



Southgate School

Staff Behaviour Policy

(Code of Conduct)

2019

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Introduction

This policy sets out clear guidance on the standards of behaviour expected from all staff at Southgate School. The principles underlying the guidance aim to encourage staff to achieve the highest possible standards of conduct and minimise the risk of inappropriate conduct occurring.

School staff are in a unique position of trust and influence as role models for pupils. Therefore, staff must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all pupils within the school.

Staff also have an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, both inside and outside working hours and work setting.

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers in the school regardless of their position, role or responsibility. References to 'staff' throughout the policy relate to all of the following groups:

- All members of staff including teaching and support staff
- Volunteers, including governors
- Casual workers
- Temporary and supply staff, either from agencies or engaged directly
- Student placements, including those undertaking initial teacher training and apprentices.

Southgate School requires that all staff have read and agree to comply with this policy.

Breach or failure to observe this policy will result in action being taken under the school disciplinary procedures including, but not limited to, dismissal.

This code of conduct is not an exhaustive list of acceptable and unacceptable standards of behaviour. In situations where guidance does not exist in this policy, staff are expected to exercise their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the pupils and the school.

Adults should always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, and safe and applied equitably.

Professional Behaviour and Conduct

Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions

Staff are expected to demonstrate the highest possible standards of personal and professional conduct and behaviour and consistently act with honesty and integrity. Southgate School expects staff to treat each other, pupils, parents/ carers and the wider community with dignity and respect at all times.

Staff must act in accordance with their duty of care to pupils and ensure that the safety and welfare of pupils are accorded the highest priority.

Staff should work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way

Staff should show fairness in their treatment of children and avoid behaviours such as

embarrassing or humiliating pupils, making jokes at the expense of pupils, discriminating against or favouring pupils and sarcasm.

Staff must have regard for the ethos and values of the school and must not do or say anything which may bring the school or governing body into disrepute.

Care should be taken by staff to avoid any conflict of interest between activities undertaken outside school and responsibilities within school.

Staff should discuss and take advice promptly from a senior leader if they have acted in a way which may give rise to concern.

Staff should act in accordance with the school's policies and procedures at all times.

Teaching staff will be expected to evidence meeting all aspects of the DFE's Teachers' Professional Standards.

Support staff will be expected to evidence meeting all aspects of the DFE's professional standards for teaching assistants.

Standards of Behaviour:

All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain confidence and respect of the general public and those with whom they work.

There may be times where an individual's actions in their personal life come under scrutiny from the community, the media or public authorities, including with regard to their own children, or children or adults in the community. Staff should be aware that their behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, could compromise their position within the work setting in relation to the protection of children, loss of trust and confidence, or bringing the employer into disrepute. Such behaviour may also result in disqualification from childcare, prohibition from teaching by the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA), a bar from engaging in regulated activity, or action by another relevant regulatory body.

The Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2018 set out grounds for disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 where a person meets certain criteria set out in the Regulations.

For example, an individual will be disqualified where they have committed a relevant offence against a child; been subject to a specified order relating to the care of a child; committed certain serious sexual or physical offences against an adult; been included on the DBS children's barred list; been made subject to a disqualification order by the court; previously been *refused registration as a childcare provider or provider or manager of a children's home or had such registration cancelled*. A disqualified person is prohibited from providing relevant early or later year's childcare as defined in the Childcare Act 2006 or being directly concerned in the management of such childcare. Schools and private childcare settings are also prohibited from employing a disqualified person in respect of relevant early or later year's childcare.

The Disqualification under the Child Care Act 2006 (Regulations 2018) states the schools should make clear their expectations that staff should disclose any relationship or association (in the real world or online) that may impact on the school's ability to safeguard pupils. This applies to all staff in schools, not just those in early or later year's childcare.

Dress and Appearance

Southgate School recognise that dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. Some may wish to exercise their own cultural customs. However, all staff must dress in a manner that is appropriate to their professional role.

Staff should dress in a manner that is not offensive, revealing or sexually provocative and in a manner that is absent from political or contentious slogans.

Staff should dress safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake. Flip flops, heels, sandals and other similar footwear should not be worn.

Tattoos and body art should not include images, symbols or words that could cause any offence; if in doubt staff should cover up.

Discreet earrings and piercings are acceptable but staff need to recognise that piercings can put them in danger of incidental injury because of our pupil's poor understanding of personal space and lack of awareness of danger; if they choose to wear piercings they are taking responsibility for their own level of risk. The same applies to jewellery

Behaviour Management

Staff must adhere to Southgate School's nurturing values and ethos at all times.

Corporal punishment and smacking is unlawful in all schools and early years' settings. Staff should not use any form of degrading or humiliating treatment towards a child or to punish a child. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards children is completely unacceptable.

Where pupils display difficult or challenging behaviour, adults must follow the schools or setting's behaviour policy using strategies appropriate to the circumstance and situation.

Where a pupil has specific needs in respect of particularly challenging behaviour, a positive management plan, including assessment of risk, should be drawn up and agreed by all parties.

Staff must never use isolation and seclusion. The legislation on these strategies is complex and staff should take extreme care to avoid any practice that could be viewed as unlawful, a breach of the pupil's human rights and/or false imprisonment.

The Use of Control and Physical Intervention

Southgate School follows the principles of Team Teach.

The law and guidance for schools states that adults may reasonably intervene to prevent a child from:

- a. committing a criminal offence
- b. injuring themselves or others
- c. causing damage to property
- d. engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline.

Staff must exercise great care must be exercised in order that adults do not physically intervene in a manner which could be considered unlawful.

Under no circumstances should physical force be used as a form of punishment. The use of unwarranted or disproportionate physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence.

When it is judged that a child's behaviour presents a serious risk to themselves or others, they must always put in place a robust risk assessment which is reviewed regularly alongside a positive management plan.

In all cases where physical intervention has taken place, the incident must be recorded following school guidance alongside subsequent actions. These must be reported to a manager and the child's parents/ carers.

Smoking, Alcohol and Other Substances

Southgate is a non-smoking site. Staff must not smoke on school premises or outside school gates. Any member of staff wishing to smoke must leave the school grounds.

Staff must not smoke whilst working with or supervising pupil's offsite.

Staff must not consume or be under the influence of alcohol, illicit drugs or other illegal substances on or near school premises.

Staff must refrain from the consumption of alcohol and other substances at school events and residential visits both within the school premises and outside the school setting.

Relationships with Pupils

All staff working in a school are in a position of trust in relation to all pupils on roll; staff must maintain professional boundaries with pupils appropriate to their position and must always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably.

Staff should act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to question their actions or intent. Staff should think carefully about their conduct so that misinterpretations are minimised.

Staff must not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. If a young person seeks to establish social contact, you should exercise your professional judgement in making a response and be aware that such social contact could be misconstrued. You must inform your line manager.

Staff must not develop personal or sexual relationships with pupils and should not engage in any sexual activity with a pupil. Sexual activity does not just involve physical contact including penetrative and non-penetrative acts.

Staff should be mindful of section 16 of The Sexual Offences Act 2003. It is an offence for a person aged 18 or over in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of a child under 18, or to cause or incite that child to engage in or watch sexual activity.

Working Together to Safeguard Children defines sexual abuse as ... 'forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Staff must not make sexual remarks to a pupil, discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of, pupils or discuss a pupil's sexual relationships in an inappropriate setting or context.

Personal phone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via all social media platforms should not be used and staff should not share their home address with pupils. If contacted via an inappropriate route the member of staff must inform the Headteacher immediately.

Southgate school staff must not accept friend invitations or become friends with any pupil of Southgate School on any social media platform. Staff should also refrain from following the Twitter or other similar social media accounts of pupils or their parents. Staff must read the school's online safety policy carefully and follow all advice and guidance contained within it.

Infatuations

It is not unusual for pupils, or sometimes their parents/ carers, to develop infatuations towards members of staff. All such situations must be responded to sensitively to maintain the dignity of those concerned. Staff should make every effort to ensure that their own behaviour cannot be brought into question and not appear to encourage this.

It is an offence for a person aged 18 or over (e.g. teacher, youth worker) to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual. A situation where a person is in a position of trust could arise where the child is in full -time education and the person

looks after children under 18 in the same establishment as the child, even if s/he does not teach the child.

Staff should also be aware that such circumstances carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against staff. Any indications of an infatuation towards yourself or another member of staff must be reported to a senior leader. The same goes for any report, sign or what you may overhear, no matter how small or insignificant. In this way appropriate early intervention can be taken which can prevent escalation and avoid hurt, embarrassment and distress for those concerned.

Gifts/Hospitality

Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift/offer of hospitality that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.

However, there may be occasions where pupils or parents wish to give a small token of appreciation to staff, for example at religious festivities or at the end of the year.

It is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or to suggest to pupils that gifts are appropriate or desired. Money must not be accepted as a gift. If you are unsure whether to accept a gift you should consult your line manager. It is unacceptable to accept any gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.

Personal gifts must not be given by staff to pupils or their families and any reward to pupils should be in accordance with Southgate School's behaviour policy, recorded and not based on favouritism.

Physical Contact with Pupils

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. A 'no touch' approach is impractical for most staff and may in some circumstances be inappropriate (please see Southgate's Positive Touch Policy). When physical contact is made with pupils it should be in response to their needs at that time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.

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.

Staff should be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described.

Staff should never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent. Always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny.

Extra caution should be exercised where a child is known to have suffered previous abuse or neglect. Such experiences may sometimes make a child exceptionally needy and demanding of physical contact and staff should respond sensitively by deterring the child through helping them to understand the importance of personal boundaries.

Staff supervising PE and games or providing musical tuition should demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument on another member of staff if possible. However, they may be required to initiate physical contact with pupils to support a child to perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument or to assist them with an exercise. Contact under these circumstances should be done with the pupil's agreement, for the minimum time necessary and in an open environment. Staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the pupil.

Physical contact must never be secretive, for the gratification of the adult or represent a misuse of authority.

If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported to a senior leader, recorded and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the child's file.

Social Contact Outside of the Workplace

It is acknowledged that staff may have genuine friendships and social contact with parents/carers of pupils, independent of the professional relationship. Staff should, however, also be aware that professionals who sexually harm children often seek to establish relationships and contact outside of the workplace with both the child and their parents, in order to 'groom' the adult and the child and/or create opportunities for sexual abuse.

It is also important to recognise that social contact may provide opportunities for other types of grooming such as for the purpose of sexual exploitation or radicalisation.

Staff should recognise that some types of social contact with pupils or their families could be perceived as harmful or exerting inappropriate influence on children, and may bring the setting into disrepute (e.g. attending a political protest, circulating propaganda)

If a pupil or parent/ carer seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise her/his professional judgement. This also applies to social contacts made through outside interests or the staff member's own family.

Some staff may, as part of their professional role, be required to support a parent or carer. If that person comes to depend upon the staff member or seeks support outside of their professional role, this should be discussed with senior leadership and where necessary referrals made to the appropriate support agency.

Staff should always approve any planned social contact with pupils or parents/ carers with senior colleagues and advise senior leadership of any regular social contact they have with a pupil/ family which could give rise to concern.

Staff should refrain from sending personal communication to pupils or parents/ carers unless agreed with senior leaders. They must inform senior leadership of any relationship with a parent/ carer where this extends beyond the usual parent/professional relationship.

Staff must inform senior leadership of any requests or arrangements where parents/ carers wish to use their services outside of the workplace, e.g. respite, tutoring. It is vital that these requests come from parents/ carers and that staff do not approach them. In addition, staff are responsible in ensuring that any necessary contributions (e.g. tax) are paid either by themselves or the external provider.

Child in distress

There may be occasions when a pupil is in distress and in need of comfort as a reassurance. This may include age appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

Such incidents should always be recorded and shared with your line manager. If you have a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance you should seek further advice from your line manager.

Intimate (Personal) Care

Schools has a clear intimate care policy and personal care plans which ensure that the health, safety, independence and welfare of children is promoted and their dignity and privacy are respected. This must be followed at all times and should be open and transparent and accompanied by recording systems.

Pupils should be encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their own personal care as is possible and practicable. When assistance is required, this should normally be undertaken by one member of staff, however, they should try to ensure that another appropriate adult is in the vicinity who is aware of the task to be undertaken and that, wherever possible, they are visible and/or audible. Intimate or personal care procedures should not involve more than one member of staff unless the pupil's care plan specifies the reason for this.

A signed record should be kept of all intimate and personal care tasks undertaken and, where these have been carried out in another room, should include times left and returned.

Any vulnerability, including those that may arise from a physical or learning difficulty should be considered when formulating the individual pupil's health and education care plan. The views of parents, carers and the pupil, regardless of their age and understanding, must be actively sought in formulating the plan and in the necessary regular reviews of these arrangements.

Pupils are entitled to respect and privacy at all times and especially when in a state of undress. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard pupils, 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 young people concerned

and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

Showers and changing

Pupils are entitled to respect and privacy whilst they are changing or showering after PE/games or swimming. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard young people, meet health and safety requirements and to ensure that bullying does not take place. The supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the pupils and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

Staff should be vigilant about their own behaviour and announce their intention of entering a changing room. Staff must not change or shower in the same place as children.

One to one situations

Staff working individually with pupils should be aware of the potential vulnerability of pupils and staff in such situations. Staff should manage these situations with regard to the safety of the pupil and to themselves.

Individual work with pupils should not be undertaken in isolated areas or rooms where there is no external viewing panel. Where it is necessary to close doors for reasons of confidentiality, a colleague should be made aware of this and asked to remain vigilant.

One to ones out of school must be in an appropriate public place (e.g. library). If it is necessary to take place at the child's home, a parent/ carer must be present.

Transporting pupils

In certain circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to transport pupil offsite, for example sports fixtures, swimming lessons or other out of school activities. A designated member of staff should be appointed to plan and provide oversight of all transport arrangements and to respond to any difficulties that may arise.

Staff should ensure that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. Staff should ensure that the driver has the appropriate license for the vehicle, that the vehicle is roadworthy, has a valid MOT certificate and is appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.

Staff should ensure that the driver is not distracted while the vehicle is in motion for any reason other than an emergency and should also ensure all passengers are wearing correctly fastened seatbelts. Staff should never transport pupils while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Prior to transporting pupil's offsite, consent must be obtained from the pupils' parent/guardian and staff should be aware that the safety and welfare of the pupils is their responsibility until this is safely passed back to their parent/carers.

Online Safety

Staff should follow Southgate School's Online Safety policy for staff and the Acceptable Use Policy at all times.

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school or the school community into disrepute. Staff should adopt the highest security settings on any personal profiles they have.

Staff should remain mindful of their digital footprint and exercise caution in all their use of social media or any other web based presence they have. This includes written content, videos or photographs and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts or following certain individuals or groups. Staff should exercise care when using dating websites where staff could encounter pupils.

Staff must not make contact with pupils, must not accept or initiate friend requests, nor follow pupil's accounts on any social media platform. Staff must not communicate with pupils via social media, websites, instant messenger accounts or text message. The only acceptable method of contact is via the use of school email accounts or telephone equipment.

Staff should not make contact with pupils' family members, accept or initiate friend requests or follow pupils' family member's account on any social media platform.

However, Southgate School acknowledges that staff who are also parents may wish to make contact with other parents, who are friends, over social media. Staff must exercise caution and professional judgement in these circumstances; they should not have any contact with pupils' family members via social media if that contact is likely to constitute a conflict of interest or call into question their objectivity.

Staff must follow the school's Mobile Policy at all times. Mobile phones and personally-owned mobile devices brought in to school are the responsibility of the device owner. Southgate School accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of personally-owned mobile phones or mobile devices.

Photography, Video and Images of Children

Many school activities involve recording images as part of the curriculum, extra school activities, publicity or to celebrate an achievement. In accordance with The Data Protection Act 1998 the image of a pupil is personal data. Therefore, it is a requirement under the Act for consent to be obtained from the parent/guardian of a pupil for any images made. It is also important to take into account the wishes of the pupil, remembering that some pupils do not wish to have their photograph taken or be filmed.

Using images for publicity purposes will require the age-appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their parent/guardian. Images should not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without their consent. Staff should also be clear about the

purpose of the activity and what will happen to the photographs/images/video footage when the lesson or activity is concluded.

Photographs/stills or video footage of pupils should only be taken using school equipment for purposes authorised by the school and should be stored securely and only on school equipment.

Staff should ensure that a member of the Senior Leadership Team is aware of the proposed use of photographic/video equipment and that this is recorded in planning. All photographs/stills and video footage should be available for scrutiny and staff should be able to justify all images/video footage made.

Staff should remain aware of the potential for images of pupils to be misused to create indecent images of children and/or for grooming purposes. Therefore, careful consideration should be given to how activities which are being filmed or photographed are organised and undertaken. Particular care should be given when filming or photographing young or vulnerable pupils who may be unable to question how or why the activities are taking place. Staff should also be mindful that pupils who have been abused through the use of video or photography may feel threatened by its use in a teaching environment.

Confidentiality

The storing and processing of personal information is governed by the data protection act 1998 and GDPR. Guidance and advice has been provided about their responsibilities under this legislation.

Members of staff may have access to confidential information about pupils, their parents/carers or their siblings. Staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil/student on a need to know basis. Records should only be shared with those who have a legitimate professional need to see them.

Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil or her/his family for their own, or others' advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other organisations). Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the pupil.

All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a pupil/student is bullied by another pupil/student, this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate school procedure. It must not be discussed outside the school, including with the pupil/student's parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the school except by a senior member of staff with the appropriate authority to deal with the matter.

Staff have a statutory obligation to share with Southgate School's Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead any information which gives rise to concern about the welfare or safety of a pupil or that might suggest a pupil is in need or at risk of significant harm. Staff should pass on information without delay in accordance with Southgate school's safeguarding policy and procedures and this should be recorded. Staff must never promise a pupil that they will not act on or pass on any information that they are told by the

pupil.

Staff should refer to the Department of Education's document Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for further guidance on information sharing. If you are in any doubt about whether to share you should seek guidance from a member of the senior leadership team.

Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the senior leadership team and only approved staff and Governors should communicate to the media about the school.

Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, without fear of repercussion.

All school staff have a duty to report any behaviour by a colleague which raises concern.

Staff should refer to Southgate School's whistleblowing policy for further guidance. This is particularly important where the welfare of pupils may be at risk.

Compliance

All staff must confirm they have read, understood and agree to comply with this policy.

P. Evans

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