**Ballylifford Primary School**

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# **Staff**

# **Code of Conduct Policy**

**Ballylifford Primary School Code of Conduct**

**The Code seeks to:**

* **set out clearly the core values underpinning professional practice;**
* **encourage attitudes and conduct which correspond to the core values of the profession;**
* **provide a framework for evaluating both policies and practice; and enhance the status of the profession in the eyes of the public.**

**Commitment to Learners**

**The Staff of Ballylifford PS will:**

* **maintain professional relationships with those pupils / learners entrusted to their care which respect the learner as a person, and encourage growth and development;**
* **acknowledge and respect the uniqueness, individuality and specific needs of pupils and thus provide appropriate learning experiences;**
* **aim to motivate and inspire pupils with a view to helping each realise his / her potential.**

**Commitment to Colleagues and Others**

**The Staff of Ballylifford PS will:**

* **work with colleagues and others to create a professional learning community that supports the social, intellectual, spiritual / moral, emotional and physical development of pupils;**
* **promote collegiality among colleagues by respecting their professional standing and opinions and, in that spirit, be prepared to offer advice and share professional practice with colleagues;**
* **cooperate, where appropriate, with professionals from other agencies in the interests of pupils;**
* **ensure that relationships with the parents, guardians or carers of pupils, in their capacity as partners in the educative process, are characterised by respect and trust; and**
* **respect confidential information relating to pupils or colleagues gained in the course of professional practice, unless the well-being of an individual or a legal imperative requires disclosure.**

**Commitment to the Profession**

**The Staff of Ballylifford PS will:**

* **as reflective practitioners, contribute to the review and revision of policies and practices with a view to optimising the opportunities for pupils or addressing identified individual or institutional needs; and**
* **in keeping with the concept of professional integrity assume responsibility for their ongoing professional development as an essential expression of their professionalism.**

**Code of Conduct**

**A Code of Conduct for Employees within the Education Sector whose work brings them into contact with children/young people. Members of staff are aware of and adhere to the Code of Conduct.**

**All members of staff are aware of and should follow the ‘Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy’ Guidelines for Self-Protection.**

**All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the children and young people in their charge must be above reproach.**

**This Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interaction with staff within the education sector. It is intended to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of child abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct.**

**Personal mobile phones or smart devices should never be used by staff to record any child. Personal mobile phones should not be used during school time without prior consent from the Principal.**

**It is strongly recommended that members of staff do not allow pupils to have access to their personal mobile phone numbers or personal email addresses.**

**Social Networking sites present particular difficulties for staff in all schools. Great care must be taken to ensure that appropriates boundaries are maintained between staff and pupils in this arena. It is strongly recommended that all staff using social networking sites use the highest available privacy settings and that staff do not communicate with pupils via personal social networking sites. Information directly related to the school community should never be posted on personal social networking sites. Staff should be mindful of content attributable to them, posted on other sites (family and friends) who may not have the privacy settings recommended.**

**Code of Conduct**

**1. Private Meetings with Pupils**

* **Staff should be aware of the dangers which may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place. As far as possible, staff should conduct such interviews in a room with visual access, or with the door open.**
* **Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. It may be necessary to use a sign indicating that the room is in use, but it is not advisable to use signs prohibiting entry to the room.**
* **Where possible another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview, and the school should take active measures to facilitate this.**

**2. Physical Contact with Pupils**

**a. As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils.**

**b. It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child especially a younger child may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.**

**c. Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm. (DENI Circular 1999/9, on the use of reasonable force, gives guidance on Article 4 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (Power of member of staff to restrain pupils).**

**d. Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.**

**e. Staff who administer first-aid to a pupil should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. However, no member of staff should hesitate to provide first-aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.**

**f. Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.**

**g. Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to his/her line manager.**

**h. Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting, or in approved out of school activities, where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school/work environment.**

1. **Choice and Use of Teaching Materials**

* **Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.**
* **When using teaching materials of a sensitive nature a teacher should be aware of the danger that their application, either by pupils or by the teacher, might after the event be criticised. Schools have already received advice on the value of consulting parents and Governors when proposing to use materials in connection with sex education programmes.**
* **If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the principal before using it.**

1. **Relationships and Attitudes**

* Within the Pastoral Policies of the school, staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age, sex and maturity of the pupils taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation.
* Attitudes, language and demeanour all require care and consideration particularly when staff members are dealing with young children.
* In all circumstances the staff’s professional judgment will be exercised and for the vast majority of employees this Code of Conduct will serve only to confirm what has already been their practice.

**Online-Safety and Internet Use**

Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Regard should be given to the schools’ E-Safety and ICT Acceptable Use Policy at all times both inside and outside of work.

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

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.

Contact with students must be via school authorised mechanisms. At no time should personal telephone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with students.

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

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 retained and destroyed in accordance with the schools Records Management Policy and Disposal Schedules.

**Staff Mobile Phone Policy**

* Staff are not permitted to make/receive calls/texts during contact time with children.
* Emergency contact should be made via the school office.
* If you are in a location where communication is not possible (e.g. fields, woods, trip) and then staff should carry mobile phones for emergency use only.
* Staff should have their phones on silent or switched off and out of sight (eg in a drawer, handbag) during class time.
* Mobile phones should not be used in a space where children are present (eg classroom, corridor, playground).
* Use of phones (including receiving/sending texts and emails) should be limited to non-contact time when no children are present e.g in office areas, staff room, empty classrooms.
* Staff must security protect access to their phone.
* Should there be exceptional circumstances (e.g acutely sick relative), then staff should make the Principal and office staff aware of this so messages can be relayed promptly.
* Staff are not at any time permitted to use recording equipment on their mobile phones, for example: to take recordings of children, or sharing images. Legitimate recordings and photographs should be captured using school equipment such as iPads

**Dress and Appearance**

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

**Confidentiality**

Members of staff and volunteers may have access to confidential information about students in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities. In some circumstances staff may be given additional highly sensitive or private information. They should never use confidential or personal information about a student or his family for their own, or others’ advantage. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the student.

Confidential information about students should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need to know basis. In circumstances where the student’s identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.

There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a student, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a duty to pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated child protection responsibilities. If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from a senior member of staff. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to senior leadership.

Adults need to be aware that although it is important to listen to and support students, they must not promise confidentiality or request students to do the same under any circumstances. Additionally concerns and allegations about adults should be treated as confidential and passed to a senior leader without delay.

**Conclusion**

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff inter-relate with children or where opportunities for conduct to be misconstrued might occur.

**In all circumstances the professional judgement of staff will be exercised and for everyone this Code of Conduct should serve only to confirm what has always been their practice.**

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_BoG Chairperson**

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Principal**

**Approved by Governors: February 2022**

**Next Review: February 2025**