Spurcroft Primary School Code of Conduct for all staff and volunteers 2025-2026

This document must be read in conjunction with the following policies: Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Whistle Blowing, Mobile Devices and Acceptable Use.

1. Purpose

1.1. The conduct, behaviour and practice of all school staff will have an influence on the development of children and young people. This code provides clear guidance on what is acceptable conduct and what is not for staff working at the school.

1.2. The Code of Conduct does not cover every eventuality and any concerns or questions should be discussed with a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

2. Applicability

2.1. This procedure applies to all staff working in the school and volunteers helping in school.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1. The head teacher and senior leadership team are responsible for ensuring all staff in the school are made aware of, and adhere to, the Code of Conduct and for providing support and encouragement to ensure staff maintain the highest standards of integrity, honesty, accountability and openness.

3.2. Staff and volunteers are responsible for reading and adhering to the Code of Conduct and for reflecting on their own conduct and practice and ensuring they meet the standards required of them.

3.3. Breaches of the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken. Serious breaches may result in dismissal from the school's employment.

Standards

The following standards apply to all adults in school.

4. General Conduct

4.1. All employees and volunteers are expected to apply the school values in their conduct at work, demonstrating honesty and integrity at all times. In general terms, the school expects that the conduct of its employees is such that no justifiable complaint can be made by parents, pupils, colleagues, governors, other bodies or agencies or members of the community in relation to conduct and behaviour of adults in school. Any complaints about inappropriate conduct will be dealt with fairly and reasonably, using the agreed procedures.

4.2. All adults are expected to use their professional expertise and judgement to put the wellbeing, development and progress of pupils first, within the context of their role.

4.3 Whilst we provide a family feel to the school, ensuring children feel nurtured, the School's Safe Touch Policy must be followed. Staff and volunteers should remember that there should be as little as possible physical contact between adults and children.

4.4. All individuals associated with the school have the right to be treated with respect and dignity. All employees and volunteers are therefore expected to treat other members of the school community with dignity and respect. Rudeness or sarcasm are not acceptable. Any negative comments made about a member of staff or volunteer must be made solely to an appropriate member of the leadership team. Bad language or swearing is not allowed on the school site, nor should it be used off-site, where children could hear it.

4.5. Adults in school should not use their position within the school for any purpose other than school business.

4.6. The school has an agreed procedure for the management of staff discipline. All employees should make themselves aware of this procedure and the disciplinary rules which apply in the school.

4.7. All employees are expected to obey the law relating to their work and general conduct. Where an employee breaks the law outside of working time and the offence is one that could damage public confidence or has a direct effect on work, the employee may be subject to the disciplinary procedure.

4.8. Adults are required to adhere to all health and safety policies and practices (see Working Safely – section 18).

4.9. The school operates a no smoking policy and smoking and vaping are not allowed within the school or school grounds. We also request that staff and volunteers so do not smoke or vape ear the school gates.

4.10 Alcohol is not permitted on the school site, unless approved for an event by the Headteacher in advance. Staff and volunteers should refrain from being under the influence of or suffering the ill effects of alcohol when at work and if found to be otherwise, will be required to leave the school site.

4.11. Where a staff member or volunteer is taking prescribed drugs, they should inform their line manager where this may affect behaviour and/or performance.

4.12. It is good practice for adults in school to inform their line manager if they are suffering from a medical condition, or have personal circumstances, that may adversely affect performance at school.

4.13. We value the uniqueness that adults in school bring to the school community but wish our children to develop their own thinking on the world within which they live, through rich and broad learning experiences. The personal religious or other beliefs of staff and volunteers should not be used to indoctrinate others. Staff must show impartiality to contentious or political issues. Bias and stereotyping relating to the characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, gender & sexual orientation) is unacceptable.

4.14 Staff and volunteers should be aware of the potential dangers to both children themselves as an employee or volunteer in using social media. They need to ensure that their own public profiles remain professional. Staff and volunteers should never contact a child using social media or networking sites, or accept a child's request to be a friend or follower. Any communication to children by staff using technology, should be through the school messaging system or a West Berks email account

14.15 Using mobile phones for personal use, in a pupil free area, during break times (such as in the staff room) is acceptable. Using your phone in front of children, or for personal use during work time is not acceptable. If a mobile phone is needed for an acceptable reason, this should be discussed with the Headteacher.

All staff and volunteers must adhere to the school's Acceptable Use policy, Behaviour and Ant-Bullying Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy and Safe Touch Policy.

5. Gifts and hospitality

5.1. Adults in the school may from time to time be offered gifts or hospitality, for example from students or parents. The following advice should guide decisions on receipt of such gifts/hospitality:

5.1.1. Small individual thank-you gifts may be accepted. Gifts resulting from collections are also acceptable (e.g. weddings, baby showers & leaving presents).

5.1.2. Always refuse a gift/offer of hospitality if you suspect the giver is trying to gain or has an ulterior motive. Always be sensitive to the possibility the giver may think that even small gift/offer hospitality may elicit preferential treatment.

5.1.3. Never accept a gift/offer of hospitality from someone who is, or may be in the foreseeable future, tendering for any contract with the school, seeking employment with the school, or in any form of dispute with the school.

5.1.4. Occasional working lunches with providers or partners are generally acceptable provided they are not to an unreasonably level or cost and the provider or partner is not seeking to achieve an advantage.

5.1.5. Invitations to corporate hospitality events must be judged on their merit. It may be acceptable, for example, to attend cultural or sporting events or other public performances as a representative of the school.
Consider the number of these events that are attended and what the public perception may be if you were to attend, bearing in mind point 5.1.2.

5.1.6. Invitations to speak at corporate events, seminars or gatherings which have been made to you in your school capacity must be approved by your line manager/head teacher before acceptance.

5.1.7. If you are in any doubt about the acceptability of a gift/offer of hospitality, consult your line manager/head teacher.

6. Financial and personal interests

6.1. School staff and volunteers must at all times be seen to be acting fairly and impartially and personal needs or interests, or those of family or friends, must not influence actions or decisions.

6.2. Where an employee or volunteer has a friend, associate or relative who is providing goods or services to the school, of a kind that the employee deals with directly or monitors in the course of

their work, this should be disclosed. Disclosures must be made in writing to the headteacher, who will advise any other school staff who may need to know.

6.3. Off-duty hours are generally the personal concern of the employee or volunteer, though employees and volunteers must not engage in any outside activity that may conflict with the interests of the school or could damage the confidence of the community in the school or the role of the employee or volunteer.

6.4. Employees and volunteers should register with the head teacher any membership of an organisation not open to the public that has secrecy about rules, membership and/or conduct (e.g. Freemasons).

7. Other employment

7.1. Members of the school management team must not engage in any other business or take up any additional appointment without the written consent of the head teacher. Consent will not be unreasonably withheld.

7.2. Volunteers and other employees may have other employment without consent, providing the employment does not conflict with the interests of the school, or in any way weaken the confidence of the community in the individual or school.

7.3. Where an employee undertakes additional employment they must notify their line manager of the number of hours they is working per week, to comply with the requirements of the Working Time Regulations.

8. Confidentiality

8.1. Confidential information must not be disclosed to anyone who does not have a right to know. Paper-based and electronic information must be stored securely and confidentially with access limited to those who have a right to view it.

8.2. Employees and volunteers must not disclose any information that is confidential or that, if it were made public, may lead to a breakdown in the trust and confidence the school is required to provide to the community. When it is necessary to discuss confidential information, the discussions must take place in private.

8.3. Employees and volunteers must not disclose any information about the school/students to the press or other media unless expressly authorised to do so by the head teacher.

8.4. Employees and volunteers must not disclose information about the school or its pupils on social networking sites or such similar sites. Employees should consider the information that they include on these sites and how the information may impact on the school and its reputation.

8.5. Employees should not put confidential or sensitive information on memory sticks which have not been encrypted to ensure confidential information can’t be accessed should the stick be lost or misplaced.

9. Recruitment and Appointment

9.1. Employees involved in recruitment and appointment must apply the school’s recruitment and selection processes and ensure fairness and equality is applied at all times.

9.2. Where an employee is involved in recruitment or making an appointment, they must advise their line manager or head teacher where they are closely associated with any of the candidates (e.g. close friend, relative).

9.3. Employees applying for a post or other work-related opportunity within the school (e.g. promotion, secondment) must not seek the help or influence of school governors.

10. Dress and Presentation

10.1. The school expects its employees and volunteers to dress in a formal manner that creates a good and professional impression. Clothes should be modest, appropriate to the job, and meet health and safety requirements. See Appendix 1 for more detail.

10.2. Personal protective equipment must be worn where required.

11. Safeguarding

11.1. All employees and volunteers are responsible for following and adhering to the school's child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures.

11.2. All employees and volunteers are expected to use the appropriate channels, as set out in the Safeguarding Policy, to raise concerns about the practice of others if there is suspicion that their conduct has a negative impact on learning or causes harm to pupils.

11.3. Employees must inform the headteacher as soon as reasonably practicable if they are working with Children's Services in their own family, if they are subject to a criminal investigation or have received a conviction, caution or have been banned from working with children.

12. Relationships with parents and carers

12.1. Employees and volunteers should strive to establish productive relationships with parents and carers.

12.2. Staff are expected to provide parents and carers with accessible and accurate information about their child's progress, involving parents and carers in important decisions about their child's education, considering parents and carer's views and perspectives and following the school policies on communication and involvement with parents and carers.

12.3. It is expected that volunteers will not pass information onto parents and carers.

12.4. Where an interaction with a parent or carer becomes aggressive or offensive, the interaction should be ended politely and firmly, with assistance summoned where required. Risk assessments should be undertaken prior to any contact with parents/carers where aggression or violence is anticipated.

13. Relationships with line manager

13.1. Volunteers in school should have a names member of staff under whose direction they work. In terms of this policy, that person is their 'line manager'.

13.2 Employees/volunteers and line managers should strive to maintain co-operative and effective working relationships. Relationships should be courteous, reasonable and fair at all times.

13.3. Employees/volunteers should carry out all reasonable and lawful instructions given by the line manager to the best of their ability.

13.4. Line managers should exercise any leadership and management responsibilities in a respectful, inclusive and fair way, and in accordance with school policies, contractual obligations and national standards.

13.5. Line managers should provide honest, accurate and justifiable comments when providing feedback, and encourage staff/volunteers to undertake training and development opportunities, within the context of the school needs and budget.

13.6. Line managers must ensure that staff and volunteers are aware of, and have access to, the relevant policies and procedures that affect their work.

14. Working with School Governors

14.1. When working with governors or dealing with enquiries from governors, all employees and volunteers are expected to be courteous and efficient. Employees should expect similar levels of courtesy from governors.

14.2. Employees should use the appropriate school procedure (e.g. Grievance procedure) to deal with any work-related personal issues and should not engage governors in such issues unless it is in accordance with a relevant procedure.

14.3. Similarly, employees should not use governors to by-pass formal school procedures in any way, for example to influence the outcome of a disciplinary matter. This does not affect the rights of trade union representatives to take up matters on behalf of their members through appropriate channels, or for governors to be formally involved in Council procedures where appropriate – for example, acting as a member of a governor disciplinary appeal panel.

14.4. Employees and volunteers must not try to influence governors prior to any appointment/decision. This excludes providing views to governors as part of an information-gathering or consultation exercise.

15. Working as part of a whole-school team

15.1. Employees and volunteers should endeavour to develop productive and supportive relationships with all school colleagues and to participate in whole-school development and improvement activities.

15.2. Employees and volunteers should uphold all school policies and procedures and raise any concerns about the life or running of the school in an appropriate and responsible way.

15.3. Employees and volunteers should recognise the important role of the school in the life of the community and take responsibility for upholding its reputation and building trust and confidence in it.

15.4. Employees and volunteers should cooperate with other professionals in the children's workforce, establishing effective and productive relationships with other professional colleagues.

15.5. Employees and volunteers should at all times ensure they act within their sphere of their own competence and responsibilities and seek clarification where this is needed.

16. Respect for diversity and promoting equality

16.1. All employees and volunteers must act appropriately towards all children and young people, parents, carers and colleagues, whatever their socio-economic background , age, gender, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, disability, race, religion or belief.

16.2. Employees and volunteers must take responsibility for understanding and complying with school policies relating to equality of opportunity, inclusion, access and bullying.

16.3. Employees and volunteers should help to create a fair and inclusive school environment by taking steps to improve the wellbeing, development and progress of those with special needs, or whose circumstances place them at risk of exclusion or underachievement.

16.4. Employees and volunteers should strive to address discrimination, bullying or stereotyping, or seek assistance from their line manager or headteacher where issues are identified.

17. Working with money

17.1. Employees and volunteers receiving or responsible for school money need to take particular care and must adhere to the appropriate financial procedures (FMSIS) at all times.

17.2. Employees submitting claims for reimbursement of legitimate expenditure must ensure the correct procedures are followed, the details of the claim are within set limits and can be substantiated (e.g. with receipts).

18. Using the school's resources and premises

18.1. School equipment should not be used for excessive personal by staff and volunteers use unless authorised by the headteacher. This includes photocopy facilities, stationery, telephones, resources and premises. Staff and volunteers can ask for permission from the headteacher to borrow resources for appropriate use.

18.2. School IT systems, particularly email and internet, should only be used for professional purposes. Passwords should be kept confidential at all times and not disclosed to any other individual.

19. Working Safely

19.1. Both the school and its employees and volunteers are responsible for ensuring that a healthy and safe working environment is maintained.

19.2. Actions or omissions of any individual that place others in danger may lead to disciplinary action.

19.3. Employees and volunteers are expected to:

- Adhere to the school's health and safety policy and rules.
- Advise the head teacher/line manager/appropriate person of any unsafe situations or practices
- Take appropriate steps to ensure the health and safety of any users of the school premises

- Wear any safety clothing/equipment and ensure all pupils are wearing and use appropriate equipment

- Report any near misses and serious accidents to the school office, who will pass them onto the headteacher

- Report incidents of abusive/aggressive or bullying/threatening behaviour that is experienced or witnessed to the school office, who will pass them onto the headteacher

- Comply with hygiene requirements.

20. Protecting the School and its standards

20.1. Where an employee or volunteer has reason to suspect that colleagues, senior managers or governors are acting improperly, the employee should report these suspicions to the headteacher (or the chair of governors if the suspicions concern the head teacher). The employee will be assured the concerns, when made in good faith, will be heard without fear of victimisation, discrimination or disadvantage in accordance with the confidential reporting code.

20.2. Improper conduct can cover a wide range, including financial irregularity, abuse of pupils, abuse of power or position, neglect of duty, discrimination, bullying or harassment in accordance with the Whistleblowing Procedure.

Appendix 1 School Dress Code

Staff and volunteers are role models for the children and as such should wear smart and appropriate clothing in accordance with our professional roles.

The following guidelines should be adhered to:

- Dresses, skirts and long tailored shorts should be no shorter than just above the knee.
- Clothing related to religious observance will be allowed in accordance with Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- ID badges must be worn at all times with the official 'staff' 'governor' or 'volunteer' lanyard.
- When teaching PE or Outdoor Learning, staff may come to school dressed in appropriate clothing for the activity. Jogging bottoms or track suits should be worn for PE, tight trousers/short/yoga pants are not appropriate.
- Foot ware should be suitable for the activities undertaken.
    - Smart trainers can be worn for class-based activities.
    - Flip-flops or backless sandals are not suitable
- Denim of any description should not be worn, unless for outdoor learning activities. This includes jeggings and cotton trousers that look like denim and denim jackets.
- Staff and volunteers should not wear:
    - short skirts or dresses
    - spaghetti strap tops or dresses
    - clothing revealing midriff or plunging/revealing necklines;
    - clothing with inappropriate wording on
    - excessive make-up
    - extreme hairstyles
- The school respects personal choice in self-expression, including staff and volunteers having tattoos, piercings or wearing jewellery. However, any jewellery or visible body art must be appropriate for a school setting.

If it is considered that these guidelines are not being fully followed, this will be addressed through reminders, or conversations with volunteers or staff, under the direction of the Headteacher.

Appendix 2 – Teachers' Standards

Teachers are expected to comply with the standards of personal and professional conduct set out in the Teachers' Standards.

- A teacher is expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct throughout a teacher's career.

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:
    - treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
    - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
    - showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
    - not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
    - ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.

- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.

- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

Appendix 3 – DISCIPLINARY RULES

The following are examples of behaviour which the School finds unacceptable. The list is not exhaustive and it is acknowledged that it will be necessary to exercise judgement in all cases and to be fair and reasonable in all the circumstances.

1. Any form of physical/verbal violence towards pupils.

2. Physical violence, actual or threatened towards other staff or visitors to the School.

3. Sexual offences, sexual insults or sexual discrimination against pupils, other staff or visitors to the School.

4. Racial offences, racial insults or racial discrimination against pupils, other staff or visitors to the School.

5. Theft of School monies or property and of monies or property of colleagues or visitors to the School. Removal from School premises of property which is not normally taken away without the express authority of the Principal or of the owner of the property may be regarded as gross misconduct.

6. Deliberate falsification of documents such as time sheets, bonus sheets, subsistence and expense claims for the purpose of gain.

7. Acceptance of bribes or other corrupt financial practices.

8. Wilful damage of School property or of property belonging to other staff or visitors to the School.

9. Wilful disregard of safety rules or policies affecting the safety of pupils, other staff or visitors to the School.

10. Any wilful act which could result in actionable negligence for compensation against the School.

11. Refusal to comply with reasonable instructions given by staff with a supervisory responsibility.

12. Gross neglect of duties and responsibilities.

13. Unauthorised absence from work.

14. Being untruthful and/or engaging in deception in matters of importance within the School community.

15. Deliberate breaches of confidentiality particularly on sensitive matters.

16. Being incapable by reason of alcohol or drugs (not prescribed for a health problem) from fulfilling duties and responsibilities of employment.

17. Conduct which substantially brings the name of the School into disrepute or which seriously undermines confidence in the employee.

The following are examples of behaviour which could lead to formal disciplinary warnings.

1. Unsatisfactory timekeeping without permission.

2. Neglect of safety rules and procedures. Some offences of wilful neglect may be regarded as gross misconduct.

3. Breaches of confidentiality. Deliberate breaches on sensitive matters maybe regarded as gross misconduct.

4. Failure to comply with reasonable work related requirements or lack of care in fulfilling the duties of the post.

5. Behaviour towards other employees, pupils, and visitors which gives justifiable offence. Certain behaviour giving rise to offence may be regarded as gross misconduct.

6. Acting in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as rude, impolite, contemptuous or lacking appropriate professional demeanour. In certain circumstances such behaviour may be regarded as gross misconduct.

7. The use of illegal drugs or substances.

8. Certain criminal behaviour, such as prosecution for drink driving.

9. Conduct which it is considered adversely affects either the reputation of the School or affects confidence in the employee. Certain conduct may be regarded as gross misconduct.