



MIDDLETON SCHOOL

Staff Code of Conduct Policy

This Code of Conduct has been negotiated with the Professional Associations/Trade Unions and is recommended for adoption.

Reviewed - Dec 2024
Ratified by Governing Body – Dec 2024
Review Due - Dec 2025

Contents

Objective, scope and principles	2
Setting an example	2
Safeguarding pupils/students	2
Relationships with offenders	3
Relationships with students	3
Pupil/Student development	4
Honesty and Integrity	4
Conduct outside of work	4
E-Safety and Internet Use	5
Confidentiality	5
Dress and Appearance	6
Disciplinary Action	6
Compliance	6
Professional Responsibilities	7
Low Level Concerns	7
Appendices	8
Appendix 1 – Relationships with students outside of work declaration	8
Appendix 2 – Confirmation of compliance	9

Objective, Scope and Principles

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school employees are expected to observe. School employees are role models, and are in a unique position of influence, and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the pupils/students within the school. As a member of a school community, each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside working hours.

This Code of Conduct applies to all employees of the school. This Code of Conduct does not form part of any employees' contract of employment.

In addition to this Code of Conduct, all employees engaged to work under Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Employment have a statutory obligation to adhere to the 'Teachers' Standards 2012' and in relation to this policy, Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct.

1. Setting an Example

1.1 All staff who work in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils/students. It is therefore unacceptable for staff to use inappropriate or offensive language at all times.

1.2 All staff must, therefore, demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils/students to do the same.

1.3 All staff must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

1.4 This Code helps all staff to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable. Regard should also be given to the disciplinary rules set out in the Schools' Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

1.5 All staff are expected to familiarise themselves and comply with all school policies and procedures.

2. Safeguarding Pupils/Students

2.1 Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils/students from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect

2.2 The duty to safeguard pupils/students includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil/student or colleague to the school's Designated Senior Lead (DSL) for Child Protection.

2.3 The school's DSLs are Debbie Hartley, Matt McLoughlin, Lisa Cox and the Family Liaison Officer; Helen Nash. From the governing body – Melanie Dorling is appointed as Child Protection Governor

2.4 Staff are provided with personal copies of the school's Child Protection Policy and Whistleblowing Procedure, have access to these policies electronically and staff must be familiar with these documents.

2.5 Staff should treat children with respect and dignity and must not demean or undermine pupils, their parents or carers, or colleagues.

2.6 Staff should not use humour inappropriately at the expense of students, colleagues or visitors, embarrass or humiliate students colleagues or visitors, or discriminate against or favour students.

2.7 Staff must prioritise the care of pupils/students under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety, well being and welfare.

3. Relationships with offenders

There is a duty to disclose all relationships which may create an enhanced risk to children – cohabitation with a person convicted of a serious offence, irrespective of whether the childcare disqualification by association regulations apply, could create potential for enhanced risk which when disclosed can be risk assessed against.

4. Relationships with students

4.1 Staff must declare any relationships that they may have with students outside of school; this may include mutual membership of social groups, tutoring, or family connections. Staff should not assume that the school are aware of any such connections. A declaration form may be found in appendix 1 of this document.

4.2 Relationships with students must be professional at all times. Inappropriate physical relationships with students are not permitted and may lead to a criminal conviction.

4.3 Encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which may lead to a sexual relationship or any other inappropriate relationship will be viewed as a grave breach of trust.

4.4 Contact with students must be via school-authorized mechanisms and solely for educational purposes. At no time should personal telephone numbers, text, email addresses or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with students or families.

4.5 If contacted by a student by an inappropriate route, staff should report the contact to the Headteacher immediately.

4.6 Behaviour giving rise to concern should also be reported. This includes pupils seeking affection, being sexually provocative or exhibiting overly familiar behaviour.

5. Pupil/Student Development

5.1 Staff must comply with school policies and procedures that support the well-being and positive development of pupils/students. This includes school protocols and policies which may not follow staff's personal beliefs or approaches to the education of and management of pupils.

5.2 Staff must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the positive development of pupils/students.

5.3 Staff must follow instructions that support the positive development of pupils/students and promote the ethos of the school at all times.

6. Honesty and Integrity

6.1 Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.

6.2 All staff must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or if they request, agree or accept, or receive a bribe from another person. If you believe that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act, you should refer to the Whistleblowing procedure for schools. For further information see the Model Anti Bribery Policy for Schools available on the Grid.

6.3 Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to the Headteacher, with the exception of "one off" 'thank you' or 'celebratory' gifts from students or parents. Personal gifts from individual members of staff to students are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted and may lead to disciplinary action.

7. Conduct outside of Work

7.1 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.

7.2 In particular, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable.

7.3 Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school nor be to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance in the school. Communication with and permission from the Head teacher should be sought in advance. Modes of communication will need to be considered which do not conflict with safeguarding policy and protection.

7.4 Forming inappropriate relationships or friendships with children or young people who are pupils or students under the age of 18 at another school/college will be viewed as inappropriate and impact upon the school's ability to trust the member of staff to maintain professional boundaries with pupils at the school.

7.5 Employees should not provide professional references on behalf of the school for other individuals without the express authority of the Head teacher; including on social media or professional networking sites.

8. E-Safety and Internet Use

8.1 Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Regard should be given to the school's Online Safety and Data Protection and Privacy Policy at all times both inside and outside of work.

8.2 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 ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have.

Guidelines for responsible use of social media;

- The employee should make it clear in social media postings that the employee is speaking on the employee's own behalf.
- Employees should be respectful to others when making any statement on social media and be aware that the employee is personally responsible for all communications which will be published on the internet for anyone to see. Employees should ensure that they use privacy and access settings whilst being aware that they cannot control the use of their postings by others.

- The employee should also ensure any content they post on social media are consistent with the professional image the employee presents to colleagues, pupils and parents.
- If the employee is uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, they are advised to refrain from posting it until they have discussed it with their manager.
- If the employee becomes aware of social media content that disparages or reflects poorly on the school, the employee should contact their Line Manager or the Headteacher.

8.3 Staff should exercise caution in their use of all social media or any other web based presence that they may have, including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts established by others. This may also include the use of dating websites where staff could encounter students either with their own profile or acting covertly.

8.4 Employees must avoid making any social media communications that could damage the school's interests or reputation and must not disclose confidential information with regard to the school, its employees or pupils and their families.

8.5 Employees must not express opinions on the school's behalf via social media, unless expressly authorised to do so and through the appropriate approved social media channels.

8.6 The school reserves the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, employee activities using school IT resources and communications systems, including but not limited to social media postings and activities, to ensure that school rules are being complied with and for legitimate school purposes. For further information, please refer to the Online Safety and Data Security policy.

In summary, the following is prohibited;

- Accepting any current pupils, or former pupils as friends, or requesting such friendships
- Communicating personally with pupils
- Posting photographs of pupils on sites not owned by the school
- Commenting about or naming pupils within social media or personal communications
- Using social media to defame or disparage the school, its employees or any third party
- Using social media to harass, bully or unlawfully discriminate against staff or third parties
- The use of social media to make false or misleading statements.
- Impersonation of colleagues or third parties

8.7 Contact with students should only be made via the use of school email accounts or telephone equipment when appropriate and strictly for educational reasons.

8.8 Photographs/stills or video footage of students should only be taken using school equipment, for purposes authorised by the school. Any such use should always be transparent and only occur where parental consent has been given. The resultant files from such recording or taking of photographs must be stored in accordance with the school's procedures on school equipment.

8.9 The employee may be required to remove any social media content that the school consider to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action.

The school considers that valid reasons for checking an employee's internet usage include suspicions that the employee has:

- been using social media when they should be working

- acted in a way that is in breach of the rules set out in this policy.

8.10 If an employee is contacted for comments about the school for publication, including via any social media outlet, the enquiry should be directed to the Head teacher and the employee should not respond without written approval.

9. Confidentiality

9.1 Where staff have access to confidential information about pupils/students or their parents or carers, staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil/student.

9.2 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 (or by a member of staff), 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 pupils/student's parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the school except with a senior member of staff with the appropriate authority to deal with the matter.

9.3 However, staff have an obligation to share with their manager or the school's Designated Senior Lead any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a pupil/student. Staff must **never** promise a pupil/student that they will not act on information that they are told by the pupil/student.

9.4 Staff are not allowed to make any comment to the media about the school, its performance, governance, pupils or parents without written approval. Any media queries should be directed to the Headteacher.

10. Dress and Appearance

10.1 All staff must dress in a manner that is appropriate to their role and promoting a professional image

10.2 Staff should dress in a manner that is not offensive, revealing or sexually provocative

10.3 Staff should dress in a manner that is absent from political or other contentious slogans.

10.4 The dress code at Middleton School prohibits the wearing of blue denim or 'slashed' clothing (unless on an INSET Day).

11. Disciplinary Action

Staff should be aware that a failure to comply with the Staff Code of Conduct Policy could result in disciplinary action including but not limited to dismissal.

12. Compliance

All staff must complete the form in appendix 2 to confirm they have read, understood and agreed to comply with the code of conduct. This form should then be signed and dated.

13. Low level Concerns

Members of staff within schools and colleges need to report and record all concerns and allegations against adults, including **low-level concerns**. A low-level concern is any concern that

an adult has acted in a way that: is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work which doesn't meet the threshold of harm or is not considered serious enough for the school or college to refer to the local authority.

Creating a culture in which all concerns about adults (including allegations that do not meet the harm threshold) are shared responsibly and with the right person, and recorded and dealt with appropriately, is crucial. If implemented well this should encourage an open and transparent culture, enable our school to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour early, minimise the risk of abuse and ensure that adults working in or on behalf of the school are clear about professional boundaries and act within them, in accordance with the ethos and values of Middleton School.

Staff members who have a low level concern regarding a colleague should share this concern as soon as possible with the DSL. At Middleton School this may also be recorded on an 'I need to tell you' form and passed to a DSL or Deputy DSL.

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

When using any form of ICT, including the Internet, in school and outside school

For your own protection we advise that you:

- Ensure all electronic communication with students, parents, carers, staff and others is compatible with your professional role and in line with school policies.
- Do not talk about your professional role in any capacity when using social media such as Facebook and You Tube.
- Do not put online any text, image, sound or video that could upset or offend any member of the whole school community or be incompatible with your professional role.
- Use school ICT systems and resources for all school business. This includes your school email address, school mobile phone and school video camera.
- Do not disclose any passwords and ensure that personal data (such as data held on MIS software) is kept secure and used appropriately.
- Only take images of students and/or staff for professional purposes, in accordance with school policy and with the knowledge of SLT.
- Do not browse, download, upload or distribute any material that could be considered offensive, illegal or discriminatory.
- Ensure that your online activity, both in school and outside school, will not bring the school or professional role into disrepute.
- Emails should ideally be checked daily as a minimum (on working days) or every other day if one day is particularly busy.
- You have a duty to report any eSafety incident which may impact on you, your professionalism or the school.

Appendix 1

Relationships with students outside of work declaration

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby employees of the school are known to students outside of work. Examples include membership of sports clubs, family connections, or private tutoring.

Staff must declare any relationship outside of school that they may have with students.

Employee Name	Student Name	Relationship

I can confirm that I am fully aware of the code of conduct relating to contact out of school with students in line with this policy.

If I am tutoring/ supporting a student outside of school I am aware that the following must be adhered to:

- I emphasise to parents that this is done completely independently of the school
- No monies come through the school at any point, informally (e.g. via the child) or formally
- No private tutoring/ private care is to take place on the school premises

I confirm that if these circumstances change at any time I will complete a new form to ensure the school are aware of any relationships.

Signed

Date

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Headteacher

Appendix 2

Confirmation of compliance

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with the school's staff code of conduct policy.

Name

Position/Post Held.....

Signed

Date

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Headteacher