice as part of their induction and on a yearly basis. They will be expected to abide by it at all times. It is important that adults conduct themselves in a way which minimises the risk of finding themselves the subject of a child protection or criminal allegation. It is also recognised that some aspects of this policy are more applicable to staff than to governors and frequent volunteers.

1. Purpose

This Code sets out the standards of conduct expected of everyone working at St Mark's, to protect pupils and support staff in exercising good professional judgement. All staff and frequent volunteers must read and agree to this Code as part of induction, and annually thereafter.

Where this Code doesn't cover a specific situation, use your professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils. Breach of this Code may lead to action under the school's disciplinary procedure.

This Code should be read alongside Hampshire County Council's Officers' Code of Conduct.

2. Scope

This Code applies to all staff (teaching and support), volunteers (including governors), casual, temporary and supply staff, and student placements or apprentices — referred to collectively below as "staff".

3. Professional Standards at Work

Staff must act with honesty and integrity, and treat pupils, parents, colleagues and the wider school community with dignity and respect at all times. Staff must uphold the school's ethos, values and policies. Teachers must also uphold the Teachers' Standards, including Part Two on personal and professional conduct.

4. Safeguarding

- Know your individual safeguarding responsibilities: recognise signs of abuse or neglect and know how to raise a concern.
- Know who the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is and follow the Child Protection Policy.
- Staff working directly with children must read Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE); others must read Annex A as a minimum.
- Any sexual behaviour towards a pupil, by a person aged 18 or over in a position of trust, is a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 — regardless of consent, and whether inside or outside work.

5. Appropriate Relationships & Physical Contact

- Work in an open, transparent way that would not lead a reasonable person to question your motives or intentions.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with children or adults. Where contact is essential (e.g. for safety), gain the pupil's permission wherever possible.
- Report all physical contact — including removing a pupil from danger, or accidental contact — to the Head Teacher.
- Understand and follow the school's restraint policy. Never use physical punishment of any kind.
- Do not establish social contact with pupils outside school. This includes personal email/phone contact, sharing personal details, transporting pupils in your own vehicle without prior management approval, and contact via social media or other online platforms.
- Avoid one-to-one situations or favouritism, unless part of an agreed school plan.
- Do not house a pupil overnight (this differs from your own child having a sleepover with a friend who is also a pupil at the school).
- Allow children to change clothes with a level of privacy and respect appropriate to their age, gender, culture and circumstances.

6. Use of IT, Social Media and Photography

- Use only the school's systems for pupil-related email and communication.
- Do not access inappropriate material via the internet.
- Only photograph or record children for approved educational activities, using school equipment. Get the Head Teacher's explicit permission for anything else — see the Safeguarding Policy.
- Take care with your own social media use so as not to compromise your position or the school's reputation. Do not accept 'friend' requests or have unauthorised contact with any pupil, current or former, unless they are a family member.

7. Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information

- Do not disclose confidential information to anyone not entitled to receive it, in line with GDPR 2016 and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- If unsure whether to share information, ask the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher.
- Never use information gained through your work for personal gain.

8. Dress and Appearance

Dress appropriately, decently and safely for a school environment and your role, taking particular care during PE and food technology. The school takes a sensitive approach to cultural and religious dress needs, within the bounds of health and safety.

9. Equal Opportunities

The school is committed to equality in employment and in all dealings with pupils and parents. Everyone has the right to work and learn in a safe environment, free from discrimination, harassment or abuse.

10. Conduct Outside Work

- Avoid any conflict of interest between activities outside school and your responsibilities within it.
- Disclose any misconduct or allegations made against you to the Head Teacher without delay.
- Recognise your influence and avoid activities outside school — including relationships or social media contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults — that might compromise your position.
- Avoid gossip, particularly about school matters. Raise concerns or questions with a senior leader instead.
- Share any concern about sexual harassment or sexual violence, involving pupils or staff, with the Head Teacher.

11. Low-Level Concerns

A low-level concern is any concern — however small, even just a nagging doubt — that an adult working in or for the school has acted in a way inconsistent with this Code, but which doesn't meet the threshold for a LADO referral. Examples include: being overly friendly with children, having favourites, taking photos of children on a personal mobile phone, one-to-one contact in a secluded area, or inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

Report low-level concerns to the leadership team using a Low-Level Concern form (see the school policies for more information).

12. Declaration of Interests

- Declare any relationship that could conflict with the school's interests — e.g. with a Governor, colleague or contractor — to the Head Teacher (or Chair of Governors, for a Headteacher's own declaration).
- Governors serving on other school or education boards must complete the governors' register of interests.
- All staff must complete the school's register of business interests and declare relevant conflicts.
- Disclose in writing any financial interest in a school contract; for staff in Community schools this is a legal requirement.
- Outside work, paid or voluntary, is permitted provided it doesn't conflict with school interests or breach the Working Time Regulations. Notify the Head Teacher of any additional employment.

13. Whistleblowing

Staff are protected under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 when raising genuine concerns about serious misconduct or malpractice at work. All such matters are treated seriously and confidentially — see the school's policies and procedures.

14. Health and Safety

Staff must follow the school's Health and Safety Policy and take reasonable steps to keep themselves and others safe.

15. Gifts, Hospitality and Sponsorship

- Small tokens of appreciation (e.g. an end-of-year thank-you) are fine; regular or high-value gifts, and money, are not.
- Never suggest to pupils that gifts are expected, and never give personal gifts to pupils.
- Do not accept gifts or hospitality that could influence your duties or create an expectation of preferential treatment.
- Only accept hospitality when representing the school, with prior written approval from the Head Teacher.
- Sponsorship follows the same principles — declare any personal or family benefit to the Head Teacher.

16. Use of School Resources and Funds

School resources, property and equipment are for school-related activities only, unless otherwise agreed. All funds must be used responsibly and lawfully.

17. Informing the Head Teacher

Tell the Head Teacher if:

- Any incident or issue might lead to concerns about your conduct, or another adult's, towards a child or adult — including a low-level concern.
- You believe a pupil may be infatuated with you or taking an above-normal interest in you.
- You are concerned about the conduct of another adult (whistleblowing).

If you are the subject of a child-protection allegation yourself, contact your professional association or trade union for support.

Staff Confirmation

Staff, governors and volunteers will be asked to sign an online form annually or on appointment to confirm their agreement in abiding by this code of conduct.

Next review

September 2027