



# **CODE OF CONDUCT & SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY FOR ADULTS WORKING IN SCHOOL**



# *Shepton Mallet Community Infants' School & Nursery*



Revised October 2021

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF, SUPPLY & VOLUNTEERS AT SHEPTON MALLET COMMUNITY INFANTS' SCHOOL & NURSERY**

### **Introduction**

1. The public is entitled to have trust and confidence in the integrity of the Shepton Mallet Community Infants' School & Nursery Community, its staff, governors and volunteers.
2. Your conduct must therefore be of the highest standard. Confidence in the integrity of people working (paid or unpaid) within schools will be shaken by suspicion, however ill founded, that you could be influenced by improper motives.
3. This Code of Conduct has therefore been prepared to achieve these aims:
  - To tell you about some of the statutory, national and local obligations which govern your conduct as an employee/volunteer of Shepton Mallet Community Infants' School & Nursery.
  - To help you on issues of conduct by providing a framework of guidelines.
4. You must read and follow this Code. You will have to sign the attached form and return it to the Headteacher to show that you have read it.
5. If any points are unclear or you are not sure of the appropriate action to take in a situation, whether or not it is covered in this code you must consult the Headteacher.

### **Children's Rights**

6. The aim of this code is also to ensure that children and young people have the right to:
  - respect;
  - information about themselves;
  - be protected from harm;
  - have a say in their life;
  - a good start in life; and
  - be and feel secure.



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## **Scope**

7. This Code of Conduct applies to all people working in Shepton Mallet Community Infants' School & Nursery, whether they be paid, contracted or volunteers.

## **General Obligations**

8. You must act with utmost good faith with regard to the business of Shepton Mallet Community Infants' School & Nursery, and must do all in your power to promote the school's interests and not do anything which may adversely affect The School's reputation.

## **Statutory, National and Local Obligations**

9. Teaching staff must adhere to the terms and conditions outlined in The School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document, a copy of which can be found in the school office.
10. Sections 35 and 36 of the Education Act 2002 applies to the staffing aspects in relation to schools.
11. Other relevant documents include:
  - staff handbook
  - disciplinary procedureThe Headteacher is responsible for telling you about these. If you are not certain about a course of action you must ask.

## **Public Duty and Private Interest**

12. Your off-duty hours are your own personal concern. It is important, however, that you do not put yourself in a position where your duty to Shepton Mallet Community Infants' School & Nursery and your private interests conflict.
13. You are expected to abide by the policies of Shepton Mallet Community Infants' School & Nursery. Your own personal or political opinions must not interfere with the provisions of balanced professional advice or your duty to carry out those policies.

## **Confidentiality and Information Disclosure**

14. You must conform with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the loss, destruction, inaccuracy or disclosure of information does not occur as a result of your actions. This includes information relating to school business and pupil data.
15. You must not disclose personal or financial information about any other member of staff to any unauthorised person, external organisation or agency without the express consent of the individual concerned or that of your Headteacher.



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16. You must not use information obtained in the course of your duties to the detriment of Shepton Mallet Community Infants' School & Nursery or for personal gain or benefit; nor should you impart this information to others who might use it in such a way.
17. Confidential information belonging to Shepton Mallet Community Infants' School & Nursery must not be disclosed to any person not authorised to receive it.

## **Other employment**

18. You are not allowed to set up a business or accept employment with a business engaged in work which is in direct competition with Shepton Mallet Community Infants' School & Nursery.
19. If you do have another job it must not conflict with Shepton Mallet Community Infants' School & Nursery's interest or bring the School into disrepute.
20. If you have another job with another organisation you must not act as a messenger, go between or arbitrator between that organisation and Shepton Mallet Community Infants' School & Nursery. Formal channels of communication must be maintained.
21. Your working commitments to another employer must not interfere with your work for Shepton Mallet Community Infants' School & Nursery; you must be able to work for Shepton Mallet Community Infants' School & Nursery at the contracted/arranged times rested and refreshed.

## **Use of School Time and Facilities**

22. Whilst on duty you should be working. The school's property and facilities (e.g. stationery, display screen equipment, photocopiers, and car park) are available to you for school related business although permission for their private use may be granted.
23. You may request to use the school telephone to make essential private calls.
24. You must account for all money and property for which you are given responsibility in the course of your work.

## **Publication of Books/Articles**

25. If you want to publish books, articles, letters, dissertations etc which you have written in connection with your duties and in which you describe yourself as holding an appointment with Shepton Mallet Community Infants' School & Nursery, you must first consult your Headteacher.



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## **General**

26. In accordance with Shepton Mallet Community Infants' School & Nursery's Equal Opportunities Policy you must ensure that you do not discriminate in recruitment and employment practices nor in the delivery of services. You must also ensure that in your dealings with the local community, all members of the public are treated with respect and fairness.
27. You must also comply with the requirements of any professional body of which you are a member e.g. GTC, CIPD, ATT, CIPFA.
28. Serious misconduct and/or criminal offences committed during or outside of working hours which bring you or Shepton Mallet Community Infants' School & Nursery into disrepute will be the subject of disciplinary action which could lead to dismissal.

## **Financial Inducements, Gifts, Hospitality and Sponsorship**

29. You must not seek or receive preferential rates by virtue of your dealings on behalf of The School. Offers of hospitality, including visits to exhibitions, business meals, social functions, are acceptable where you represent Shepton Mallet Community Infants' School & Nursery as part of your official duties. These should be authorised in advance by your Headteacher.
30. Where an external organisation wishes to sponsor or is sought to sponsor a school activity, the above rule 29 applies. Particular care must be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors.

## **Disciplinary Action**

31. Any breach of this Code of Conduct will be the subject of disciplinary action which could result in dismissal.

## **Further Information**

32. This Code of Conduct cannot cover every eventuality. Its purpose is to alert you to some of the matters about which queries are received. It does not replace the general requirements of the law, common sense and good conduct.
33. If you are uncertain about what to do in a particular situation or you require further information or guidance on the appropriate course of action to take in any situation you must contact your Headteacher for advice before you taken any action.
34. Please sign the slip below and forward it to the Headteacher.

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## **Confidentiality**

Shepton Mallet Community Infants' School & Nursery is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all the children in our school. This policy statement acknowledges that staff and other adults in the school community working in school, will sometimes be party to or have knowledge of confidential information concerning children.

### **To safeguard the children all staff will respect confidentiality:**

- Staff and other members of the community working regularly within a classroom will not discuss children with people other than that child's parent or carer
- Parents may only have access to their own child's files or records
- Concerns relating to the safety and welfare of individuals will remain confidential but must be passed on to the appropriate member of staff for action
- Recording of information about or from a child must be dated and signed.
- Staff need to respond to fact: allegations and hearsay must be supported by clear evidence before further action is taken.
  - Information on individuals known to staff will not be passed on to any other agency or professional without the consent of the child's parents or if relevant the Headteacher
- If a parent approaches you with a query or concern about their child or any other children they should be referred to the class teacher in the first instance
- Issues relating to pay and conditions of staff will remain confidential
- Any adult working with children will be made aware of this policy and required to respect it

### **DISCLOSURES FROM CHILDREN LEADING TO YOU BEING WORRIED A CHILD IS BEING ABUSED OR NEGLECTED.**

A disclosure will be a statement, comment or conversation from a child that makes you feel worried for that child's safety. It is vitally important that any such comment is recorded and dealt with following agreed procedures. These are:

1. Listen carefully and reassure the child.
2. Try not to show any shock you might feel
3. Take what they say seriously
4. Be clear with the child about what you are going to do.



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The child is likely to tell you in *secret* and ask that *you promise not to tell anyone*. You **MUST** pass the information on and you **NEED** to make it clear to the child that you will do this.

5. Clarify what the child is saying without contaminating the evidence.

If the child says 'my thingy is sore' clarify with open questions

What do you mean by thingy?

Why do you think it is sore?

Can you tell me what might have made it sore?

6. RECORD EXACTLY what the child said

RECORD EXACTLY what questions you used and the child's response

Name/date of birth/ age of child

Your name and position

Time and date of discussion

Pass the information onto named person or Headteacher

## Safeguarding and Child Protection

At Shepton Mallet Community Infants' School & Nursery we create an environment where children are safe from abuse and in which any suspicion of abuse is promptly and appropriately responded to.

With the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount, all staff members at Shepton Mallet Community Infants' School & Nursery are committed to developing and working in partnership with the family and other professionals in the interest of the child.

It is our policy to ensure:

1. The School has an appointed member of staff and a governor jointly responsible for Child Protection issues.  
The School's appointed teacher is **Honorina Thompson**.
2. Government statutory guidance LA procedures and key recommendations from Somerset Safeguarding Children Board are securely in place for all school practices including appointments.
3. Regular training is undertaken by the appointed person and Head Teacher to keep abreast of current legislation and advice.
4. All staff receive training and development following in-service courses.
5. Any suspected or alleged abuse or neglect must be dealt with following school procedures and guidelines. This must be reported to the appropriate named member of staff or Headteacher immediately.
6. Information about the key indicators for physical, mental, emotional and sexual abuse is available to staff. You must ask the appointed person if you need this information.
7. Volunteer helpers in the classroom receive training and induction annually including a summary of the schools procedures for child protection issues.
8. We maintain a code of practice amongst staff and parent volunteers. All are advised not to be alone or isolated with one child for any length of time.
9. The layout of the classrooms allows for constant supervision of pupils. Parents working with children are supervised at all times.

10. Procedures exist for informal observations and communication between staff for noting and passing on change to children's attitude and behaviour that may be the result of abuse. All concerns must be passed onto the class teacher.
11. Children do not leave school with an unknown adult unless this has been requested in writing by the parent.
12. Where necessary, names and photographs of parents or adults who are denied access to their children are circulated and posted in staff rooms.

## **DBS CLEARANCE AND CHECKS**

Following the DFE guidance on Safeguarding Children and the topical question of Criminal Records Bureau checks for adults working in school the Governing Body (GB) annually review the guidelines to which we work.

From September 2008 the Continuous Monitoring, Vetting and Barring Scheme was introduced. This process allows the authority to update employers' records as soon as an offence is recorded for all those registered on the CRB database and the Somerset County Council database. Current DBS Clearance through Somerset as the Registered Body is valid for a period of 3 years.

Since 2012 DBS checks are standard procedure prior to the appointment of:

- Teaching staff
- Non-teaching staff
- Governors
- Para-professionals working with children in school
- Trainees, including NVQ, GTP, CLA

In addition to this, since April 2007, the GB requires clearance from:

- Adult voluntary helpers if involved with PE, swimming and residential trips and clubs
- Parents and other helpers listening to reading or helping in the school outside the above categories on a frequent or regular basis

And

- Appropriate clearance is requested from all adults involved from outside sources such as theatre groups, visiting specialists (dance/music) when contracted to work in school.
- Internal checks and procedures are used to monitor occasional helpers for events such as 'Arts Day'. In the interests of the children's safety and wellbeing, these individuals are NEVER alone and always supervised by a member of staff when working with a child or group of children.

The DFE recommends that anyone working within the school is checked and the above policy is in line with this recommendation. It is important to bear in mind the following points:

- A DBS check is only valid at the time the check is made.



- Because an adult (whether checked or not) is seen regularly in school it does not automatically make them a 'safe' person.
- We must reiterate to parents that they should exercise a duty of care to their children when leaving them with any adult outside the school setting.

## **Social Networking**

The school is aware and acknowledges that increasing numbers of adults and children are using social networking sites. The widespread availability and use of social networking application bring opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with audiences in new ways. It is important that we are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with our reputation.

This policy and associated guidance is to protect staff and advise school leadership on how to deal with potential inappropriate use of social networking sites.

For example, our use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The policy requirements in this document aim to provide this balance to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice.

There are four key areas:

1. **The use of social networking sites by pupils within school**
2. **Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity**
3. **Comments posted by parents/carers**
4. **Dealing with incidents of online bullying**

### **1. The use of social networking sites by pupils within school**

The school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) outlines the rules for using IT in school and these rules therefore apply to use of social networking sites. Such sites should not be used/accessed in school unless under the direction of a teacher and for a purpose clearly apparent from the learning objective of the relevant learning experience. If social media sites are used then staff should carry out a risk assessment to determine which tools are appropriate. Social Media sites to be used in school include blogging sites (Primary blogger) and Twitter.

In terms of private use of social networking sites by a child it is generally understood that children under the age of 13 are not permitted to be registered, including Facebook and Instagram to name two.

### **2. Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity**

It is possible that a high proportion of staff will have their own social networking site accounts. It is important for them to protect their professional reputation by ensuring that they use their personal accounts in an appropriate manner.

Guidelines issued to staff:

- Staff must **never** add pupils as 'friends' into their personal accounts (including past pupils under the age of 16).

- Staff are **strongly advised** not to add parents as 'friends' into their personal accounts.
- Staff **must not** post comments about the school, pupils, parents or colleagues including members of the Governing Body.
- Staff must not use social networking sites within lesson times (for personal use).
- Staff should only use social networking in a way that does not conflict with the current National Teacher's Standards.
- Staff should review and adjust their privacy settings to give them the appropriate level of privacy and confidentiality.
- Staff should read and comply with 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People'.
- Inappropriate use by staff should be referred to the Headteacher in the first instance and may lead to disciplinary action.

### **3. Comments posted by parents/carers**

Parents and carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking. Methods of school communication include Class Dojo, the prospectus, the website, newsletters, letters and verbal discussion. School policies and documents provide further information regarding appropriate channels of communication and means of resolving differences of opinion. Effective communication following principles of mutual respect is the best means of ensuring the best learning experiences for the child.

Parents must not post pictures of pupils, other than their own children, on social networking sites where these photographs have been taken at a school event.

Parents should make complaints through official school channels rather than posting them on social networking sites.

Parents should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social networking sites about any member of the school community.

### **4. Dealing with incidents of online bullying/inappropriate use of social networking sites**

In the case of inappropriate use of social networking by parents, the Governing Body will contact the parent asking them to remove such comments and seek redress through the appropriate channels such as the Complaints Policy and will send a letter.

The Governing Body understands that, "There are circumstances in which police involvement is appropriate. These include where postings have a racist element or where violence is threatened or encouraged." Furthermore, "Laws of defamation and privacy still apply to the web and it is unlawful for statements to be written...which:

- expose (an individual) to hatred, ridicule or contempt
- cause (an individual) to be shunned or avoided
- lower (an individual's) standing in the estimation of right-thinking members of society or
- disparage (an individual in their) business, trade, office or profession." (National Association of Headteachers)

**To be reviewed October 2022**



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## **Code of Conduct 2021**

I confirm that I have read and understood the Code of Conduct for Shepton Mallet Community Infants' School & Nursery and agree to abide by its contents.

Print Name:

Signed:

Date:

Capacity Involved with The School:

Please return this slip to your Headteacher as soon as possible.