

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL

CODE OF CONDUCT

WINSLOW CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL



Approved by:	Governors
Last Reviewed on :	September 2025
Next Review due by:	September 2026

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Code of Conduct draws together existing School policies and procedures.
- 1.2 The School aims to ensure the highest standards of conduct and will assist employees in performing their duties to the best of their ability.
- 1.3 The Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with Children and Young People in Education Settings.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This guidance applies to:
 - Employees in Schools employed under the terms of Bucks Pay Employment Conditions.
 - All temporary, casual and agency workers including supply teachers.
- 2.2 Teachers are expected to conduct themselves in a way consistent with both the Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers and, where applicable, this guidance.
- 2.3 Governors are expected to conduct themselves in a way consistent with the provisions of their own Code of Conduct and, where applicable, this guidance.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 Teachers/Head teachers/Line Managers and employees have a responsibility under this Code of Conduct.

Teachers/Head teachers/Line Managers will:

- Apply the policies and procedures detailed in this document in addition to the provisions of any Code of Conduct operational within the individual School.
- Ensure all new employees are made aware of this Code of Conduct on commencing employment at the School.
- Deal promptly, thoroughly and fairly with any matter arising from a breach of this guidance.

- 3.2 Employees will:

- Act in accordance with the Principles set out in this document in addition to the provisions of any Code of Conduct operational within the individual School.
- Never use their position for personal gain.
- Through procedures outlined in the relevant School's policies, bring to the attention of the appropriate level of management any deficiency in the provision of service or breach of this guidance.
- Maintain conduct of the highest standard such that confidence in their integrity is sustained.

- 3.3 Employees in roles that have their own professional code of conduct must appropriately apply the standards of their profession in line with this guidance.
- 3.4 In relation to employees in Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools with delegated budgets, the obligations of the employer reside with the Governing Body as agent of the County Council.
- 3.5 In relation to employees in Foundation and Voluntary Aided Schools with delegated budgets, the obligations of the employer reside with the Governing Body.

4. Principles

- 4.1 This Code of Conduct is founded on the following principles:
 - To ensure the highest standards of conduct and integrity from all employees of the Council/Governing Body.
 - To support the Council/Governing Body's visions and values, policies and procedures.
 - To set out clear objectives and expectations for all employees and Teachers/Headteachers/Line Managers.
 - To ensure all employees and Teachers/Headteachers/Line Managers treat colleagues and those they interact with during the course of their work with dignity and respect.
 - Not to discriminate against any individual in the application of this guidance on the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, maternity and pregnancy, race, caste, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, other grounds protected by law (e.g. part-time worker status, trade union membership or HIV positive status)..

5. Safeguarding

- 5.1 The Council/Governing Body has a duty to safeguard and promote the well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults. This includes the need to ensure that all adults who work with or on behalf of children, young people and vulnerable adults are competent, confident and safe to do so.
- 5.2 All employees who come into contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults in their work have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare.
- 5.3 It is essential that all employees are aware of and refer to the Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults for those working with Children and Young People in Education Settings. (See Appendix 1)
- 5.4 All staff, governors and volunteers have a duty to keep pupils and themselves safe and to protect them from physical and emotional harm. This duty is, in part, exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between adults and pupils and behaviour by adults that demonstrate integrity, maturity and good judgment. All staff, governors and volunteers must know and follow the safeguarding procedures as outlined in the Child Protection Policy in the event of a concern or disclosure regarding the safeguarding of a child.
- 5.5 Staff working in one to one situations with pupils are more vulnerable to allegations. Staff must recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. Every attempt should

be made to ensure that the safety and security needs of both staff and pupils are met. Where such a meeting is demonstrably unavoidable it is advisable to avoid remote or secluded areas of the school and to ensure that the door of the room is left open and/or visual/auditory contact with others is maintained. Another member of staff should be aware of the meeting and any arrangements should be reviewed on a regular basis. Pre-arranged meetings with pupils away from the school premises or on the school site when the school is not in session are not permitted unless approval is obtained from their parent/ guardian and the head teacher or other senior colleague with delegated authority. Should a staff member have to walk a child home in an emergency, then this should always be in pairs with another adult member of staff.

- 5.6 Staff are expected to follow ongoing government guidance in relation to Covid-19 including any associated restrictions to gatherings, travel, or other measures designed to reduce the risk of infection and spread. These restrictions may include a requirement to quarantine attached to higher-risk activities such as travel abroad. Staff who are required to quarantine as a result of actions outside of school must notify their Headteacher in advance and may agree alternative duties to perform from home while in quarantine. If alternative duties are not possible, staff will be placed on unpaid leave for the remainder of the quarantine period.

Staff are required to follow any additional operational measures put in place in response to Covid-19 and to hold the safety of themselves and others around them with the utmost priority. Failing to adhere to these standards will be treated as a matter of professional conduct and may result in disciplinary action.

6. Disclosure of Information and Confidentiality

- 6.1 Employees may, in the course of their employment become aware of personal or other confidential information, some of which may fall within the scope of Data Protection legislation. The Council/Governing Body requires that the confidentiality of this information be respected. (See the Toolkit for further information).
- 6.2 Employees must not use information obtained in the course of their employment for personal gain or benefit, nor should they pass it on to others who might use it in such a way unless it is necessary and within the law to do so i.e. where a police investigation is necessary.
- 6.3 Any meeting recorded without the consent of all those present (covert recordings) will be treated as a conduct matter. If employees have any misgivings about either the process or the managers leading it, they should tell us openly so that we can address your concerns
- 6.4 Information concerning an employee's private affairs will not be supplied to any person outside of the School unless the consent of the employee is obtained first. This includes inappropriate use of social networking websites such as Facebook.
- 6.5 At Winslow Church of England School we expect staff to have an awareness and high regard for the confidential, sensitive and important nature of their role. They should be mindful of this at all times including formal and informal discussions with parents, other members of staff, children and the wider school community. Particular attention should be given in public areas of the school such as corridors, the playground and the staff room.

A “needs to know” approach should be adopted to safeguard this principle and to ensure no child or group of children is unfairly stereotyped or unnecessarily spotlighted. Where possible no names should be explicitly mentioned, whether for positive, negative or information purposes in public areas, unless it is on a needs to know basis for all present to hear. Confidential information about pupils must be held securely.

Confidential information about pupils must not be held off the school site other than on security protected school equipment. Memory sticks should not be used to store any information considered to be 'personal' under GDPR guidelines

7. Commercial Practices including Gifts and Hospitality

- 7.1 The principal aim of the Code of Conduct on Commercial Practices is to ensure that the School's business is conducted in accordance with the very highest standards.
- 7.2 Employees should never use their position for personal gain and should seek to uphold and enhance the reputation of the School by:
- a) Maintaining a high standard of integrity in all professional relationships;
 - b) Fostering the highest possible standards of professional competence amongst those for whom they are responsible;
 - c) Complying both with the letter and the spirit of:
 - i. the law;
 - ii the Governing Body Standing Orders;
 - iii any additional guidance supplied by the Council/Governing Body;
 - iv the Conditions of Service of Employees of the Council/Governing Body.
 - d) Rejecting any business practice that might reasonably be deemed improper.
- 7.3 The guidelines on Schoolweb express the obligations of employees that exist in legislation or are expressed or implied conditions of appointment.
- 7.4 At Winslow Church of England School, staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed by others as a bribe, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. There are occasions when pupils or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff e.g. at Christmas or as a thank-you and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.

8. Prevention of Fraud & Corruption

- 8.1 The Council/Governing Body is committed to ensuring the highest standards of propriety in the delivery of its services and management of its resources and assets.
- 8.2 All employees are expected to act with integrity at all times and to comply with legal requirements, rules, procedures and good practice.
- 8.3 Further guidance can be obtained in the School's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Framework.

9. Raising Concerns in the Workplace – Grievances and Whistleblowing

- 9.1 The Council/Governing Body believes that an employee should report any significant concern they may have about any aspect of service provision, or the conduct of employees, Governors, or others acting on behalf of the School without fear of victimisation.
- 9.2 In the first instance, employee concerns should be raised via the Schools internal complaints procedure. (See Toolkit for further information).

- 9.3 Where concerns have not been addressed satisfactorily through the internal complaints procedure, employees can report unresolved issues under the School's Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure.
- 9.4 If an employee has a concern regarding their own employment they should raise this under the School's Grievance Policy and Procedures.

10. Dignity and Equality at Work

- 10.1 The Council/Governing Body wishes to create an environment where all employees are treated with dignity and respect.
- 10.2 The Council/Governing Body is committed to achieving equality of choice as an employer of people, provider of services, educator and community leader.
- 10.3 All employees are expected to adopt the School's vision of equality of opportunity.
- 10.4 The School's Anti-Harassment & Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures must be adhered to.
- 10.5 At Winslow Church of England School, Professional Relationships must be upheld at all times:

With pupils:

All pupils have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Staff and volunteers must not use any form of degrading treatment to punish or undermine a pupil. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards pupils is not acceptable in any situation. When speaking to pupils, we always consider how we would expect to be spoken to ourselves. All staff must have knowledge of, and follow, the school's behaviour policy.

Shouting aggressively is not acceptable in any situation.

With other members of staff:

We act in a professional manner towards colleagues, irrespective of our relative position or status within the school hierarchy, for example:

- 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;
- We never act in a way that publicly undermines a colleague
- We all take responsibility for our actions and are prepared to apologise when we have made mistakes and undertake to learn from those errors;
- Not deliberately discriminating or ostracising certain members of staff;
- Avoiding the establishment of 'cliques' within the staff body;
- Supporting the professional development of all colleagues;

11. Close Personal Relationships at Work

- 11.1 The Council/Governing Body will not interfere unduly in the private lives of employees but with the public interest in mind will take legitimate action when close personal relationships at work have an actual or potential impact on School services.
- 11.2 The Council/Governing Body will regard as wholly unacceptable any close personal relationship between an employee and a child or young person who is under the age of 18 (19 if still at school), whom they meet as a result of their employment.
- 11.3 Issues involving close personal relationships at work will be approached sensitively and managed promptly, effectively, fairly and lawfully.
- 11.4 Further guidance can be found in the Close Personal Relationships at Work documentation on SchoolsWeb.

12. New Appointments

- 12.1 Employees involved in appointing new staff must ensure that appointments are made on the basis of merit alone. There is a strong risk of illegality if an employee makes an appointment based on anything other than the ability of the applicant to undertake the duties of the post. To avoid accusations of bias, employees must not be involved in appointments where they are related to an applicant or otherwise have a close personal relationship with them or have knowledge of them in another context e.g. business associates.
- 12.2 Similarly, employees should not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, promotion, recruitment or pay and conditions for any other employee who is a relative, partner, close friend etc.
- 12.3 All applicants will be asked to declare any relationship to the Chair of Governors or the Service Director Education. Failure to do so could result in the withdrawal of the offer of appointment, or dismissal if already appointed.
- 12.4 For further guidance, Teachers/Headteachers and Line Managers should refer to the document titled Recruitment, Selection and Appointment of Employees in Schools. This is available on Schoolsweb.

13. Work for Other Organisations

- 13.1 Applicants for employment with the Council/Governing Body will be asked to disclose to the Headteacher/Chair of Governors, any employment or work in any capacity they may have with other organisations. Failure to do so could result in the withdrawal of the offer of appointment, or dismissal if already appointed.
- 13.2 All employees must notify their Headteacher/Chair of Governors if they are undertaking work for another organisation. This includes work in any capacity e.g. contract of employment, consultancy or contract for services.
- 13.3 Employees should refer to the Government Working Time Regulations that came into effect in 1998, when considering additional appointments or employment. (See Toolkit for further guidance).

- 13.4 For a period of 6 months after the termination of employment, former Buckinghamshire Council employees shall not solicit custom, directly or indirectly, from any customer/client of Buckinghamshire Council with whom they have had contact, and to whom they have provided services, during the 12 months prior to the termination of your employment. For the purposes of this clause, such a customer/client is defined as any individual(s), group, or organisation with which you have had contact or correspondence in the course of your employment with Buckinghamshire Council.

14. Communication, Computer Usage and the Internet

- 14.1 Use of the School's equipment, systems and network is provided as part of an individual's work role.
- 14.2 Employees should be familiar with the relevant School policies surrounding computer usage, internet access and electronic communications.
- 14.3 Misuse of the equipment, systems and network may be grounds for disciplinary action under the School's Conduct & Discipline Policy & Procedure, which, if found to constitute gross misconduct, could render an individual liable to dismissal.
At Winslow Church of England School staff must not post material which damages the reputation of the school or which causes concern about their suitability to work with children and young people.
- 14.4 Use of technology to contact students can suggest an informality that is inappropriate. Great care should be exercised over the use of communications technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, emails, digital cameras, videos, web cams, websites and blogs unless contact via these routes is required and for which permission has been given by a senior manager e.g. field trips and expeditions. (See Toolkit for further guidance).

At Winslow Church of England School, staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. This includes social networking and blogging. Even if a pupil seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise her/his professional judgment in making a response and be aware that such social contact in person, by phone or on the internet could be misconstrued and may place the member of staff in a very vulnerable position.

The school has a separate policy on internet use, electronic communication and security (E-Safety Policy) which forms part of this Code of Conduct.

Personal mobile phones or cameras must not be used to take photographs or videos of pupils. Any use of a mobile phone by staff must be discreet and appropriate and outside of teaching hours unless in an emergency.

Under no circumstances should adults in school access inappropriate images. Deliberately accessing pornography on school equipment will be treated as gross misconduct and may be considered a criminal offence. Accessing indecent images of children on the internet, and making, storing or disseminating such material, is illegal, is likely lead to criminal prosecution, and may result in barring from work with children and young people. Personal property of a sexually explicit nature such as books, magazines, DVDs or such material on any electronic media must not be brought onto or stored on the school premises.

Staff and volunteers must not give their personal details such as home/mobile phone number, home or e-mail address to pupils or parents unless they are an existing personal friend or the need to do so is agreed with senior management. Staff may use the class dojo app on their phones to communicate with parents and carers.

15. Social Media Use

- 15.1 Social media is a type of interactive online media that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public forum. This includes online social forums such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Social media also covers blogs and video-and image-sharing websites such as YouTube.
- 15.2 Employees must follow the School's policy on the use of social media, which is available as part of the Schools IT policies. Social networking sites and blogging are extremely popular. Staff must not post comments about the school, pupils (including past pupils), parents or colleagues including members of the governing body. Staff also must not post material which damages the reputation of the school or which causes concern about their suitability to work with children and young people. Those who post material which could be considered as inappropriate, could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations of misconduct. Inappropriate use by staff should be referred to the Headteacher in the first instance and may lead to disciplinary action.
- 15.3 At Winslow Church of England School, staff are advised, as a matter of personal safeguarding, that they should not have contact via social media (facebook, Instagram etc) with parents at the school as this may create difficulties if an issue arises involving their child. Privacy settings on any social media site must be to the highest level of security and access. Staff should regularly check these settings and ensure that their details cannot be seen by parents or children, or adults who have links with parents/children in this school.
If a request for access by any child or a new parent is made to any staff member, then this needs to be reported immediately to the Headteacher. Staff must decline any request made and then let the Headteacher know. Failure to do so could see the staff member disciplined in line with the School's Conduct Policy.

16. Alcohol and Drugs Misuse

- 16.1 The School is committed to ensuring a safe, healthy and productive working environment and to minimising problems arising from the misuse of drugs and alcohol at work.
- 16.2 Those representing the School are personally liable for their conduct, specifically in relation to consumption of drugs and alcohol. They must avoid the use of illegal substances or any substance which may affect their work or which might place them at risk of accidents, loss of efficiency or effectiveness.
- 16.3 Anyone working on behalf of the School must not possess, consume, sell or give away illegal drugs especially whilst on duty or undertaking work on behalf of the School.
- 16.4 Inappropriate behaviour as a result of substance misuse will be dealt with under the relevant policy e.g. Conduct and Discipline, Capability.

17. Staff Dress Code

- 17.1 A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, staff and volunteers should recognise that they are role models to the children and their choice of dress should uphold the school's expectations for the children. Staff and volunteers must ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately, for the tasks they undertake. Those who dress or appear in a manner that could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations of misconduct.
- 17.2 Whilst it is not possible to list every possible clothing option here, it is expected that staff will support the safer code of professional conduct and will dress in a way that reflects a professional appearance at all times whilst in school. For teachers, LSAs / TAs, Admin, Mid-day Supervisors and Finance staff, the wearing of casual items such as jeans, trainers or equivalent (outside of PE lessons and whole school non-uniform days), sports clothing, football team clothing etc., or items of clothing that could be deemed by others as too revealing, is not appropriate or acceptable at Winslow Church of England School. Footwear should also be sturdy enough to protect feet from injury if an accident occurs. We have high standards of how we expect pupils to present themselves, so we must ourselves work within these same strict principles. It is accepted that, due to the nature of their work, staff who work in the kitchen and who are employed as cleaners or site staff, may need to wear less formal dress whilst in school. However, a smart and appropriate appearance is expected of all staff at all times, as all staff represent the school and the Local Authority.
- 17.3 Due to the impressionable nature of young children, we ask that tattoos and other body art are covered up whilst in school where possible.
- 17.4 Staff should wear PE clothes and trainers when teaching PE and Games lessons. Teaching assistants attending to support the learning of pupils in a PE or Games lesson should at a minimum have a change of appropriate shoes.

18. Breach of the Code of Conduct

- 18.1 Failure to comply with this guidance and associated School policies may result in disciplinary action being taken.
- 18.2 The Council/Governing Body reserves the right to take legal action against employees where breaches of the guidance warrant such action.