



1839 + Bures School

BURES CEVC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bures School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff to share this commitment.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF MEMBERS

1. INTRODUCTION

The public is entitled to have trust and confidence in the integrity of the Bures School Community and in particular its staff. The conduct of all staff must therefore be of the highest standard. This Code of Conduct sets out clear guidance on the standards of behaviour we expect from all staff at Bures CEVC Primary 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. This Code applies to all staff in the school regardless of their position, role or responsibility.

This Code of Conduct also links with the School policies on;

- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Acceptable use of IT
- Online Safety
- Public Sector Equality Duty
- Health, Safety and Wellbeing
- Staff disciplinary procedures, which will be used if this Code of Conduct is breached.
- Staff grievance procedures
- Staff capability procedures

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 and promote a culture that supports wellbeing across the school.

2. AIMS

This Code of Conduct is not exhaustive but is written to assist staff and it is important that individuals should take advice and guidance if necessary. If in doubt, ask. 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.

The underlying purpose is to ensure that the School provides a high-quality service to its pupils and stakeholders in accordance with the School's Vision, Christian Values, and fundamental British Values and promotes public confidence in the integrity of the School. We aim to ensure our School is an environment where everyone is safe, happy, and treated with respect.

It takes in the requirements of the law and attempts to define the required levels of professionalism to ensure the wellbeing of the School, its staff, and its stakeholders.

Staff are requested to read this Code carefully and consider the issues which it raises.

The Headteacher should also ensure that all staff are aware of the Code's contents and are fully briefed on its implications.

Reference to this Code will be made in all contracts of employment, and copies will be given to all staff. In addition, the induction programme for all new staff, will reinforce the principles of this Code.

Breach or failure to observe this Code will result in action being taken under the School Disciplinary procedures.

3. CODE OF CONDUCT

Professional Behaviour and Conduct

Staff are expected to demonstrate the highest possible standards of personal and professional conduct and behaviour and consistently act with honesty and integrity, Bures CEVC Primary School expects staff to treat each other, pupils, parents and the wider community with dignity and respect at all times thus supporting each other's mental health and well-being.

Staff must show tolerance of and respect the rights of others and should uphold the fundamental British values including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

When carrying out their activities, staff must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people as outlined in the Public Sector Equality Duty Act.

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

Low-Level Concerns

It may be possible that a member of staff acts in a way that does not cause risk to children, but is however inappropriate. A member of staff who has a concern about another member of staff should inform the Head Teacher about their concern. If the Head Teacher cannot be contacted, the Deputy Headteacher should be contacted instead. (See Appendix A – Low- Level Concerns Policy)

Team Working – Relationships with Staff

Staff are expected to act in a professional manner towards colleagues, irrespective of their relative position or status within the school. This means:

- Speaking politely to one another
- Being approachable, friendly and welcoming to other adults in school – both staff members and visitors
- Being flexible and understanding of unexpected changes within the school day;
- Communicating clearly and honestly
- Addressing concerns openly and honestly with the person to whom the concern is addressed, whenever possible, without publicly criticising anyone
- Never publicly undermining a colleague
- Taking responsibility for our actions and being prepared to apologise when we have made mistakes
- Not deliberately discriminating or ostracising certain members of staff

To support staff's wellbeing and mental health, relationships between staff should be characterised by fairness, openness, and respect. This means valuing all contributions, acknowledging differences, and working together to build an environment with continuous improvement and positivity at its foundation.

Bullying, discrimination or racism from one member of staff to another will not be tolerated. Such incidents will be logged and dealt with immediately.

Relationships with Children

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

Staff should show fairness in their treatment of children and avoid behaviours such as embarrassing or humiliating pupils, making sarcastic remarks, making jokes at the expense of pupils, and discriminating against or favouring pupils. Staff will never shout at a child as a form of punishment or sanction – behaviour concerns should instead be dealt with in line with the School Behaviour Policy

Relationships with Parents

Staff should aim to create a welcoming and open relationship with parents. All parental concerns should be treated seriously and dealt with promptly and respectfully. All parents should be held in high regard.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

Staff must safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils, as well as safeguarding themselves and other adults that they encounter. Staff are expected to know who the Designated Safeguarding Leaders (including those for Online Safety and PREVENT), and Safeguarding Governor are, and the protocols to follow if a disclosure is made.

All staff must be familiar with and act in accordance with the the relevant statutory National guidance (e.g., Keeping Children Safe in Education, Working Together to Safeguard Children) as well as following the school's policies and procedures on safeguarding, including guidance on PREVENT regarding exploitation and radicalisation.

Physical Contact with Children

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.

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.

Staff should only exercise physical restraint as a last resort to prevent injury or harm - following the guidance within the School Behaviour Policy

If a member of staff believes that an action involving physical contact could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported to their line manager, recorded and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the child's file.

Conduct Outside Work

Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community. Any such

conduct could lead to dismissal. Criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable and could lead to dismissal.

Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Staff must not use social media e.g. Facebook/Twitter/Instagram/Snapchat with pupils or former pupils unless the former pupil is aged at least eighteen and has not been a pupil at the school for over seven years. Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute. Staff should only use their school email account or Seesaw to communicate electronically with parents.

Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school and is not to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance. All members of staff must declare any business interests outside of school that may be connected either to the supply of goods / services to the school or be rewarded through association with the school.

Acceptable Use of IT Equipment

A user of IT is responsible for any activity undertaken on the School's IT equipment provided and must use the equipment in the manner prescribed by this policy and the terms of the School's Acceptable Use Policy.

Equipment must be kept physically secure in accordance with this policy to be covered for insurance purposes. When travelling by car, best practice is to place the laptop in the boot of a car before starting a journey.

The installation of any applications or software packages must be authorised and carried out by the IT Technician.

Portable or mobile IT equipment must not be left unattended and any personal data and/or confidential information must be kept secure and out of sight. Staff should secure the information on their laptop on or off premises by locking the device when they are leaving it unattended even if for only a few minutes.

Use of Mobile phones

Mobile phones have a place in settings, especially those without a landline, and on outings. They are often the only means of contact available in settings and can be helpful in ensuring children are kept safe. Although staff are authorised to use personal mobile phones on site or on outings and in accordance with their work with the children, they are not authorised to use their mobile phone for personal use e.g., to text or send and receive calls from outside the setting during the school day when they are providing supervision to children. Staff should ensure during these times that mobile phones are switched off unless authorisation has been received from a member of the Senior Leadership Team for personal reasons. Staff are authorised to use their mobile phones during specified breaks and when out of sight of children.

To protect children we will:

- Only use mobile phones appropriately and ensure staff have a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse.
- Ensure the use of a mobile phone does not detract from the quality of supervision and care of children
- Ensure all mobile phone use is open to scrutiny and if a personal mobile phone is used, the owner is prepared for this to be checked for compliance with this policy.
- Ensure any staff known or seen to be using a mobile phone is aware that this can lead to them being disciplined if misused.
- Ask visitors to turn their mobile phones off or to store them in the office before visiting classrooms.

- Ensure that the use of mobile phones on outings is included as part of the risk assessment: for example, how to keep personal numbers that may be stored on a phone safe.

Staff are authorised to use personal mobile phones to take pictures of children attending the setting but must:

- Only use a mobile phone when suitable school equipment is not available or suitable for the purpose e.g when needing to upload to a secure school platform during a residential or to share Forest School or trip photos taken off site.
- Only share photos to school devices or school media platforms e.g Seesaw or Twitter and only email to other members of staff via school email or through Teams.
- Ensure that all pictures taken are deleted from their personal photos including the recycle bin as soon as reasonably practicable or not later than 14 days from when they were taken. Staff that take photos on their phone for school purposes should regularly check that photos have been deleted from their device.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing

Staff must take care of their personal hygiene, safety and welfare, and that of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions. All staff must comply with the requirements of the School's Health, Safety and Wellbeing policy and relevant legislation and regulations, and ensure that pupils do likewise.

Staff must familiarise themselves with the fire precautions, procedures and drill routines. They must regard practice fire drills or building evacuations in a positive manner, and ensure they are perceived by pupils as an essential precaution to prevent risk of injury or fatality.

Professional Dress

At Bures we recognise that dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. The school is committed to promoting diversity and will therefore respect individual preference in terms of customs, culture, religion and tradition. However, all staff must dress in a manner that is appropriate to a professional role and that promotes a professional image unless it is a non-uniform day. Denim jeans are not to be worn and offensive or political slogans should not be displayed.

Attendance and Punctuality

Staff should attend their place of work punctually in accordance with their conditions of service. It is expected that all staff will arrive on the school site at least 10 minutes before they are due to begin work so they are able to prepare themselves and be in their workspace at the correct time. Where staff are unable to avoid being late or absent, they should give as much notice to the Headteacher as possible so that alternative cover arrangements may be made. (The staff Sickness Absence Policy provides more information for staff in this area).

Confidentiality

It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure the School's compliance with the Data Protection Act and take all reasonable steps to ensure that the loss, destruction, inaccuracy or disclosure of information does not occur as a result of their actions. This includes information relating to school business and pupil data. However, this does not overrule the duty to report child protection concerns where a child or children are believed to be at risk of harm.

Staff are therefore expected to have an awareness and high regard for the confidential, sensitive and important nature of their role and to be mindful of this at all times including during formal and informal discussions with parents, other members of staff, children and the wider school community. Particular attention should be paid in public areas of the school such as corridors, the playground and the staff room.

Confidential information about pupils, parents/carers and colleagues must not be disclosed to any person not authorised to receive it and should only be shared on a 'need to know' basis.

Confidential information must be stored securely and must not be held off the school site other than on security protected equipment

4. DISCIPLINARY ACTION

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

Serious misconduct and/or criminal offences committed during or outside of working hours which bring employees or the School into disrepute will be the subject of disciplinary action which could lead to dismissal.

PLEASE NOTE

By agreeing to be a member of staff at the school, you are agreeing to abide by this Code of Conduct to support all stakeholder's mental health and wellbeing.

Date of Policy: Spring 2022

Review Date: Spring 2025

Appendix A

Low-Level Concern Policy

1. Introduction

At Bures CEVC Primary School, we take safeguarding very seriously. This includes ensuring that adults who work with children do so in a way that is in accordance with the ethos and policies set out by the school, including the Staff Code of Conduct. This policy sets out the detail and processes for staff regarding low-level concerns they may have.

2. Summary

It may be possible that a member of staff acts in a way that does not cause risk to children, but is however inappropriate. A member of staff who has a concern about another member of staff should inform the Head Teacher about their concern. If the Head Teacher cannot be contacted, the Deputy Headteacher should be contacted instead.

3. What is a low-level concern?

The following is taken from Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2022

Para 426. The term ‘low-level’ concern does not mean that it is insignificant. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a ‘nagging doubt’ - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work and
- does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children
- having favourites
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door, or
- humiliating children.

4. Clarity around Allegation vs Low-Level Concern vs Appropriate Conduct

Allegation

Behaviour which indicates that an adult who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

Action – Report to the headteacher immediately or the Chair of Governors if the Headteacher is the person about whom the allegation is to be made. (See also Whistleblowing Policy)

Low-Level Concern

Any concern – no matter how small, even if no more than a ‘nagging doubt’ – that an adult may have acted in a manner which:

- is not consistent with an organisation’s Staff Code of Conduct, vision, values or ethos, and /or
- relates to their conduct outside of work which, even if not linked to a particular act or omission, has caused a sense of unease about the adult’s suitability to work with children.

Action – Report concern to the Headteacher or the Deputy Headteacher.

Appropriate Conduct

Behaviour which is entirely consistent with the Staff Code of Conduct, vision, values and ethos, and the law.

5. Storing and use of Low-Level Concerns and follow-up information

A record of low-level concerns will be stored securely within the schools safeguarding systems, with access only by the leadership team. This will be stored in accordance with the school’s GDPR and data protection policies.

The staff member(s) reporting the concern must keep the information confidential and not share the concern with others apart from the Head Teacher or those aware in the senior leadership team.

Low-Level Concerns will not be referred to in references unless they have been formalised into more significant concerns resulting in disciplinary or misconduct procedures.

Whenever staff leave Bures CEVC Primary, any record of low-level concerns which are stored about them will be reviewed as to whether or not that information needs to be kept.

Consideration will be given to:

- (a) whether some or all of the information contained within any record may have any reasonably likely value in terms of any potential historic employment or abuse claim so as to justify keeping it, in line with normal safeguarding records practice; or
- (b) if, on balance, any record is not considered to have any reasonably likely value, still less actionable concern, and ought to be deleted accordingly.

6. Keeping Children Safe in Education

In dealing with any reported low-level concerns the Headteacher will follow the extensive guidance provided in KCSiE.