



Staff Code of Conduct Policy

Policy written June 2014 Last updated June 2024 **Next Review date June 2025**

RATIONALE

The school wants all staff to be happy and morale to be high. Staff should feel valued and supported at all times. This policy was introduced with the intention of ensuring that all staff are secure in systems employed by the school. Staff should have the opportunity to understand the criteria against which performance is judged. 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. Safeguarding children is the highest priority.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the safeguarding policy, health & safety, Prevent Policy and intimate care policy.

This is based on our mission statement and aims of the school

Our school is a happy, safe place where diversity is celebrated and all children are given access to the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. We aim to work in partnership with parents and the community to enable our children to learn, achieve and succeed through play and real life experiences to become productive members of our multicultural society.

The staff here have to ensure that they are fully aware of their position of **trust** given to us by parents of children who attend the school. We are role models.

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child, and expects the highest possible standards of openness.

Aims of Bentilee Nursery School

- For every child to enjoy coming to school to learn through play
- For our school to be a safe, happy and secure environment where children can take risks and learn through their mistakes in a supportive way
- For every parent to be valued as the child's first educator to enable us to work in partnership to develop our children's education together so that they can reach their true potential
- For every child to have equality of access to the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum
- For our children to believe they can be anything they want to be
- For our school to make challenge and high expectations achievable targets in life
- For each child to be encouraged to foster an awareness of and respect for their immediate environment and the wider world around them
- For each child to form positive relationships with their peers and adults
- For each child to be proud of their culture and to share it with others so that mutual respect is achieved in our multi-cultural society
- For our school to embrace individuality and to ensure that differences are viewed as positive gifts, each having a purpose in life that can be used to help others
- For the school and community to work in cooperation to give our children real life learning opportunities

As a staff we also endorse what we want for children and the parents of the school for staff. Therefore from our aims for children we also have the aims for staff:-

- For every staff member to enjoy coming to school to teach and learn
- For our school to be a safe, happy and secure environment where children and staff can take risks and learn through their mistakes in a supportive way
- For every staff member to be valued to develop our children's education together so that they can reach their true potential
- For every adult to have equality of access to the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum so that they can teach it well
- For our staff to believe they can be anything they want to be
- For our school to make challenge and high expectations achievable targets in life
- For each staff member to be encouraged to foster an awareness of and respect for their immediate environment and the wider world around them
- For each staff member to form positive relationships with their peers and outside agencies
- For each member of staff to be proud of their culture and to share it with others so that mutual respect is achieved in our multi-cultural society
- For our school to embrace individuality and to ensure that differences are viewed as positive gifts, each having a purpose in life that can be used to help others
- For the school and community to work in cooperation to give our children real life learning opportunities
- ***Any prejudice, discrimination or extremist views, including derogatory language, displayed by staff will always be challenged and where appropriate dealt with in line with this policy***

The above sets the overall general standard for our code of conduct of staff.

Introduction

- School staff are in a unique position of trust and influence as role models for pupils/students. Therefore, staff must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all pupils/students 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:
 1. All members of staff including teaching and support staff
 2. Volunteers, including governors and parents
 3. Casual workers
 4. Temporary and supply staff, either from agencies or engaged directly
 5. Student placements, including those undertaking initial teacher training and apprentices.
- Bentilee Nursery 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/students and the school.

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. Bentilee Nursery school expects staff to treat each other, pupils/students, parents 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 show fairness in their treatment of children and avoid behaviours such as embarrassing or humiliating pupils/students, making jokes at the expense of pupils/students, discriminating against or favouring pupils/students 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 act in accordance with the school's policies and procedures at all times.
- *See links with violence or verbal aggression- policy*

Dress and Appearance

- Bentilee Nursery school School recognise that dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, all staff must dress in a manner that is appropriate to a professional role and that promotes a professional image.
- 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.
- Tattoos and body art are acceptable but the school would appreciate them not being flaunted unnecessarily. Discreet earrings are acceptable but all other body piercings should be removed while on school premises.

Smoking, alcohol and other substances

- Bentilee Nursery school 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 pupils 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/student events both within the school premises and outside the school setting.

Relationships with Pupils/Students

- Staff must maintain professional boundaries with pupils/students 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.
- Contact with pupils/students should be through Bentilee Nursery school's authorised mechanism "teacher2Parents"- operated by senior staff in the office. 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/students. If contacted via an inappropriate route the member of staff must inform the Headteacher immediately.
- Bentilee Nursery school school staff must not accept friend invitations or become friends with any pupil/student of Bentilee Nursery school on any social media platform. Staff should also refrain from following the Twitter or other similar social media accounts of pupils/students or their parents. Staff must read the school's e-safety policy carefully and follow all advice and guidance contained within it.

Infatuations

- It is not unusual for pupils or, sometimes, their parents to develop infatuations towards members of staff. All such situations must be responded to sensitively to maintain the dignity of those concerned.
- 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 your line manager.

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/students 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/students 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.
- Personal gifts must not be given by staff to pupils/students and any reward to pupils/students should be in accordance with Bentilee Nursery school's School's behaviour policy.

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. 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.
- It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. Staff should therefore, use their professional judgement at all times.
- 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. Staff must not engage in rough play, tickling or fun fights with pupils/students.
- 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. Story books can support this.
- Physical contact must never be secretive, for the gratification of the adult or represent a misuse of authority.

Child in distress

- There may be occasions when a pupil/student 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.

Changing

Staff must adhere to the intimate care policy when changing a child.

One to one situations

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

Transporting pupils

- In certain circumstances it may be appropriate for staff to transport pupils/students offsite, for example to take a sick child home
- 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 or child seats. Staff should never transport pupils/students while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Prior to transporting pupils offsite consent must be obtained from pupil/students' parent/guardian and staff should be aware that the safety and welfare of the pupils/students is their responsibility until this is safely passed back to their parent/carer.

E-Safety

- Staff should follow Bentilee Nursery School's E-Safety and social media 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 students.
- 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, Bentilee Nursery School's 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 and 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.

- Mobile phones and personally-owned devices may not be used during lessons or formal school time. They should be switched off (or silent) at all times. The Bluetooth functionality of a mobile phone should be switched off at all times and may not be used to send images or files to other mobile phones. Mobile phones and personal devices are not permitted to be used in certain areas within the school site such as toilets.
- Mobile phones and personally-owned mobile devices brought in to school are the responsibility of the device owner. Bentilee Nursery School's 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/student is personal data. Therefore, it is a requirement under the Act for consent to be obtained from the parent/guardian of a pupil/student for any images made.
- 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/students 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 lesson plans. 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/students 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.

Confidentiality

- Members of staff may have access to confidential information about pupils/students, 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.
- Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil/student 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/student.

- All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. 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 Bentilee Nursery 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/student or that might suggest a pupil/student is in need or at risk of significant harm. Staff should pass on information without delay in accordance with Bentilee Nursery School's school's safeguarding policy and procedures and this should be recorded. Staff must never promise a pupil/student that they will not act on or pass on any information that they are told by the pupil/student.
- 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 Bentilee Nursery School's whistleblowing policy for further guidance. This is particularly important where the welfare of pupils/students may be at risk.

Staff safety

- When staff come into school they must sign in. If they leave the premises during the day they must sign out and then in again, when back in school.
- If a member of staff goes on a home visit alone / or to a meeting, it is very important they tell the office where it is they are going and how long the visit should last. They will be given a code word to ring school for help.

Compliance

- All staff must complete the form in appendix 1 to confirm they have read, understood and agree to comply with this policy. This form should be signed and dated and a copy retained on the member of staff's file.

IMPLEMENTATION

To ensure this happens the school has in place:-

- The teacher's job description clearly states their role in supporting the team e.g. clear timetable, protocol for sending children home at the end of the day etc.
- A staff handbook to ensure all policies relating to the school are seen by staff
- All staff have a clear job description and gauge job evaluation which is reviewed regularly
- There are at least termly opportunities to have a professional discussion between the Head and staff on a 1:1 which is chance for an open and honest dialogue in confidence.

- A clear induction procedure for new staff-meetings with the Head as mentor to reinforce protocol and professional conduct
- Weekly staff meetings with an agenda to allow staff the opportunity to raise any concerns about team work
- A weekly SMT meeting where senior management discuss strategies to move the school forward
- There is always an equal opportunities agenda item in meetings for fairness issues to be discussed
- There is a school ethos that aims for staff consensus in decision making
- Staff are modelled conduct by senior members of staff in the school- being professional
- Where concerns are raised it becomes an agenda item and rules/ codes of conduct may be discussed and agreed
- It is made very clear to staff that any breach of agreed protocol e.g. confidentiality, inappropriate use of language speech or body will not be tolerated
- Staff are sent on best practice and professional development courses to ensure their professionalism is developed and they are valued
- The school works closely with the LA to ensure professional conduct is supported at all times
- The school works closely with the school governors to ensure they are linked to members of staff as co-ordinators and can act as critical friends to support and develop them on their professional journey

If things go wrong:- Protocol

The Governors will:-

- Ensure that a prompt and fair investigation is conducted.

The Headteacher will:-

- Make sure staff know the disciplinary route
- They understand what is necessary for safe performance of work and the maintenance of satisfactory relations
- Staff should be aware of the likely consequences of breaching the rules.
- ***Any prejudice, discrimination or extremist views, including derogatory language, displayed by staff will always be challenged and where appropriate dealt with in line with this policy***
- ***Where misconduct by a teacher is proven, the matter will be referred to the National College for Teaching and Leadership for their consideration as to whether to a Prohibition Order is warranted.***

Disciplinary rules and procedures apply.

- be in writing
- specify to whom it applies
- for matters to be dealt with quickly
- indicate the disciplinary actions which may be taken
- specify the levels of management which are empowered to take various forms of disciplinary action
- employees to be informed of the complaints against them and to be given an opportunity to state their case before decisions are reached
- give individuals the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or by a fellow employee of their choice
- ensure that, except for gross misconduct, no employee is dismissed for a first breach of discipline
- ensure that disciplinary proceedings are not commenced until the facts have been carefully investigated

- ensure that individuals are given an explanation of any penalty imposed
- provide a right of appeal and specify the procedures to be followed

Governors have the power to:-

- dismiss a person employed to work solely at the school
- withdraw from working at the school a person employed to work at a number of locations including the school

The Director of Education is entitled to be present or represented at all stages where dismissal is considered.

Further details are found in the Conduct and Discipline Section 6 subject A part of the administration handbook. The school will liaise closely with HR services to ensure the conduct is followed precisely.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored annually and reviewed as and when required. New staff will be inducted with the policy always and their views and understanding taken into account.

Appendix 1



Confirmation of compliance

Bentilee Nursery 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